

*Oral Questions*

I am saying to the right hon. gentleman that there are contradictions appearing in the Government's stance, and that I think he perhaps owes it to Parliament to clarify the situation and to say who is speaking for the Government.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the view I expressed was on behalf of the Government. What my friend, the Minister of Health, was doing was exploring options, which is a good idea, in the expression of a national debate in which we hope all Members of the House will become engaged. It was a thoughtful expression of opinion and not at all inconsistent with the broad thrust of what we are trying to accomplish. I do not think there is any doubt but that our principal hope is to redirect, if we can, and if it meets with the favour of the House and broad public support in the country, some of our scarce assets to helping those who need them most.

[Translation]

## GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister is going to review his Ministers' statements, because it might . . . My question is as follows: When is he going to admit that his own Ministers are confusing and upsetting Canadians by their contradictory statements about Canada's social security system?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I heard the Right Hon. Member say on television that he was prepared to review universality. What he said was entirely in agreement with a statement made by the Member for Sudbury, who said more or less the same thing, while other Members of his caucus were saying the exact opposite. We are just saying that there is considerable debate on the issue in this country, and we are seeking opinions from all Canadians on this matter. We hope to be able to allocate more funds to the neediest in our society, but it will depend on the outcome of the debate.

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● (1420)

[English]

## THE ECONOMY

## ECONOMIC STATEMENT—GOVERNMENT PROJECTIONS

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Would he tell us whether he is aware of any reason, which has not been disclosed either to the House or to the Canadian public, to alter the economic projections for the Canadian economy that were set out in some detail in his mini budget of November 8?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, no, I don't know of any reasons to alter those projections. They will stand. If the Hon. Member looks at some of the recent releases by other economists, he will find that the projections are well within the consensus range of leading economists in Canada.

## ISSUANCE OF GOVERNMENT BONDS

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, how can the Minister of Finance justify this week's \$1.2 billion issue of Canada bonds—obligations of the Government of Canada—with four maturities through to the year 2005, non-callable, and with interest rates far in excess of anything projected in the mini budget, which was 6.5 per cent from 1986 to 1990? We have ranges going up to 12 per cent for the latter part of that issue. That is a tremendous waste of taxpayers' money, if he really has confidence in the numbers which he gave us on November 8.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member looks at the broad range of the debt management program of the Government, which is necessitated by the huge borrowing requirements left by the previous Government, he will understand that a range of securities has to be offered at any one time. I would point out to him that some 56 per cent of the outstanding securities of the Government of Canada are in Treasury bills and in Canada Savings Bonds. Therefore, they are very sensitive to the changing nature of interest rates. We will benefit in a very major way if we are able to get interest rates down, and that is what we intend to do.

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## AUDITOR GENERAL

## PETRO-CANADA PURCHASE OF PETROFINA—REQUEST FOR CABINET DOCUMENTS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It arises out of something which she said in the House yesterday. I want to give her the opportunity to correct what I think she will have decided was an error. When she was asked about providing information to the Auditor General, she said:

—the Auditor General wants from me what the law does not permit me to give, that is, access to other Cabinet Ministers' material.

I should like the Minister to tell the House what law she was referring to, or will she take the occasion to correct what she said?

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to correct in this matter because I was referring to a convention which has the force of law—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!