

Oral Questions

I understand that the person responsible for scholarships and programs took this decision while listening to an inspiring speech of the Secretary of State in North Bay on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, March 21. It was not a prepared speech, but it came from the heart.

[Translation]

We are doing everything we can to promote national unity, and I know that people in my riding and other ridings in Canada will do so as well. Congratulations to our Secretary of State.

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[English]

EASTERN ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas): Mr. Speaker, the 7.6 per cent unemployment rate for the economic region of eastern Ontario is totally inaccurate.

Unemployment in Cornwall is over 15 per cent with 3,400 people looking for work. Many have lost their jobs due to plant closings and bankruptcies. The number of weeks needed to qualify for UI in Cornwall is 18, whereas only 10 weeks are required in regions where unemployment is at 15 per cent. In addition, only 21 weeks of UI benefits are provided to the jobless in Cornwall who do qualify for UI instead of the 37-week coverage allotted in a 15 per cent region.

When will this government stop using inaccurate data to mask the real picture of unemployment in Cornwall and other communities in eastern Ontario? When will this government improve the UI system which sets unemployment rates? When will it implement an economic development program to help the economy of eastern Ontario so that UI is not needed? The people want answers now.

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[Translation]

COMMENTS MADE BY RIGHT HON. PIERRE ELLIOTT TRUDEAU

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, in a speech at the University of Toronto last Thursday, the former Prime Minister of Canada stated quite bluntly

that after the patriation process in 1981–82, sorcerer's apprentices persuaded Quebec it had been left out.

Now he accuses the Supreme Court, and the majority justices he himself appointed, of manipulating the evidence. This is not only contempt of court, it is an argument unworthy of a man who in the past was so quick to condemn injustice.

Furthermore, he justifies his Machiavellian policy by claiming he enjoyed the support not only of federal members from Quebec but of the majority of Quebecers as well. That is false. In March 1981, only 27 per cent of Quebecers supported patriation and 54 per cent were opposed. A year later, the figures had hardly changed: 26 per cent in favour and 55 per cent opposed.

If the former Prime Minister of Canada had tried to understand the aspirations of Quebecers instead of wanting to sabotage them, his policies would have had a better chance of surviving into the next century.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Before starting Question Period, I just want to share something with all hon. members.

Hon. members will know that we have customarily, for some time now, been coming in to open Parliament and to take prayers early. The reason for that is not to lose any time in either members' statements or in Question Period.

I am in your hands. I cannot proceed without a quorum, and I would hope that over the break you would all be determined to be here just a minute or two early when we come back so that we can get on with the business of the day.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CANADIAN UNITY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): That is certainly a good point, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that we all need some prayers at this crucial time in our country.

My question is for the Prime Minister.