Oral Questions

exports. He also overlooks the 1.5 million people who are still out of work in this country.

If the minister is so sure the professor does not know what he is talking about, why does he not put his money where his mouth is? Will he make public the government's own economic impact statements on the proposed NAFTA deal? Will he tell us how many more Canadian workers are going to lose their jobs because of this proposed three-way NAFTA deal? Do not talk about the past. Tell us about your impact studies and what they say about the NAFTA.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, it is quite amazing that this member should talk about putting his money where his mouth is.

I sat five feet away from him in 1980 when he was asked whether he would resign if interest rates went up again. He said: "Yes, I will resign". What happened when interest rates went up to 22 per cent? He sat right there twiddling his thumbs, never a thought of resignation, never a thought of the principle that he is talking about now. I will put my money where my mouth is anytime this hon. member wants to do the same thing.

An hon. member: Any more questions, Herb?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I want to refer to a study not done by the government but through the C. D. Howe Institute. It says: "Free trade with the United States has helped the development of the higher value-added industries that are crucial to Canada's future economic growth, a result that is consistent with the predictions of supporters of the agreement". That is an impact study done by an independent observer that says that the free trade agreement has been good for Canada and good for Canadians.

* * *

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. It concerns the P.E.I. fixed-link.

On February 24, in response to a question from my colleague, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands,

the Minister of the Environment said "there has been an environmental assessment done on the project".

On Friday the Federal Court ruled that this government has violated its own environmental guidelines and that a generic study of a generic bridge design is unacceptable. Judge Reed even called the process so far downright silly.

Given this court's decision and the extent of public interest in this review, will the minister take this process out of the back rooms and proceed immediately with a full proper environmental assessment of the specific bridge proposal complete with public hearings?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, we appreciated Madam Justice Reed's prompt decision on this matter. It is a comprehensive decision. This government has always, as he will recall, undertaken to abide by the process right from the beginning.

He will not be surprised, however, to know that I have not had an opportunity to discuss this matter with cabinet colleagues or with other levels of government, although I did have a quick call from Premier McKenna who offered his support. I have not had a chance yet to speak to the Prince Edward Island government for obvious reasons. I will have to wait in order to discuss it with the new premier, perhaps.

In any event, the member and the House can be sure that we will be looking at this extensively. I will be able to report to him and to the House within a few days.

Mr. Steve Butland (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that it is going to be a difficult one for the minister. While the minister decides the fate of the project, he must not allow a repeat of the Rafferty–Alameda and Oldman River dam situations where work went ahead on the projects while the environmental reviews were going on.

Will the minister ensure that a similar fiasco is not repeated and ensure that the project is not continued even one day more while the environmental assessments are incomplete?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to my colleague, we will look at the implications of this very carefully. We have