

Oral Questions

permitted. Since the matter is called for debate, I am now in some difficulty having allowed the first question.

Perhaps I could simply explain my problem to the Member and go on to the next questioner. I am sorry I did not catch that on the first question. I have some sympathy for the Member since he is caught in a position that is of my making, and I apologize.

The Hon. Member for Sudbury.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I want to say that the Conservatives can worry about the bank presidents, but Liberals are going to worry about average Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Frith: In light of the Minister of Finance's interview with *La Presse* yesterday, can the Prime Minister tell us whether Canadian families who earn \$35,000 a year or more are to expect cuts in their old age security cheques and in their family allowances?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker.

SOCIAL SPENDING AS PERCENTAGE OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister indicate to the House why his Government is not prepared to increase social spending in light of the study by the OECD countries which shows that Canada ranks sixth out of seven of the richest industrialized nations in the amount per cent of Gross National Product spent on social expenditures?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we appear to be moving up, depending upon which Party is asking the question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: We have moved from the bottom to sixth. In point of fact we are third per capita in social spending.

The Hon. Member raises a good question, because we have increased social spending for widows and widowers between the ages of 60 and 64, and we have increased it as well for veterans who fought for Canada and who deserve our recognition and help at this moment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

CANADIAN COMPANIES' RECORD

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister who knows how important research and development are to allow Canadian enterprise to expand. Is the Prime Minister and the Government aware that Canadian firms do five times the amount of research and development through to production than do foreign firms of the same size?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the fact that Canada over the last 15 years has spent less per capita on research and development than any industrialized country, with the exception of Iceland and Ireland. This Government is designing policies to attract national and international investment and to have research and development dramatically expanded here. We are going to ensure that that the research and development component is extended irrespective of the nationality of the capital, because that is what creates durable jobs in Canada.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will know that has not been the case.

ROLE OF INVESTMENT CANADA

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that Canadian firms do significantly more research and development through to production than foreign firms, will the Prime Minister explain how getting rid of the review process in Investment Canada is going to assist us in expanding that R & D sector?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Investment Canada is not an omnibus piece of legislation designed to correct all of the ills. It is a piece of legislation designed to enhance the creation of employment by the attraction of international investment capital here. There will be other legislative instruments designed to enhance research and development because we believe firmly, and I think we will bring in legislative instruments which my hon. friend will applaud, that research and development must be substantially enhanced here in Canada if we are to achieve the levels of prosperity and employment that we need.

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FISHERIES

WEST COAST TRAGEDY—PROVISION OF WEATHER REPORTS

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. The Minister will recall early in November the tragic deaths of five fishermen off the coast of British Columbia. At that time the people of British Columbia were concerned that inadequate weather information may have been a contributing factor to the tragedy. Over a month has passed. Can the Minister advise the