

*Oral Questions*

ment of Quebec? If so, will it be signed before December 25, 1992?

[English]

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question.

My colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, and his counterparts in the province of Quebec worked very hard on this agreement. I am pleased that the agreement is at the point where I believe final plans can be made for its ratification and for its announcement.

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[Translation]

### MANUFACTURING SECTOR

**Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Since the recession began Canadian manufacturing has lost three times as many jobs proportionately as American manufacturing. My question is: Why this crushing gap between us and the United States?

[English]

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, let me just point out to my hon. friend that in the first eight months of this year Canadian exports to the United States, which were about 55 per cent manufactured exports, were up 9.8 per cent. That was 9.8 per cent in a period when the U.S. economy was not in a very robust position, but 9.8 per cent because of the advantages that my hon. friend well knows are there from the free trade agreement. That is one of the things that has helped the performance of the manufacturing sector in Canada.

My hon. friend would do well if he looked at other reasons the manufacturing sector is in some difficulty today. It is partly because of the fact that we are going through a period of enormous change which my friend, the Minister of Finance, has been talking about.

The hon. member talks about adjustment. If he would compare adjustment in the United States with adjustment in Canada, he will see that the adjustment programs in Canada for both individuals and industry, including the manufacturing sector are many, many times greater than those in the United States on a per capita basis.

**Mr. Paul Martin (LaSalle—Émard):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about job loss. The fact is the United States is going through adjustment as are we yet we have lost three times as many manufacturing jobs as it has.

The reason is very clear. Despite the two years of tremendous human suffering, this government has pursued a course of action which has done nothing to relieve the pain Canadians feel, nothing to prepare the country for what lies ahead. While we on this side called for economic stimulus, they on that side countered with uncompetitive interest rates. While we called for increased training, increased research and development, they said wait for the prosperity agenda. The prosperity agenda is in. What is the government's excuse for doing nothing? When is the government going to give us a budget? Does it really think that the financial deficit can be solved if the human deficit is ignored?

• (1500)

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, let me be quite clear that the human element of this has not been ignored. It has not been ignored at all because the amount of training that has been brought in by this government to address the problems of the people who have lost their jobs because of the difficulties in the manufacturing sector has increased substantially. It numbers now some \$3.5 billion which I believe is greater than the total amount that the United States has for the whole of an economy that is 10 times greater than the Canadian economy.

The simple facts are that the reasons for the difficulties in the manufacturing sector go directly to the fact that manufacturing, unit labour costs, increased something like 50 per cent in comparison to the United States. It is for that reason and not reasons caused by—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.