

Opposition was Minister of Finance, rose dramatically. They rose 12.9 per cent for a decade under the Liberals, but we have held them to 0.2 per cent, almost zero growth for two years running, and this is dramatically good news.

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[Translation]

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF DOMTEX PLANT AT SAINT-JEAN AND VALLEYFIELD—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to protect jobs in the textile and clothing industry. Domtex is going to close another plant next Monday in Saint-Jean and Valleyfield. What does the Prime Minister intend to do for the 800 workers affected by this decision?

[English]

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the Hon. Member that we are very concerned about and very aware of the problems in Canada's clothing and textile industry. Some of their representatives were here on the Hill today and I was pleased to be able to meet with them to hear firsthand about their problems. I assured them that when we announce our new clothing and textile policy in the very near future, they will indeed see that we care about them and are going to stand by the Sherbrooke statement.

IMPACT OF TRADE DISCUSSIONS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister said that because I have a question for the Prime Minister who made the Sherbrooke statement. The Progressive Conservative Party promised: "We promise fair trade but not free trade." Since the Prime Minister promised that in Sherbrooke in the middle of the election, could he tell us why the Government has not lived up to that promise, including the enforcement of quotas? Is it because he has abandoned fair trade to get involved in highly dangerous, for these workers, free trade discussions with the U.S?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, not at all. We sought a formula which we think will enable us to explore, as a mature and reasonable nation, the possible benefits which can accrue to Canada from enhancing in a more liberalized way our commerce with the United States. We think it can secure access to markets, create jobs, enhance our competitiveness, and give us a better kick at the 21st century.

It is a serious question my friend raises, and we have acknowledged that in this process, if it is successful, some industries will be less able than others to deal with enhanced

competition. As a result, there would be a 10 or 15-year phase-in period. There would be special aid for workers, retraining possibilities, aid for regions, and so on. That is if the entire project is successful. However, as I indicated to my hon. friend and the country, we shall only conclude such an agreement if it is in the interests and to the benefit of Canada and Canadian workers.

IMPORT QUOTAS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promised fair trade but not free trade. As well, point two of his program refers to the enforcement of international agreements, including quotas, to protect jobs. Therefore, will he tell us why his Government has not enforced existing quotas since he became Prime Minister two years ago, and will he give us his assurance before the House adjourns this week that a new system of quotas will be put in place which will enable him to live up to the promise he made to workers in our textile sector?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to answer that question because I would like to inform the Hon. Member that indeed we have lived up to our commitments. In the last 18 months we negotiated 25 bilateral agreements with 13 different countries. That is twice the number achieved by the former Government in the previous three years. We are protecting our industry. Last year low cost imports to Canada were down to 2 per cent, a dramatic drop from 26 per cent in 1983 and 16 per cent in 1984.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST FOR AID FOR EARLY RETIREES TO DEFEND POSITION BEFORE TRIBUNALS

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister.

A few weeks ago, we found out that the Prime Minister spent over \$800,000 on three trips, and that furthermore, the Government had paid \$34,000 so the Prime Minister could appear on television. Today we learn that 105,000 copies of a brochure were distributed in the United States, just to introduce him to Americans.

At the same time, this Government is cutting unemployment insurance benefits for early retirees—

Mr. Speaker: Order! Order!