

Adjournment Debate

The North American free trade agreement will eliminate most Mexican barriers to exports from Canada. It will also create export-led growth and jobs in Mexico. Mexican consumers, including workers, will also have greater access to and greater capacity to buy competitive Canadian goods such as grains, red meats, fishery products, wood and paper manufactures, and automotive products, including mass transit equipment. This will be good for Mexico and good for Canada.

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to review a question I asked during the Question Period of April 20 of this year.

It had to do with the whole economic climate of metropolitan Toronto, a city that used to be an important piston in the economic engine of our country. It would seem to me, as a member of Parliament for York West as part of metropolitan Toronto, the government has either completely ignored the economic fabric of the city or it assumes that somehow metropolitan Toronto is the perceptual fat cat city of Confederation. I am not saying metro Toronto is completely down and out because it is not. At the same time, the government needs to recognize there is also a chronic under-belly to metropolitan Toronto on an economic basis that is in need of some kind of stimulus in order to get that piston operating again, so the engine can function in a much better capacity and put Canadians and their families back to work.

• (1830)

That is essentially the question I asked. The week before I asked that question, the metropolitan Toronto government put out a report suggesting last year alone almost 9,000 Toronto firms either moved out of the city or went bankrupt. As a result of the loss of 9,000 firms in Toronto alone, there was a direct net loss of 65,000 jobs. On top of that another 30,000 jobs were lost as a result of Toronto companies trying to survive by downsizing.

In my own vicinity, the government recently announced it was going to close the Downsview Military

Depot and transfer it to Montreal. An independent study concluded that on an economic basis Montreal was the worst location and the best was Kingston. That meant an automatic loss of 330 direct jobs and also a loss of \$106 million in annual contracts that went largely to the metropolitan Toronto area. The number of indirect jobs are probably incalculable but very significant.

When you put the entire package together, it is not one that encourages confidence in the marketplace. It is not one that puts a vibrant Toronto city back to work, but allows it to fester. Confidence is not there and therefore consumer spending is not there.

My question on April 20 is the same one I have this evening. What measures does the government intend to implement immediately so metro Toronto, as an important facet of the economic situation in this country, can return to some degree of normalcy, and the spin-offs we have in metro Toronto as a direct benefit to citizens in Toronto can also be felt in other sectors across the country, and try to begin to put a recovery package in place? It needs some government stimulus or initiatives, rather than a *laissez faire* attitude, which means the recession will drag on much longer than need be.

[Translation]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I wish to respond in greater detail to the questions of April 29 by the member from York West.

The government shares the concerns of all Canadians with the effects the economic slowdown has had on jobs and unemployment, and is working to strengthen the economy and accelerate the recovery.

While the labour market situation deteriorated in Toronto during the downturn, between 1984 and 1990, a total of 296,000 jobs were created in Toronto and many new businesses were started.

The government's efforts are directed to improving the climate for investment through lower interest rates, lower inflation, lower deficits and greater economic confidence in order that more new businesses start and that existing businesses begin hiring more workers.