

Oral Questions

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, this Government, for the very first time, has called upon all Members of this House to volunteer names of persons who would help participate in the census. All Members have volunteered names, and a good number of those have been selected with the assistance of friends on that side and friends on this side. Statistics Canada advised that only competent people are being selected.

[Translation]

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, I am not interested in the people who passed the test. I am interested in those who failed.

RATINGS USED

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform the House, since a memorandum drafted by his department indicated that 60 per cent was the passing mark, why it only takes 9 per cent for Conservatives, when 60 per cent is the passing mark for all other Canadians who want to work for Statistics Canada?

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I asked Statistics Canada to follow two rules, number one, that the integrity of the system be maintained, and number two, that only qualified people be involved in the census.

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[Translation]

MINISTER OF STATE (YOUTH)

RECIPIENTS OF LETTER—INQUIRY OF THE MINISTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Youth).

She admitted Friday that she sent the letter that was inappropriate.

My question is quite simple: To which Minister?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, last Friday I offered the apologies appropriate in the circumstances. I consider the matter closed.

[English]

RESPONSES TO LETTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, there are many people in the parliamentary system who believe that a simple apology for such an error is not enough. Did she send that letter to other members in the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, and, if so, what was the response?

• (1425)

[Translation]

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I think my answer will be the same as for the first question.

Last Friday, I made the appropriate apologies, and I am certainly not going to hand in my resignation at the request of the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

[English]

INQUIRY CONCERNING RECIPIENTS AND RESPONSES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is not sufficient. Considering that the Minister apologized last Friday for something that she clearly believes was wrong, it is very relevant to ask her if she sent that letter to the Prime Minister or other members of the Cabinet and, if so, what was the response? The Minister has an obligation to reply to that question and not simply repeat an apology.

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I apologized because there seemed to be an understanding by some people that there was an intent to use taxpayers' money for partisan purposes. Such was not the intent, and the letter was misinterpreted.

I also admitted that the writing of the letter was a mistake and I have apologized for that. There was never any such intent, so I think that this is all there is to it.

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STATISTICS CANADA

NOMINATION OF CENSUS COMMISSIONER IN COCHRANE-SUPERIOR CONSTITUENCY

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services. In the constituency of Cochrane-Superior in northern Ontario the wife of the former President of the Progressive Conservative Riding Association was nominated as a census commissioner. That is no problem, but it is reported to me that she failed the test and performed very poorly in the interview. Nevertheless, orders came down to officials that, despite her performance, she should be hired.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It is time for a question.

Mr. Penner: Why did the Minister cause such an order to go down, that this woman be hired despite the results of her exam?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Hon. Member did not hear my earlier response that two orders were given to Statistics Canada; one, to maintain the integrity of the system; and two, to hire qualified people.