

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT CONTRACTS BE AWARDED TO QUEBEC SHIPYARDS

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montréal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, sad but true: We have a Prime Minister who is so incompetent he does not know the facts.

The contracts being carried out today in Quebec shipyards were awarded by the Liberal Government in 1983. If we have \$800 million today, it is thanks to the Liberal Government. The only contract this Government awarded was for the *Caribou*, which takes care of the balance. Shipyards are closed because no new contracts are forthcoming.

My question is quite simple, Mr. Prime Minister. A promise is a promise, and I am not the only one who is saying that the Minister of Supply and Services broke his promise. Shipyard workers and Minister Johnson could not agree more.

I don't want to know how many frigates you are going to give us. I want to know about the other jobs and contracts you will give the shipyards to keep your promise and make sure they have work. In Montreal, 600 workers cannot buy Christmas presents for their children. What kind of jobs are you going to provide for these people in January?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, when the Hon. Member refers to employees in Montreal or in Quebec who cannot buy Christmas presents, I think he is saying something very important, and I think it is very sad. However, perhaps I may remind him that during the four years and nine months his Government was in power, 40,000 jobs were created in Quebec, while in three years this Government has created 275,000 new jobs. That is the whole difference!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the job creation rate and figures are there. This Government's job creation rate is ten times what was accomplished in this respect by the Government of which the Hon. Member for Montréal—Sainte-Marie was a Member, a Member who remained silent when plants were closing down with the resulting human tragedy.

He was sitting here in the House, and while those tragic events were taking place in Montreal, he kept quiet, he did not say one word to support the people of Montreal!

● (1230)

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT STUDIES

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister promised Canadians a full and open debate on his trade deal with the United States. Yet when I have tried to get impact studies on the employment effects of this deal through Access to Information I have been denied.

Does the Prime Minister not believe that Canadians have a right to this information to judge for themselves the real impact of this trade deal? Why is the Government committee to a conspiracy of silence when it comes to this important information?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I find passing strange the conspiracy of silence the New Democratic Party talks about.

We have probably been more open on this particular trade agreement than any trade agreement in the history of the country, any trade agreement. We have discussed this from one side of the country to the other since we became the Government.

Study after study has been produced, not by the Government but by independent bodies, which say that it is the right thing to do. All kinds of information has been available to the Hon. Member. He just does not know how to interpret it properly. That is his problem.

REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION OF DATA

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Prime Minister because it is really a question of trust and openness. There is no doubt that the studies exist. In the response I have received indeed it is admitted that the studies exist and that the studies deal with the impact the trade deal will have on employment.

If this is such a good deal, why does the Canadian Government not trust the Canadian people and make the data available so that Canadians can judge for themselves? Why does the Government not make this information public? Surely Canadians have a right to know what will be the employment impact of this deal. Why is it trying to cover this up?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Government is not covering up anything. We know that the trade agreement with the United States will create thousands of jobs. It is going to be very, very important to this country.

The only thing opposition Members can do, the only thing they can attack—it is their whole *raison d'être*—is to try to