

Oral Questions

for stimulating the housing sector. All of these things are now starting to pay off and we are seeing some very positive growth and some very positive indicators in the Canadian economy.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

We are all aware that the chair of the subcommittee on poverty has renewed her role as tormentor of the poor. The government's leading poverty revisionist would have us believe that if poor Canadians are taught how to shop and how to cook they would not need food banks.

I ask the minister why he has allowed his poverty chief to tell Canadians that poor people are as stupid and useless as the government that rules them?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I guess the question would be more properly put to the member for Don Valley North who I do not believe said what is reported to have been said about her.

Mr. Marchi: Where is she?

Mr. Fontana: I heard her on the radio this morning.

Mr. Weiner: I am pleased that you heard it. I have not had a chance to read it at this point.

I recognize the situation that there are poor and hungry people in this country. We are attempting to do everything to help all those people. I personally have been involved in my own community in every way possible to be supportive of just such organizations. We hope we will find a way to achieve full employment or to find an opportunity for everybody to participate fully. It starts with a job. It starts with better education. It starts with a good health care program which we already have in this country. We are hopeful we will continue to see progress on behalf of those families at risk.

• (1430)

There have been significant programs put in: the \$2.1 billion of increased spending in the child tax credit and the \$500 million introduced by the minister for *Brighter Futures*. Those are all assisting families in need.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, this government may try to hide hunger but it cannot hide its contempt for the hungry.

[*Translation*]

The government's high priestess on poverty says that many people who go to food banks do not really need to. These are the very words of someone whose experience of poverty is limited to that of a mere spectator who never even visited the largest soup kitchen in the country, which serves her own riding.

I ask the minister why his government acts on poverty with all the sensitivity of a sledge hammer.

[*English*]

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for citizenship I particularly commend all those who contribute both their time and financial assistance to the support of those who are less well off in our communities.

I have tried to indicate publicly my own personal support. I have had long experience with Sun Youth in Montreal, as an example. It is a very noble and fine institution that has been providing the community with the type of help the member would like to see.

[*Translation*]

It is not easy; times are tough. Many families experience hardship in such times. There is no need to blame anyone, because frankly we all want to make life easier for our fellow citizens. We are continuing to work toward this goal and I am sure that goes as much for members on our side as for those on the hon. member's side.

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[*English*]

EDUCATION

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Student unemployment in Nova Scotia stood last year at 24 per cent. Tuition fees in Nova Scotia universities have gone up 50 per cent since 1985. In the same time period SEED job funding is down 44 per cent. Student loans are slashed. No jobs, no loans, equals no education.