

they witness business people, labour spokespeople, academics and special interest groups making claims and counterclaims.

My question to the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology is this. Will the minister please explain to Mr. and Mrs. Front Porch in my riding what this agenda means to them and how they can participate in it.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I think the principal reason why this is important to people in his riding is because the initiative is designed to review the challenges we have in improving our competitive position and the standard of living of the people in his riding, are related to our competitive position.

• (1450)

Normally when views are sought from Canadians on matters such as this in a normal consultative process, people such as he is referring to do not have an opportunity to feed into the process, to express their views, to get into a dialogue, to discuss the problems and the challenges that we are facing. Since we are going to 175 or 185 communities across the country, people such as my hon. friend is referring to will be able to feed directly into the process and have their views heard.

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[Translation]

#### SOVEREIGNTY-ASSOCIATION

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Since yesterday, when he had his initial reaction to the excellent report by the Economic Council of Canada, I know that the Prime Minister has tried to play the bogeyman and pretend that there is no question of Canada one day having economic agreements with a sovereign Quebec. My question for the Prime Minister is: Will the 100,000 workers in Ontario who owe their jobs to the \$30-billion trade that Ontario has with Quebec be unemployed to punish Quebecers the day after sovereignty is attained?

#### Oral Questions

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think that my friend has been overtaken by events. Important events are taking place in Quebec. He is the manager or assistant manager of the Ontario Branch of the PQ, but his big boss made an important revealing statement last night in Montreal. Mr. Parizeau said that in an independent Quebec, Quebecers who wanted to could keep their Canadian citizenship. So Mr. Parizeau is now proposing independence, but keeping the Canadian currency, an economic union with Canada and Canadian citizenship. It may be less costly for Quebecers to remain Canadians.

**Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question. I know that the Prime Minister will have fond memories of that great Quebec leader with whom he plotted to get elected in 1984 and 1988 and the Prime Minister cannot deny it.

Can the Prime Minister tell me whether western farmers who sell \$750 million worth of beef to Quebec will say that once Quebec is sovereign, they will no longer sell their beef but eat it in the West?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know with whom I plotted in 1984, but I know that my opponent then belonged to the Liberal Party.

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#### TRANSFERS TO THE PROVINCES

**Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board and concerns transfers to the provinces. Since 1984, when our government held program spending increases to 3.5 per cent, most provinces continued to raise theirs too rapidly. Since then, they must also adjust to economic reality, while trying at times to put the blame on the federal government, with the demagogic help of the opposition parties. To my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, the figures on transfer payments contradict these ridiculous statements and I would like to have them confirmed by the President of the Treasury Board, especially with respect to programs like equalization, Established Program Financing and the Canada Assistance Plan.

**Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, although the government has striven since 1984-85 to reduce public spending, it has always made a point of remaining sensitive to the needs of the provinces and, as evidence of that, I would mention that since 1984-85, the principal