

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Nunziata: Is this the Minister's idea of openness and fairness, or is it just another example of the Conservatives' cynical manipulation of the media?

● (1440)

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the promotion. I really do. If the Hon. Member wants to go beyond *The Journal*, beyond *Canada AM*, and beyond some of the other national programs, to invite the participation of all those in the Press Gallery, I would certainly welcome requests for interviews. I will be glad to explain to the press all the details of the labour market strategy, a strategy that is designed to put hundreds of thousands of Canadians to work, something that the previous Government ignored and overlooked for far too long.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY**IMPACT OF DEINDEXATION OF PENSIONS**

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister is aware of recent statistics showing that the increase in the number of elderly people will be greater and faster in Quebec than in Canada as a whole. The people of Quebec will therefore be more severely affected by the impact of the deindexation of old age pensions. My question is this: Why did the Minister choose to withhold \$245 million from retired people by deindexing old age security pensions when he had a fourth option—he could have collected \$600 million by maintaining the capital gains tax?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): The philosophy that underlies that question is one which has been held by members of the NDP for a long period of time. That philosophy is that those who create wealth, who have property, who farm, and who run corner grocery stores, do not create jobs. I say give those people a chance. Let them use their investments. They are the ones who create jobs and build the country. As they create wealth, we will have money for social programs. That applies to Quebec as well as to every other part of Canada.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, the Minister had four options but has chosen to go with the 4 per cent of rich Canadians who claim capital gains taxes. When will the Minister start standing up for those who rightfully fall

within the jurisdiction of his Department, the senior citizens, rather than for the small percentage of rich people who rip off the taxpayers?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, who are the rich the Hon. Member is trying to identify? They are farmers in our ridings. They are fishermen along the coasts and in the inland fisheries. They are the men and women who own small businesses across the country. They are the blue-collar workers who can now invest and hold stock in Canadian companies. Those are the ones he says are ripping us off.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): He will turn right around to claim that we should create more jobs when we do not even have the wealth to do so. I am saying that we should start creating some wealth in order to protect the programs we have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE ADMINISTRATION**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT APPOINTMENTS**

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I would like to ask the Prime Minister to put aside the insults, the bombast, and the stonewalling that we have heard from Ministers for the last few days about the appointment of the Crosbie sons by their fathers.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: Fathers?

Mr. Kaplan: I would also like to ask him to put aside the protestations of good character—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. May I ask Hon. Members to let me hear the question?

Mr. Kaplan: I would like to ask the Prime Minister as well to put aside the protestations about the good character and integrity of the Minister of Justice because that is really not the issue. How can the Prime Minister justify these appointments within the clear language of the guidelines against conflict of interest which clearly prohibit precisely what the Minister of Justice has done?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the need for balance and reasonableness must intrude. In regard to guidelines I would point out to my hon. friend, who was a Minister of the Crown, the following comment:

I would remind you of our decision not to apply the requirements of these guidelines to our spouses and dependent children. The notion that husbands and wives may wish to pursue careers and activities independent from each other is