

Oral Questions

when sitting as a member of the Opposition and phone the Governor of the Bank of Canada to ask him not to increase interest rates.

[English]

My question to the Minister is this. Will he now do what he knows is the appropriate thing if he wants to keep jobs, if he wants to encourage home building and protect farms—tell the Governor of the Bank of Canada not to increase those rates tomorrow?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the same question that the Hon. Member just put to me about a minute ago. I would say to him, again, that he is a student of economics. I think that that is the course he took at university, at the London School of Economics. We cannot wave a magic wand and say this is what will happen with interest rates.

Mr. Broadbent: It is not a magic wand.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I ask the Hon. Member to look closely at the economic performance over the last 16 months. Some 450,000 jobs have been created. Investment intentions have jumped markedly.

Mr. Broadbent: And you're going to lose them all now.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Hon. Member says we are going to lose all. I recall back in November, 1984, when we brought down the economic statement and the Hon. Member said 150,000 jobs were going to be destroyed by it. Mr. Speaker, 450,000 jobs were created.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FRENCH PARLIAMENTARIANS

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I indicate the presence in our galleries today of a delegation of French parliamentarians, M. Charles Pistre, M. Pierre Bernard and Senator Jacques Durand.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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● (1430)

[Translation]

INDUSTRY

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDED CLOSURE OF GULF REFINERY AND AGREED TO ULTRAMAR TRANSACTION

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

and concerns the question he was asked yesterday when he said that his Government had not made the decision to close the Gulf refinery.

On the program *Le Point* in which I took part with him, the Secretary of State mentioned that the Cabinet had been consulted. In addition, the Minister of Communication stated on the radio last Sunday that the Cabinet had made the decision.

An Hon. Member: Question!

Mr. Malépart: Can the Prime Minister tell us whether Cabinet recommended to the President of the Standing Committee on Regional Economic Expansion that the Gulf refinery be closed and the deal with Ultramar be approved?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that, by choosing to remain silent for three years when refineries were closing in east-end Montreal, the Hon. Member for Montreal-Sainte-Marie lost all his credibility and failed in his duty to represent the interests of his constituents. That is what he did.

Mr. Speaker, the transaction . . . yes, I know that the Liberals do not like this and that they do not like good news such as announced by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that, contrary to the Liberal Government which closed three refineries, we are working with the people involved to find a new and appropriate use for the facilities involved. Instead of closing the refining industry in east-end Montreal, we are going to build it up, contrary to what the Liberals did.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, I could tell the Prime Minister that in 1983-84, he did not do his job as a Member of the Opposition. He must have been in the pay of the Americans at the time.

SITUATION IN MONTREAL EAST—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Could the Prime Minister tell us, in view of the fact that—

An Hon. Member: He does not know what he is saying.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. May I have a question, please?

[Translation]

Mr. Malépart: In view of the fact that the Prime Minister is beginning to show some genuine interest in Montreal East, could he tell the House whether he supports the steps taken by the Bourassa Government to try to convince Ultramar to sell the Gulf refinery in Montreal East to Gaz Métropolitain, and