Oral Questions

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, the workers at Dominion Textile joined the long line of Canadian workers who are being bled to death by the policies of the Minister of Finance and the government.

Is the Minister aware of the fact that in the first nine months of this year, the number of unemployed workers in the manufacturing sector has increased by 17.65 per cent? Is he prepared to justify to those workers that they have to die to go to heaven?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not enjoy seeing people lose their jobs. I do not enjoy seeing the Dominion Textile plant in Yarmouth being closed. But we have to understand that the reason why that plant is being closed is that it is over 100 years old and it is moving to more modern facilities. That is, unfortunately, the process that an economy goes through as we see technology take hold in different places. But we do not take any pleasure in that at all.

What my hon. friend ignores, when she talks about what has happened in the last few months, is the fact that we have had 1,600,000 jobs created in the last six years. These jobs are created because of the policies that we have been following as a government. But, as I have said on many occasions, we have been pushing at the extent of the capacity of our country to produce those jobs and that has resulted in the high interest rates that we have today. As we get through this period, we will be able to get back onto a path of non–inflationary growth again and that will allow us to create good solid jobs in the future.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Acting Minister of Industry, Science and Technology. Considering the 44 per cent increase in unemployment in the manufacturing industry since the beginning of this year, I would like to ask him why his department has no programs in place to help workers who are now being zapped by this government's economic policies?

[*English*]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Science and Technology has, indeed, been looking very carefully at this situation and we are aware that a rationalization process is going on in almost every sector of the Canadian economy. What we would ask the hon. member, in turn, to do would be to tell her colleagues in the other place to move Bill C–21 through so we can have more training money and make it easier on the people.

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THE ECONOMY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, the litany continues. Today it is Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, that has lost 300 textile jobs. In southwestern Ontario, plant closures are a daily occurrence. Throughout Canada thousands of transportation jobs are being lost, all because of the deliberate policies of this government; the free trade agreement, high interest, the high dollar, a recession, and, in the wings, the GST.

The Minister of Transport says that he is not, and this government is not, in the business of creating jobs but opportunities. Where? Where? In the United States and Mexico?

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is this: When is this government going to stop creating misery in this country, stop this economic haemorrhage that is so cruelly punishing to so many Canadians?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is very familiar with the automotive situation. While there have indeed been some plant closures because of rationalization, what the hon. member does not tell you is that Ford of Canada, for example, is putting in a $64 million aluminum casting plant in Windsor.

Chrysler is investing $250 million to upgrade its minivan plant, NKK–Dofasco is investing $250 million in a new plant galvanizing operation which will be in Windsor. I can go on. Joh Rubber has recently opened a new plant in Leamington.

Mr. Speaker, all they want to talk about are those that close. They do not want to talk about the things that open.