

Oral Questions

totally impossible for them to expand and create the kinds of jobs we need in the economy now?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of State, Finance): I should like to remind the hon. member that the budget already features a measure for small businesses, the bonds, which will bring temporary relief to small businesses which are in need; and that applies particularly to the type of preoccupation expressed by the hon. member.

[*English*]

EFFECT OF U.S. "BUY-AMERICA" POLICY ON CANADA

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, even the minister should know that the so-called program for small business assistance that he is talking about will aid only 5 per cent of small businesses and that 95 per cent will be excluded.

I should like to put a question to the Prime Minister which perhaps he will answer, since it concerns our direct relations with the United States. The Bombardier Corporation of Montreal has just announced that it is opening a new plant in Barrie, Vermont, creating 200 new American jobs instead of jobs in Canada, and it is doing this as a direct result of the "buy-America" legislation which exists in the United States. Considering that the president-elect has indicated very clearly that he wants to strengthen this "buy-America" legislation, I should like to ask the Prime Minister what the government intends to do about getting the U.S. government to change this legislation which so adversely affects employment in Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Pierre does not want to answer.

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, we had been holding very active and urgent discussions with the previous U.S. administration. Just before the adjournment of the House, we had been holding discussions with the present U.S. secretary of commerce, Mr. Klutznick, and we intend to open discussions with the new U.S. administration as soon as possible after their cabinet is in place.

I might also point out that while this plant will mean some 200 jobs in Vermont, it was established there to enable the creation of some 400 jobs in La Pocatière in Quebec through the carrying out of this contract. I hope my hon. friend does not oppose that.

Madam Speaker: A further supplementary, the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie).

Mr. Broadbent: Only the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce could see the loss of 200 jobs as providing some kind of benefits to Canadians—

Madam Speaker: Order please. I am sorry but I was confused. I meant to recognize the hon. member for Oshawa but I did call the hon. member for Rosedale.

Mr. Broadbent: I do not know, Madam Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order please. I think I owe the House an explanation. I was writing down the name of the hon. member for Rosedale because I saw him rising for a question later on. The hon. member for Oshawa.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, I do not know which of us should rise on a question of privilege!

My last question is to the incomparable Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: I said "incomparable" with just a tinge of irony!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Having failed to produce jobs for people at Massey, having failed the auto industry, having failed the steel industry because of its problems with the buy America act, and having lost out in the cabinet in his attempts to get an industrial strategy, will the minister finally fulfil at least one promise he made to the people of Canada, that unless he obtained what he promised for them, he would submit his resignation now?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, we should ask the Leader of the NDP why he has not resigned as a result of his efforts which lost his party all its seats in northern Ontario and brought about an absolute failure to get the support of industrial workers in Ontario and in the rest of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gray: On the other hand, Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Canada we took action which has created the basis for the preservation of the 40,000 jobs connected, directly and indirectly, with Chrysler Canada. We have shown our willingness to make a commitment, if the private sector does its job, which will preserve and increase jobs at Massey. This is a demonstration of our achievement and our commitment to preserve jobs and increase jobs for working people across Canada, something which, on the basis of comparison, the NDP and its leader have shown themselves to be totally incompetent, and incapable of doing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!