

like I just heard him make today as to why Canada is a place that the Japanese should be spending more time both investing in and why we should be having much closer economic and political relations.

I think that is spoken like a true Prime Minister and I am proud of him.

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STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology.

The minister knows that the government's high dollar and high interest policy has been devastating for the Canadian steel industry. I want to ask him specifically today about the thousands of jobs reported to be sacrificed at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste. Marie, which would destroy the livelihood of thousands of families and devastate the entire community.

What specific assistance is the minister prepared to give today to save jobs and help this community?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is well aware, we have been part of discussions that involve the company Algoma Steel, the union, the shareholders of Algoma Steel, Defasco, as well as the bankers in the province of Ontario, to try to assist in ways of seeking adjustment to the company so that it can continue in business.

I am sure my hon. friend is well aware of the very serious financial conditions of Algoma Steel. He is also very much aware that if the federal government provides specific monetary assistance to the company, it will very seriously affect its capacity to sell into the United States market.

That option is not open to us, but we are talking to the company to try to assist in ways that will allow it to move into a new regime, possibly helping out in the training and retraining of individuals who would lose their jobs.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Labour.

The minister knows that there have already been thousands of jobs lost at Algoma Steel and there are plans for further lay-offs. Many of them are older workers.

Oral Questions

Is the Minister of Labour willing to give a commitment today to designate Algoma Steel workers eligible for the Program for Older Workers Adjustment so that they can be provided with an adequate and respectable early pension?

The chances of these older workers finding jobs in today's recession are almost nil. Would the minister give a commitment today to designate this industry and this community for assistance under the Program for Older Workers Adjustment?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend knows that POWA, to which he is referring, has specific rules. A committee made up of representatives from Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada is actually meeting and will make a recommendation to both ministers. I hope that recommendation will be favourable.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 1989, Ontario has lost 144,000 or 14 per cent of its manufacturing jobs. Employment is down 19 per cent in auto parts, 21 per cent in steel, 26 per cent in machinery, and 33 per cent in furniture. Because of this government's deliberate policies, many of these jobs are lost forever.

When will the minister responsible for industry help Ontario export something other than jobs?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that my hon. friend speak to the person immediately to his front and left. He would find out that I am actively helping Ontario companies find new business through trade opportunities in the Middle East.

The member for Etobicoke North and I were on a trade mission. He has just very kindly sent to me a report that he wrote for *The Financial Post* on the trade mission. He neglected to mention my name in it, unfortunately.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I just wanted anyone who read that article to know that I was the minister who was leading that trade mission, helping Ontario companies, helping Quebec companies, helping companies from Newfoundland right across Canada to British Columbia