

supported the Polish and Russian actions in Poland against the Polish people?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that I disagree with his interpretation of our policy, particularly the facts that he set forward. When he says that there was never any condemnation of martial law in Poland, I must point out to him that the very first time I was asked about the imposition of martial law, I believe it was at a press conference on December 19, I regretted the imposition of martial law. I went on to indicate that, since it was a fact, we would hope that the military authorities in Poland would permit monitoring by Canada or other people to ensure that the rigours of martial law would be eased as soon as possible. My statement at the year-end went even further along that line.

As to the role of the Soviet Union, I must say that at the time I spoke we had no evidence of any direct intervention by the Soviet Union in Polish affairs. When I say direct, I mean of course beyond the fact that Poland is and has been a satellite of the Soviet Union, as are many other countries in eastern Europe. However, in so far as any direct military intervention is concerned, we had no evidence of that. I understand that some countries claimed to have such evidence. The Secretary of State for External Affairs is in the process of examining and assessing that evidence.

#### COMMENTS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has been the reluctant debutante in condemning what happened in Poland and what has gone on there for the last month. On December 18 the Prime Minister stated that martial law was the best alternative in Poland, and I quote:

Hopefully the military regime will be able to keep Solidarity from excessive demands.

Since the Prime Minister has agreed to appear on a television show arranged by the U.S. International Communications Agency, to be shown around the world on January 30 in support of the Polish people, will he now repudiate and withdraw his comments supporting martial law in Poland and apologize for them, to counteract the view of the Poles that, and I quote:

Your Trudeau—he really did us in.

Or will he go ahead without repentance as 1982's greatest example of hypocrisy in action?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member's question is more laden with invective than with fact. When he says that I support martial law, I must ask him to refer to the text of my statement.

**Mr. Andre:** December 18.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Yes, it was on December 18. It was stated in these terms: if martial law is a way to avoid civil war and

#### Oral Questions

Soviet intervention, then I cannot say it is all bad. That, I suppose, is still a question for the history books to decide. In the case of this government, and I believe most of our allies, we have always expressed the hope and stated the policy to the effect that the Soviet Union must not intervene militarily in Polish affairs and that the solution to the Polish crisis should be found by the Poles themselves. My statements will stand.

I do not believe that in advance we can or should condemn the use of troops by any of our friends, if it is to avoid a worse result. The worse result in this case would have been intervention by the Soviet Union. When I say by our friends, of course everybody in this House has examples in mind where democratic or other forms of government have used the military. Britain is using them in Northern Ireland now. Turkey is using them. They are our friends in NATO. We have used them under the War Measures Act in 1970. These cases are all different in scope, but once again we must ask ourselves if there was a better scenario. Perhaps there was. I do not know. However, I say that if the invocation of martial law was a way to keep the Soviet troops out, then I cannot condemn it *a priori*. I will have to see in what way that martial law proceeds, and I will—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** If hon. members opposite want to engage in debate, we will be happy to have a debate on one of their opposition days, if that is what they want. However, I think the position of the government warrants listening to by members opposite.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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● (1450)

#### UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

##### DELAY IN PAYMENTS TO RECIPIENTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It pertains to the fact that last year the delivery of unemployment insurance in the province of British Columbia collapsed three times, with the result that thousands of workers were forced to turn to the provincial welfare system when they should have been qualified for unemployment insurance. It is taking the minister's department something in the order of two to three months to provide unemployment insurance to those people who are suffering enormous hardship.

What I would like to hear from the minister is if he can tell us today exactly what provisions he intends to make to rectify this situation so as to clear up the problem now, and can he guarantee it will not happen for a fourth time within the next few months? Also can he tell us whether he intends to reimburse the province of British Columbia for the millions of dollars that it is paying out for unemployment insurance funding because of the incompetence of his department?