

a rather surprising attitude from a Prime Minister who purports to act on behalf of workers, at least who did some time in the past, and defends freedom of association—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): While the government is delaying this legislative action in circumstances in which an employee in an office of a non-New Democratic Party Member of Parliament is arbitrarily fired, disciplined, or harassed, in the absence of any legislative action on the part of this government the Speaker said that she is powerless to intervene.

Madam Speaker: Order. Now I do have to object to the length of the question.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): In view of the fact there is no avenue of appeal whatsoever for such an employee, when is the government going to bring in the necessary legislation to extend collective bargaining rights or, at the very least, provide some sort of appeal mechanism or grievance procedure for employees in an MP's office who may be unfairly dismissed, harassed, or unjustly disciplined?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I find it regrettable that the hon. member is bringing back his allegations of harassment. He has been challenged by many people, by the press and by myself, either to put up or shut up on this matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

CHRYSLER CANADA—TERMS OF NEW LOAN GUARANTEE AGREEMENT

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce I will direct my question to the Minister of Finance. It is with regard to the new loan guarantee agreement with Chrysler. In view of the fact that this new agreement is substantially inferior as far as Canada's benefits and Chrysler's guarantees are concerned, when compared to last May's agreement, and because presumably the Minister of Finance along with cabinet had to approve such a program, I now ask the minister to justify the government's new position in this regard, keeping in mind for example the reduction of some 3,000 jobs with this program as opposed to the one of last year, and the reduction of 50 per cent in small cars to be produced in Canada by Chrysler, not to mention the \$50 million discrepancy in the actual amount of the funds agreed to, and to explain how the government can justify taking a step backwards in this regard as compared to the agreement last May with Chrysler.

● (1500)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have been involved in the discussions with the Minister of Industry, Trade and

Oral Questions

Commerce and other ministers on this particular proposal, and we did approve it because, in our view, it represented a very good deal for Canada in light of the support which the Government of Canada proposed to give. It was my impression that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce had done an extremely good job in negotiating with Chrysler and getting very substantial benefits for Canada.

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

TREATMENT ACCORDED SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr. Otto Jelinek (Halton): Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the minister's answer—from a questionable program to one which has taken a step backward—I would like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of State for Small Businesses.

In view of the fact that small business provides over 50 per cent of the labour force in Canada, as he well knows, and because this vital sector is experiencing a record number of bankruptcies, primarily as a result of high interest rates and the lack of venture or working capital, could the minister explain why, on one hand, the government is able to support a large foreign company to the extent of \$200 million while, on the other hand, Canadian-owned small and medium-sized industries, which provide the largest possible employment potential, are left high and dry by their own minister? What action is the minister taking from his standpoint when, on one hand, we have the government guaranteeing \$200 million—

Madam Speaker: Order, order.

[Translation]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses)): Madam Speaker, the hon. member should check his figures before making allegations. Indeed the loan guarantee given to Chrysler Corporation amounted to about \$150 million.

As to the small business sector in Canada, the hon. member ought to recall that the moment we were returned to office we rushed through the House a measure to raise the loan ceiling from \$75,000 to \$100,000 under the Small Businesses Loans Act. In addition, as early as April 17 the Minister of Finance announced that Small Business Development Bonds would be issued and, a few days ago, he stated that this program would be extended until the end of the year. The hon. member spoke about the record number of bankruptcies experienced by the small business sector. He should know as well that the bankruptcy rate is less than 1 per cent of the total number of small businesses in Canada and he forgot to say that 1980 saw the creation of 50,000 small businesses in this country.