

Oral Questions

help them before we help those who do not need that kind of assistance.

OECD REPORT

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, surely the Prime Minister is aware that OECD studies show that Canada ranks second to last in social spending, and that people are suffering greatly? Will he agree today that there will be no cuts to old age pensions and family allowances? People are confused. Give us the truth.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure it was a matter of inadvertence again. With regard to the OECD study to which the Hon. Member refers, in which Canada was second to last, health care was not included. If it was, it would have raised Canada almost to the top of the list. That is what is wrong with the NDP position.

Ms. Mitchell: I am talking about social programs.

Mr. Mulroney: I regret to say that my hon. friend, from time to time, has selective amnesia. I want to deal with that because we indeed stand firmly committed to assisting old age pensioners. We stand firmly committed to aiding all of those in Canadian society who need and deserve the help of the Government of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS

DOLPHIN DELIVERY CASE—GOVERNMENT FACTUM

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It concerns a factum submitted to the Supreme Court of Canada by the Government on September 3 in the Dolphin Delivery case. Does the Prime Minister stand behind the position taken by the Attorney General that the Charter should be narrowed so that citizens are not protected from encroachments on their freedom of expression and freedom of association where those encroachments arise under common law? Or is this another orphan similar to the one the other day for which the Government disclaims paternity?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, that is a gross and wilful exaggeration of the position taken by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada has not argued any diminution in the Charter of Rights of Canada. This was a case that, on the facts, relates to private parties only in a relationship governed exclusively by the common law, without any legislation or government action in issue. In those circumstances, the Charter has no application.

We have intervened in every major court case and supported the Charter of Rights in many of them. Therefore, the question is an absolute distortion of the situation.

Mr. Kaplan: It is not a distortion. In his answer the Minister just referred to the common law as being excluded from protection in the Charter. That is exactly my question.

COMMON LAW RIGHTS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is admitting that common law rights are to be excluded by the Government, will he agree that in the future all factums in which the federal Government intends to stand against the rights of the citizens, as it has done in this case, and against the Charter, as in the MacDonald case, will be reviewed by full Cabinet before they are sent to court?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, no such action has occurred, nor will any review by the Cabinet be necessary. The Attorney General is in charge of these proceedings. We have intervened in case after case to support Charter rights and we will continue to do so.

When we think it is a situation where the Charter does not apply, as in the particular case to which the hon. gentleman is referring, a legal opinion will govern, not some cheapskate, political opinion to twist things, as the hon. gentleman is attempting to do.

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FINANCE

CORPORATE TAX RATE

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Is it the position of the Government of Canada that in the near future the Government will reduce the already low 15 per cent corporate tax rate by introducing additional incentives for foreign investment in Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No.

NEW YORK TIMES REPORT

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, will he then look into the relationship between the Minister of Finance and Dr. Michael R. Graham, Vice-President of Dominion Securities Pitfield Limited, to determine why Dr. Graham, in an article in *The New York Times*, indicated that such measures were likely to take place?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am completely unaware of any of the information to which the Hon. Member refers. I will take it under advisement and ask the Minister of Finance to explain.