

We say: "No, not at all. Let us raise some of the standards of these Mexicans. What is the problem?" Do we have to lower our standards? Absolutely not. I agree with the member and that is probably the only thing we agree on.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend's motion is the kind of blanket statement that opposition members find so easy to make.

• (1715)

With all due respect, I would suggest that hon. members of the opposition take the time to learn about the very real efforts this government is making with regard to the Canadian economy.

The hon. member's motion gives the completely false impression that this government has been sitting idly by. Canadians know that is not the case. We have been making a genuine, concerted effort to deal with the economy and to give business an incentive to invest in this great nation.

This government has many programs that are beginning to show good results. It does not happen overnight. There is no instant solution but we are making progress.

Because of the Free Trade Agreement, along with other trade initiatives, Canada's exports are up 11 per cent. That does not represent stifled economic growth to me. This government understands economic reality, and we have clearly demonstrated fiscal and economic leadership.

During the last two decades inflation has been the most intractable problem for many nations. However, in Canada our government has conquered this killer of jobs and economic growth. Under our government inflation is now around an acceptable two per cent. The approach we have taken is a no-nonsense approach. It is an approach that avoided quick fixes, and instituted real change so this magnificent country can enjoy long-term gain.

Tax reform has enabled Canadian business to compete around the world without being saddled by a manufacturers' sales tax. The result is that other nations see Canada with a disciplined government that puts good fiscal management ahead of soft policies designed to win

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popularity contests. We have the respect of those other nations and the confidence of foreign investors.

Over the past few years this government has been building a solid framework that will enable business and labour to successfully compete in the new, technology-driven, global economy. For example, let us just consider some recent initiatives the government has undertaken to help small businesses. I trust that my hon. friend realizes that small business is the real driving force behind our economy.

In the economic statement delivered by the Minister of Finance in December the small business loan limit was increased to \$250,000. Additional forms of working capital are also becoming available. Rules for investing in retirement savings plans were made more flexible so Canadians will have more incentive to invest in Canadian companies.

We did not increase income tax or UI premiums. We did not increase the small business tax rate and there is no payroll tax for training. We made changes in the unemployment insurance program, changes that were requested by both business and labour. Besides freezing UI premiums, we are providing employers with a UI premium holiday for new companies and new employees in existing companies.

Opposition motions condemning this government imply that we should pretend there is no massive debt and just spend, spend, spend, that we should live beyond our means and place a totally irresponsible financial burden on our children and grandchildren. This government will never take that path. The people of Canada have entrusted us with a solemn responsibility to do what is best for our economic health, and we have every intention of living up to that responsibility.

This government has addressed issues that previous governments shied away from and placed them at the top of our agenda. Not because we enjoyed doing so but because we knew it was the right thing to do. This government has had the courage to acknowledge that we do not have all the answers. We have entered into partnerships with interested parties in some sectors to ensure that we are on the right path for a full and healthy economic recovery.