

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The largest and most important of the programs we are contemplating are those affecting Canadians 65 and over. Will the Minister confirm that Canadians at age 65 will continue to receive this benefit on a universal basis, as they do now, and that no surtax will be paid on this benefit by any pensioner after the review process has been completed?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks me will old age pensioners receive the same benefit in the same manner as they are now, as well as those who come to retirement at age 65, and the answer to that question is yes.

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DISARMAMENT

UNITED STATES STAR WARS TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. Apparently the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, has announced that star wars testing and research will continue in the new year despite the scheduled talks in January with Foreign Minister Gromyko. Mr. Speaker, the British Government firmly opposes the star wars plan. Last week in Europe the Secretary of State for External Affairs said, and I quote: "This was a question I was hoping to avoid". In view of those facts, can the Prime Minister tell Canadians why his Government is refusing to support the policy that this Parliament and the previous Government enunciated, opposing strongly the new development of the star wars system which is threatening the world at this time?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Canada is an adherent to the 1967 outer space treaty. We believe very fundamentally in it. We have not been approached in regard to what is not an undertaking but a research project, I understand, which is going to get under way. There has been no change. We have not been asked to consider anything, but we have ventured the view that the Canadian Government will press incessantly for the elimination of all instruments that damage the cause of peace. We are deeply committed to the talks in Geneva, and we hope that good will flow from them.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Right Hon. Prime Minister if this is a change in policy? It is very disturbing for Canadians to realize that everything the Americans are asking of the Canadian Government is agreed to. The star wars system is a new dangerous development. The speech in New York by the Prime Minister offered Canada as a give-away to the United States, with, for example, the abandonment of FIRA and the changing of

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energy policy to please the big American corporations. Is it the Prime Minister's ambition to become the first Governor of the united states of Canada?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my speech in New York, the Government of Canada will defend the integrity and the interests of this country at all times and in all circumstances. The Hon. Member referred to international corporations. His law firm is representing most of them in this country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: We are committed to the integrity of this country, and we shall defend it. We need no lessons from the Hon. Member from Bay Street in that regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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SOCIAL SECURITY

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. A few minutes ago a member of his own caucus, the Hon. Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, asked the Minister very clearly whether there will be no surtax applied to old age pensions. The Minister conveniently avoided answering that question. I would like to ask him again whether it is the intention of the Government that there will be no surtax on pensions or family allowances.

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question that was asked in terms of universality, maybe at this stage, in this House and in the country, we can put the question that the Opposition has been putting forward, to rest. There is no change. There never was any intention to change. There are no conditions to change the universality under which the old age pension is being paid to Canadians. It will be paid.

Mr. Broadbent: That is not the question.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Just a minute, Ed, patience. You were taught that earlier today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Provencher): On the matter of resources, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have asked whether it is fair to ask of Canadians whether at certain income levels a certain amount of the money they receive could be better used, for example, by single parents who live below the poverty line. Those are the questions and answers that we want discussed, and I would like to have the Hon. Member's input too.