

*Oral Questions*

For example, sales are up dramatically for our domestic auto makers. Just yesterday General Motors announced a third shift and that 650 more workers are to be hired. The figures for Chrysler, the company that builds its cars in Brampton, Ontario, rose 16.1 per cent. The figures for trucks are up 15.3 per cent and for cars, 17 per cent. These domestic auto makers are doing extremely well.

Capacity utilization is up strongly in our manufacturing area. Statistics Canada attributes that to our strong exports.

For the hon. member to stand up and blame the woes on the free trade agreement or other things is totally wrong.

What is happening is that the economy is recovering from a very serious recession and the recovery is very slow. However the signs are now there. Canada is going to come out of this recession much stronger than all the other OECD countries. This was just expressed this week by the OECD. It is the strongest growth not only in economic terms but in employment terms as well.

[Translation]

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Madam Speaker, I am surprised the minister can afford to brag about a 60 per cent increase in unemployment since the last election. We are talking about 1,600,000 Canadians who are out of work. In Montreal, 80,000 jobs were lost just since the last election. In Toronto, 150,000 more jobs were lost. How can the minister say he is doing a good job when the government knows that the employment figures and statistics tell an entirely different story?

[English]

**Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member failed to mention that since our government was elected, 1.3 million more people are working today than there were back in 1984. That was a slight oversight, I am sure, by my hon. friend.

I think the hon. member fails to recognize or refer to the fact that we have come through a very serious recessionary period in that period of time. The hon. member knows because when her party was the Government of Canada it experienced the same problem, that in recessionary periods there is the problem of high unemployment. That happens.

What we have been able to accomplish is to get interest rates and inflation down and to get Canada positioned to take advantage of the growth we are going to experience both this year and next. Jobs will follow with that growth.

[Translation]

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Madam Speaker, I was in the House four years ago when the Minister of Finance announced he was going to bring about a recession in Canada. I was also here when both Tory leadership candidates fully supported the policies of that same minister.

He was talking about jobs, so I will ask him why, in one month, we lost 78 full-time jobs? Part-time jobs at a fast food outlet are fine, but when will we have a policy for creating full-time jobs that will pay Canadians a decent wage?

• (1120)

[English]

**Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)):** Madam Speaker, I could go through the list of companies that in the last few weeks have talked about increasing employment. That includes General Motors to which I just referred with 650 additional jobs in Oshawa. Other firms are making those announcements.

I might also say that the help wanted index—

**Ms. Copps:** How many did they lay off this month?

**Mr. McDermid:** The hon. member is not listening to the answer. She is yapping away there as she usually does. She delivers her best speech from the seat of her pants—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for York North.

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North):** Madam Speaker, according to Statistics Canada the unemployment rate is stuck at 11.4 per cent. That is unchanged from last month and is higher than the month before.

The Minister of Finance must agree that unemployment in this country is a serious problem. He must also agree that it is draining the energy from our economy, hurting consumer confidence and hampering the recovery.