

*Oral Questions***OLD AGE SECURITY**

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister will agree with me that the situation of elderly Canadians is serious enough as it is, that their prospects for the coming months are not very encouraging. Mr. Speaker, we could resort to abuse, but that would not improve the plight of senior citizens. You could be civil and polite. Yesterday you saw Mr. Lévesque who said: It is an inhumane decision. You also know that the business community said that it is an unacceptable decision—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the Hon. Member have a question?

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister accept two suggestions: First, would he agree to meet here in Ottawa with various groups of Quebec elderly citizens who I know want to see him and, second, will he admit that it has been a mistake and will he amend the Bill at the earliest opportunity?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the idea of limiting the indexation of benefits did not come from the Conservative Government. My colleague will admit that, when he was sitting on this side of the House, the Liberal Government did implement a much more drastic measure concerning limited indexation in Canada. I think it is an undeniable fact. That being said, I am neither ashamed nor hesitant about repeating to my colleague that we wanted to be so fair with senior citizens that we thought we had to include in the Budget a specific provision concerning our intention to follow up on this case, hopefully to make appropriate changes in due time. Since not one elderly person has yet been adversely affected by the Government's intention and that the first impact would not be felt before April 1986, we have ample time to see how the situation evolves and take immediate action to help elderly Canadians.

● (1440)

GROUPS TRAVELLING TO OTTAWA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Prime Minister will have to admit that the Liberal Government at least protected the elderly through double indexation, for 20 years. I think that if the Prime Minister is at all honest, he will acknowledge that fact, unlike the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary contains two points: first of all, the Prime Minister failed to answer the question: will he agree next week to meet with the groups that are coming here to Ottawa and second, could the Prime Minister explain to the

elderly why they should trust him this time around on what it says in the Minister of Finance's Budget Speech, because on two occasions he broke promises that had been given in writing, one in July in Sherbrooke in the Province of Quebec and one in January?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member started out saying he wanted to be nice and polite, and unfortunately, he wound up his statement with some very harsh, and I would think petty, judgments of others in this House.

However, the question was: Will I be meeting Quebec groups next week in Ottawa? The answer is no. Next week I will be meeting Quebecers in Quebec City and elsewhere in the Province of Quebec.

[English]

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET SENIOR CITIZENS IN HALIFAX

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. A few months before the Budget was brought down the Minister of State for Finance as well as the Minister, I think, and certainly some of his officials, met with representatives of the oil industry in western Canada, discussed their taxation plight, made promises to them, and in the Budget and the Western Accord delivered great windfalls to the industry.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance why is he hunkering down here in Ottawa. Why is he afraid to meet with the seniors? Why is he isolating himself, and will he not accept the perfectly reasonable suggestion of the Hon. Member for Beaches that he meet in Halifax with a seniors' group next week?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, obviously the fact that I will be in Halifax does not mean that I am hunkering down here, afraid to meet with people. I would be happy to meet with the group that the Hon. Member suggests.

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THE BUDGET

TAX MEASURES AFFECTING OIL INDUSTRY

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister to tell us, and to tell the seniors in my riding who have been asking me, why is it that the oil industry got such favourable treatment from the Government and the seniors have been treated so shamefully. I want to ask him further, apropos of that, why do some of the seniors' groups in the poorest part of the country have to pay for job creation when the oil industry gets so many windfalls compared to the seniors. Why do the seniors have to pay for that job creation?