

Oral Questions

and my colleagues, to offer to you and, through you, the staff of the House of Commons and our pages our warmest Christmas greetings and wishes for a happy holiday. I also want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on the very spectacular lights on the Hill this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): They may be the only light we have had in recent days.

[*Translation*]

And I also wish to offer the Prime Minister personally, his family and the Members of his caucus and also the Hon. Member for Oshawa and his colleagues, our best wishes for the holiday season.

[*English*]

I also want to extend those greetings to the Fourth Estate, members of the Press Gallery.

Some Hon. Members: No!

Mr. Nystrom: Not Duffy.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We also want to remember Canadians less fortunate than ourselves, those who are out of work and having a tough time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Now that the de Havilland documents are going to be presented to a parliamentary committee which will have an opportunity to review the deal, I hope the Government has drawn a lesson from this. Will the Prime Minister give an undertaking to the House that in any future sale of a Crown corporation the full documentation and details of that sale will be referred to a parliamentary committee before the sale is closed?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I want to thank the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition for his generous comments to all Members of the House, Mr. Speaker. May I take this opportunity on behalf of my Party and the Government to extend to him and all of his colleagues, as well as the Hon. Member for Oshawa and his colleagues, and to you, Mr. Speaker—but I will not go much beyond that—as well as to all members of the Gallery and our staff, our very best wishes as well for happy holidays.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: In any future transactions we will be respectful of the traditions and customs of the House and we will be searching for ways to provide as much information as possible to Members of the Opposition and public.

[*Translation*]

REQUEST FOR PRECISE RULES FOR FUTURE SALES OF CROWN CORPORATIONS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, when a Crown corporation is put up for sale, we must remember these companies belong to Canadian taxpayers, who are the real shareholders.

In the circumstances, could the Prime Minister, in future, provide more specific rules for prior consideration of these transactions, including information on the future of the jobs involved, the future of Canadian technology and research, and especially on whether control will remain in Canadian hands?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I don't think I have ever denied the fact that we have an obligation to provide the Opposition and the Canadian people with all the facts of the case, while bearing in mind that we are also talking about a commercial transaction that has a number of confidential aspects, which is only normal.

There are elements that may become problematic if they are revealed before the sale is closed. I think we all know that. However, this does not relieve us from our responsibility to be open in all circumstances, where the sale of Crown assets is concerned. We were in this particular case, and we hope to be even more so in subsequent cases to be considered by the House. In any event, the Leader of the Official Opposition can count on our co-operation at all times with respect to matter that are so vitally important to us.

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● (1120)

[*English*]

SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL OF BILL C-70

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have one final question. In view of the widespread opposition in the country, particularly that of our religious leaders, would the Prime Minister withdraw Bill C-70 relating to the deindexation of family allowances?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Benjamin: I'll agree to that.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I have great respect, Mr. Speaker, not only for the religious leaders to whom my right hon. friend refers, but for other leaders in the country, many of whom have expressed deep gratification with the course that the Government is following to restore sanity.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!