

Oral Questions

• (1450)

We are in this together. We are in it for the betterment of the potato industry in Prince Edward Island. Yes, there is a hypothesis out there, a theory that there may have been some mistesting. But no one including the international panel of experts has any doubt that PVY-N is in Prince Edward Island. What we are doing together with the farmers and the province is attempting to eradicate that so that the industry will be able to sustain itself.

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COMMENTS IN CHAMBER

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

At a time when we are trying to send out a signal to Canadians that Canada is a country for all Canadians, we have in the last two weeks witnessed derogatory remarks made in this House that have insulted both the women of Canada and visible minorities of Canada.

I know that the Prime Minister has a commitment to combating sexism and racism in this country, as I do, and I want to ask the Prime Minister: Will he take serious action to show that commitment by removing the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Immigration from their duties to show his seriousness?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I thought this item had been dealt with quite effectively by yourself when it came up. In any event, the whole question of the demeanour of members of Parliament in this House has been a subject I have been talking about for a year. I committed earlier this day to bring forward a motion to this House. We can fully debate that, have a free vote, and impose on ourselves standards of behaviour that will make the people of Canada proud rather than disappointed in this House.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I think everyone in this House will agree that we do not need a free vote on sexism. We do not need a free vote on racism.

I want to say to the Prime Minister that I as a leader will personally commit that, should anyone in my caucus make sexist or racist comments in this House, I will relieve them of their duties and I ask the Prime Minister: Will he simply do the same?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty at all in subscribing to the point of view expressed by my hon. friend.

I have sat here for seven years as Prime Minister and have been I think subjected to just about every possible epithet coming from the other side of the House. One of the members of the NDP, among other things, arrived here and slogged down a fish, with huge insults, on—

Some hon. members: That is not sexist or racist.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says: "We are of course opposed to sexism. We are of course opposed to racism of all kinds". I have stood against both throughout my political and private life.

My hon. friend will agree that this is a two-way street. We are going to enforce these requirements very severely on ourselves. I know that she will want and the Leader of the Opposition will want to enforce the same demands and the same high standards of conduct on all members of the Official Opposition.

The opposition does not require calumny, smear, character assassination, or any of the things to which we have been subjected for the last seven years. In the process I can commit to my hon. friend that we will subscribe to very high standards with pride and with pleasure. I know that they too will insist that the Leaders of the Liberal Party and the NDP do no less for their own members.

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[Translation]

PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Mrs. Carole Jacques (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, Kemtek, a petrochemical company, announced that it intended to suspend all operations indefinitely. Mr. Speaker, this decision threatens more than 1,000 jobs in East Montreal. Last week, the minister responsible for Montreal and the executive and members of the union had a meeting to discuss a solution. My question is this: Could the minister give the House the