

Oral Questions

out any public discussion which denies bilateral assistance to the poorest countries and their poorest peoples.

Today, the Liberal caucus is holding a round table discussion on the implications of these cutbacks on the peoples of the African countries, the region most impacted by eight cutbacks and policy changes. We were not pleased when this government unilaterally decided to make our assistance conditional to debt-burdened countries accepting punitive structural adjustment programs. We cannot accept that major objectives of the government, as quoted from its leaked document, are: "to support and promote market-based reforms and trade and investment links between Canada and aid recipients".

I have in hand petitions I received at a Queen's University rally last week. Hundreds of students and thousands of Canadians across this land demand public consultation before policy changes are initiated and that this country continue to prioritize the poorest of the poor in our aid program.

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SCIENCE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, even as the federal government cut funding from crucial Canadian science programs it was happily doling out more money to send into orbit, \$10 million more into orbit this year than last. What does it do with most of this money? Over \$1.5 billion will go to help build the U.S. space station.

With a new President in the White House there might not even be a space station. The Americans are realizing that you get far better economic spin-offs from science on the ground than from megaprojects high up in outer space. We have already wasted \$300 million that could have better laid the groundwork for the kind of value-added, knowledge-based economy that creates the stable, high-paying jobs that people desperately need.

For the thousands of Canadian unemployed the final frontier is not space. It is that last unemployment insurance cheque before the oblivion of absolute poverty. That is a frontier we should be making sure no one explores.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

As we speak, there are 400,000 young Canadians who cannot find work. On the other hand, we have 300,000 jobs that cannot be filled because we do not have people who possess the required skills.

As the Prime Minister orchestrates his departure, is he proud of a legacy that leaves one in five young Canadians without a job?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I think it goes without saying that members on all sides of this House find the unemployment of our youth today unacceptably high. That is why the government has been concentrating on training and retraining programs to try and encourage those who have dropped out of school early—some 30 per cent drop out of school and that is an unacceptably high rate as well—to get back into the work force to get some training they need that will bring them into today's reality in the economic picture that we find ourselves in.

There is some \$3.5 billion being spent on training and retraining and that, I believe, is a very positive sign that this government is doing something to encourage the young people to get back to work.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that as we near the end of the Mulroney era 400,000 young people are out of work. One young person out of five is looking for work. However 300,000 jobs cannot be filled because no one has the right training.

I want to ask the Prime Minister just this: What happened to his promise that training programs would be provided following the signing of the Free Trade Agreement? Why did he betray Canadians?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): As usual, the hon. member's statement is wrong. Today \$3.8 billion is being spent on manpower retraining programs, especially for young people in Canada. This is unprecedented. An interesting point is that we managed to do