

External Affairs talk about includes a statement which says we must build upon the consensus that was reached. But we know the stumbling block to any further progress is the willingness to negotiate the Star Wars or SDI Program. In Canada's strong support for the continuation of negotiations, will the Prime Minister be communicating directly with our allies in the United States and urging them to reconsider their position and put the Star Wars SDI Program back on the agenda for Geneva so we can eliminate that stumbling block and reach an historic agreement?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think one can look at the events of the weekend with some optimism or some degree of pessimism. For our part, I think that is positive. I think there is reason to be modestly hopeful. I think the elements are in place for an ongoing civilized dialogue at Geneva and, hopefully, which will result in Mr. Gorbachev's coming to the United States as agreed upon. There are stumbling blocks on both sides. That is what negotiations are all about, sitting down with open minds knowing the objections on both sides and trying to effect an honourable compromise.

The important thing which came out of the meetings, I believe, was the indications of the parameters of understanding. They are there, and hopefully people of goodwill will achieve them.

REQUEST JOINT PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION BE DRAFTED

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, no one would disagree with the Prime Minister's comments or hopes, but what we are asking about is the specific initiative the Canadian Government, indeed, the Canadian Parliament, could take on behalf of all concerned Canadians. Would the Prime Minister be prepared to join with the opposition Parties in drafting a joint parliamentary resolution which would urge continuation of negotiations but also urge that the question of SDI or Star Wars be put on the agenda and that both superpowers attempt to negotiate an agreement which will limit the testing of that program in space?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why we would pass a resolution putting the question on the agenda when it clearly is on the agenda and it was on the agenda all weekend.

Mr. Kaplan: What about Gorbachev?

Mr. Mulroney: The Hon. Member wonders about Mr. Gorbachev. Mr. Gorbachev, I think, made his point well known, as did President Reagan. The fact that agreement was not reached at this first meeting does not mean that agreements will not be reached in the future. I think we ought to look at this constructively and see the atmosphere in which events transpired, the hope for the future, and resolve to encourage President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev to go to Geneva with a view to resolving these differences.

Oral Questions

I do not look at it in the spirit of pessimism. I think there is modest reason to be hopeful about the future and Canada's every commitment will be to be helpful in that area.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

FORGET COMMISSION REPORT INQUIRY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Prime Minister. He will recall that frequently throughout the Speech from the Throne the Government committed itself to the notion of fairness. I have figures which will appear in the soon-to-be released Forget Report which indicate that this commission plans to take \$620 million out of Atlantic Canada, \$930 million out of Quebec, and \$430 million out of British Columbia. These are three regions of Canada which are already the worst affected by high levels of unemployment. Is this the Government's idea of fairness? And if not, will the Prime Minister give us assurances that this recommendation, coming from the Forget Commission, will not be accepted by the Government of Canada?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I must tell my hon. friend that he apparently has access to information that I as Prime Minister have not received. I can tell my hon. friend that our only involvement was mentioned at the time of the Budget Speech on May 23 by the Minister of Finance when he said in this regard:

I am also announcing that the government will soon launch a major review of the unemployment insurance program. Our objective is to improve and simplify the unemployment insurance system to make it fairer and to ensure that it promotes flexible adjustment in the labour market. I want to emphasize that we are not undertaking this review with an objective of reducing federal contributions to the unemployed.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, it may be the case that I have figures that the Prime Minister does not have; but when he looks at the report he will find those figures.

LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, since it was the Prime Minister's Government that appointed this commission and since it is his Government to which the commission will make its recommendations, will the Prime Minister make it clear that when it comes to these three areas the worst hit by unemployment his Government will not administer a further smack in the face, which is what it amounts to, to the poorest regions by taking hundreds of millions of dollars out? Will he assure us that the \$3 billion recommended for cuts across Canada will not be acted upon by the Government?