

Oral Questions

a quarter million dollars saw their average tax bill decline by \$20,597.

Will the minister not agree, then, that his government's tax reform is nothing more than tax cuts for the rich and tax hikes for the poor and ordinary Canadians?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the very clear fact is that those people who earn over \$50,000, representing 7 per cent of the tax filers in this country, pay up to 40.4 per cent of the tax compared to 34.1 per cent. That clearly shows that the tax system is more progressive. It is fair.

We said in phase one of tax reform that there will be 850,000 low income Canadians who would not pay tax after tax reform where they paid tax before. In fact there are 905,000. We said there would be 250,000 seniors who were paying tax in 1987, who would not pay tax after tax reform. That figure is 290,000.

We have made tax reform work and we are going to make it work again.

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HEALTH

Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Two years ago, the government made a commitment to help senior independence by setting aside money for research into Alzheimer's disease and osteoporosis. Recently, the minister confirmed that he is cutting 20 per cent from the program. Alzheimer's may not be a concern for the minister, but it is a concern for millions of Canadians.

Will the minister do the right thing and restore the proper funding?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm to the hon. member that the government has committed substantial amounts of money for research into diseases of the elderly and for medical research in general.

We continue to set a high priority upon that and we will do so throughout the life of this government.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, cutting funds for research into prevention now will mean more funds will be required for cure of diseases in the future.

Many health researchers and workers responded to the government's initiative announced two years ago and planned their careers in accordance to the previously announced government priorities. Now, without any warning, after plans were made by the research community, the minister has cut funding by 20 per cent.

Will the minister admit his responsibilities to the seniors of the country and their families, and to the workers and research investigators, and restore funding to the levels previously committed to help reduce the occurrence of Alzheimer's disease among the seniors of tomorrow?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to put a high priority upon diseases related to seniors.

If the hon. member were to look at the record of spending by the government on medical research during the life of this government, he would see that substantial commitments have been made and that substantial increases have taken place in research funding for health care in Canada.

Hon. members opposite cannot have it both ways. They recognize the fact that there is a national debt in Ottawa of over \$13,000 for every man, woman and child in Canada. The hon. members complain about that, but every effort that is made to attempt to bring that debt under some control they oppose. They have to be honest with Canadians. It is time to choose whether or not they are prepared to support restraint, or whether they believe that we should continue to spend in all areas without constraint.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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CFB CHATHAM

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence.