

at all despite the high interest rates said economists Ronald Wonnacott of the University of Western Ontario and Douglas Purvis of Queen's University.

These are two outstanding people who are saying that the free trade agreement has brought great benefits to Canada.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister is so convinced of his facts I ask that today he table a list of those jobs that have been created in Canada since the trade deal has been signed.

He might also want to speak to the 60 head office employees and the 280 plant workers at Catelli Limited who are being asked to take wage cuts and accept a wage freeze until the end of 1993 if they want to keep their jobs from being shifted to the U.S. plants. The U.S. president of the Catelli firm said that the decision was part of the company's North American strategy under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Can the Prime Minister still maintain that the trade deal will bring more jobs and a higher standard of living when the trade deal is being used to intimidate workers into lower wages and to accept poorer standards of living?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I had not planned on doing this but I would be happy to table a document which indicates that since the free trade agreement came into effect on January 1, 1989, 257,000 new jobs have been created.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: List them.

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, in regard to an important component of them—

Mr. Allmand: Selling hamburgers.

Mr. Mulroney: The member for NDG says selling hamburgers. Of the 257,000 jobs, 231,000 or 90 per cent have been full-time jobs, reversing the trend under the Liberals completely.

Oral Questions

• (1430)

[Translation]

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The question for the people of Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec, might be: "Where are the jobs?" We learned this weekend that 1,700 jobs would be lost in Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec. The General Motors plant is shutting down half its production line. Now this plant is more competitive than the General Motors plant in the United States: its production cost per employee is between \$8 and \$9 an hour less than in the United States.

The Prime Minister said that with the Free Trade Agreement, all decisions would be based on competitiveness. Is the Prime Minister prepared to admit that this decision is political, not economic, that jobs are at stake and that free trade does not protect our people?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the layoffs in Sainte-Thérèse are temporary. They are due to short-term market conditions. The Sainte-Thérèse plant is very modern and very competitive; General Motors has already invested \$450 million in it. The facilities at Sainte-Thérèse, like the new paint department, are high quality. We are confident that the plant is in a good position to make the new products successful, which will make it viable in the long run.

[English]

We should boost this plant, not disparage it. It has a very strong success rate and a good future.

I should also tell the hon. member that when she talks about food processing, in the past year this industry has seen 21 new plants, 23 expansions and 18 improvements to plants. This was in the last 12 months.

[Translation]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. As was already mentioned on Friday, General Motors announced that 1,700 workers at its plant in Sainte-Thérèse would be laid off. Since the government has subsidized this company in Sainte-Thérèse in the past and, with the Free Trade Agreement, the government promised to maintain and even increase the number of