

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. friend's concern in this particular matter. I can do no more than reiterate the comments I made.

The program, we feel, has come to an end as far as this level of government is concerned. It has served the purpose and we think it is up to other groups to come forward at this time to participate in the program.

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**CHILD POVERTY**

**Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the minister responsible for children, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

This government's thwarted scheme to deindex seniors' pensions is still fresh in the minds of Canadians. Today the same hour-glass approach to cutting child benefits will push the poorest of Canadian children deeper into poverty and despair with each passing year.

I ask the minister why this government has betrayed Canadian children by allowing their futures to decay by 3 per cent every year?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, must I repeat for this House that we believe that children represent the future of our country and that through the budget which was tabled and on which we will vote tomorrow, we are helping families who need social and economic assistance, particularly one-parent families who need additional help.

Too often we forget to mention that this budget contains increased benefits for families and children and that day care services will be maintained through other programs and existing measures. We are working in that direction by way of the budget and of the last social measures.

[*English*]

**Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East):** Mr. Speaker, Canadian children know the difference between trick and treat.

The net child benefits for an average income family are worth barely half of what they were seven years ago. These families are teaching their children to be aware of false promises and sacred trusts.

I ask the minister why her government has deprived Canada's children to hide the cost of Tory fiscal failure?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, when speaking about social measures we often tend to think in terms of winners and losers. I would simply like to say that low and middle income families will be winners, thanks to the social and fiscal programs we created for families. Single parents will also be winners.

I maintain it is by reducing the debt and the deficit we inherited in 1984 that we as a government and as a society will succeed in taking on that responsibility and in preparing the future within the context of a healthy economy.

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[*English*]

**CROSS-BORDER SHOPPING**

**Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and it concerns the government policy of cross-border shopping.

The minister will know that Canadian customs uniforms are not purchased in Canada and that various government departments use postal services other than Canada Post. This practice has hit home in our own Parliament Buildings where a Canadian carpet supplier was actually excluded in favour of an American supplier.

Does the minister endorse this practice in the proposed \$200 million renovation slated for the Parliament Buildings over the next 10 years? Will he ensure that whenever possible every nail, every litre of paint, every