

date of 1995 remains operative and the statement of principles, and that is the position of the federal Government today.

In fact, I should tell the Right Hon. Prime Minister—the Leader—

**An Hon. Member:** You were right the first time.

**Mr. Epp:** I was right once but I was not right at the present time. There is a Prime Minister and he is not your Leader, and so what I say is this. There were certain numbers given to the Hibernia project.

• (1440)

Obviously as people have been looking at that project with new technology, that is, primarily the sponsors, there is a new examination of some of those numbers. However, the commitment on the project remains as it was before.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** That answer is a far cry from the declaration of the Prime Minister in Newfoundland on July 19, when he said: “Today the dream has been realized”. Where is that dream? There is no legally binding document. It has been postponed *sine die*.

Let me say to the hon. gentleman that I have always favoured the Hibernia project subject to a better return on royalties to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

[Translation]

#### SITUATION OF THE DISADVANTAGED

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the essence of this Throne Speech is that the Government wants to cut back on assistance to the most disadvantaged regions and the neediest Canadians. Why does the Throne Speech say that the unemployed, whose unemployment insurance benefits will be cut, will have to pay for training programs? Why should ordinary Canadians, need their incomes to support their families, clothe their children and pay the rent, have to pay for four and a half years of Conservative incompetence? Why didn't the Government make helping the most disadvantaged and neediest Canadians its priority instead of giving that priority to nuclear subs?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wonders why the Throne Speech says that the unemployed and ordinary families and the needy have to pay the bill. The Throne

#### Oral Questions

Speech says nothing of the kind. It is a fabrication used by the Leader of the Opposition during the election campaign, and I assume that is one of the main reasons why the Liberals are in the opposition and will probably remain there for quite some time.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

#### UNIVERSALITY OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I may have lost some of my hair but I am still as strong as ever.

My question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The Throne Speech had a lot to say about social programs but unfortunately, there is no assurance that the universality of social programs will be maintained. Is the Prime Minister prepared to give the House the assurance today, here and now, that the universality of social programs will be guaranteed during the next four years?

[English]

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, first let me say to the Hon. Member that we on this side of the House are delighted to see him back. It is the first opportunity I have had to congratulate him on his new responsibilities and also to say that it is obvious from that question that he has lost none of his old vigour.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the universality of social programs is a principle that is well accepted by the Government and by the people of Canada.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAMS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Laurier—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Today, unfortunately, the Minister of Transport said on one of the radio stations that his Government would have to reduce the deficit by five billion and that this would be at the expense of established programs financing. Could the Prime Minister give the House the assurance that the health insurance, the hospital insurance program will not be cut in any way and that he will not make the provincial governments do the dirty work?