

Oral Questions

than still living in the time of the recession, she would realize that Canada's share of world trade increased in 1983, not decreased. She would realize that our Gross National Product has gone up, productivity has increased—

Mr. Nielsen: So has unemployment.

Mr. Lalonde:—and our unit labour costs have increased less than the United States. We have had a very good record in 1983, and I suggest that instead of relying on publications which are something like a year old, she could use at least a weekly publication like *The Economist* which gives the indicators and shows that Canada is performing extremely well compared to any other industrial country.

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SHIPBUILDING

UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, who is also the Minister responsible for shipbuilding policy. He will know that due to his and his Department's insensitivity to the plight of the shipyard workers, over 70 per cent of those people normally involved in new ship construction are jobless. What is he going to do about it? When is he going to get serious about the desperate plight that this country's jobless shipyard workers and their families are facing?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, obviously the Hon. Member has not been paying attention to what has happened in the last couple of years in the shipbuilding industry with respect to the Government's initiatives. In spite of the fact there has been a dramatic decrease in demand for shipbuilding all around the world, this Government has taken some very positive action. For example, the Export Development Corporation financed a \$100 million plus rig which was built in the shipyard in Saint John. As a result of the April Budget of my colleague, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of National Defence announced substantial contracts for ships, right across this country, ten of them as I recall. If it was not for this Government's positive reaction with respect to the world-wide recession in shipbuilding, there would not have been anything built across this country.

Mr. Corbett: Mr. Speaker, due to the actions of this particular Government the Saint John shipyard is all but shut down at this very time.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for dragging his feet and not introducing the shipbuilding policy legislation which is long overdue in this House. When will the Minister act on behalf of shipyard

workers and get that Bill before the House, which this Party has agreed to see gets speedy action? When will he close that ridiculous loophole in the PIP grants which, in effect, subsidized foreign-built ships and put Canadian shipyard workers out of work by the thousands?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that there is a heavy load of legislation before the House. If he feels this particular Bill should be given priority higher than other pieces of legislation, he should raise it with his House Leader who, I am sure, will want to discuss it with our House Leader, and then this matter will be examined.

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AGRICULTURE

FARM BANKRUPTCIES IN SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture concerning the economic recovery which the Government says is under way in our country. The fact is that there is no real economic recovery for farmers, particularly in Saskatchewan where farm bankruptcies went up by 87 per cent in 1983 and net farm income dropped by some 12 per cent. In light of those startling facts, and many other cases that I could tell him about from all across my riding, I want to know what the Minister is planning to do specifically to make sure that farmers will stay in business and that net farm income will go up in 1984, rather than down like it did last year.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member talks about the economy of his Province. I would gently remind him that the economy of the Province of Saskatchewan shows in the agricultural sector the least turn-down of any province in Canada. It shows the debt repayment ability of farmers to be the best of any farmers in Canada. It also shows that the Royal Bank of Canada has opened 14 new branches in Saskatchewan this year. It shows we have loaned more money to farmers in Saskatchewan this year than we did before, and their repayment ability to the Farm Credit Corporation is the best. It also shows that we spent in Saskatchewan double the money that the Province of Saskatchewan does to help the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Nystrom: If Saskatchewan is doing the best, it must mean that the rest of the country is awfully sick, because our bankruptcies have gone up 87 per cent and net farm income has gone down by 12 per cent in 1983.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Only in Yorkton.

INTERNATIONAL GRAINS AGREEMENT—REQUEST THAT
MINISTER UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the Argentinians have just announced