

Question Period – Economy (28 Jan, 2008)

**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, clearly the government will not help the struggling industries because it has already spent all of its money on tax credits for political reasons and on the 13.3% increase in spending over two years, which is unbelievable.

Is it not completely incompetent to spend left and right when everything is going well, and not to leave a cent to help Canadians when the economy takes a downward turn?

[English]

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**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic that the hon. member stands in the House and raises that sort of a question. We are talking about jobs.

I would add to the hon. industry minister's comments. Canada's economy created more high paying jobs in 2007 boosting the quality of employment by the most since 1999. According to CIBC, the employment quality index jumped by 2.8%.

The government is reacting to the concerns of Canadians who are losing jobs. We are building on that strength.

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**Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, this is not the time for silly PMO speaking notes.

The member should understand that tonight at dinner real Canadians will be troubled about the economy. The stock markets are in turmoil. Last month, far from adding to jobs, the Canadian economy lost 51,000 private sector jobs in a single month. The manufacturing sector is losing tens of thousands of jobs every month with forestry not far behind.

The minister just sits there and smirks. Is this a policy of laissez-faire or an attitude of "I don't care"?

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**Mr. Ted Menzies (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, I might remind the hon. member that we are in the second longest period of economic expansion in our history and that is thanks to this finance minister and this government.

I might also suggest to the hon. member that he might pay a little more respect to the CIBC's numbers because those are the numbers that I was quoting. Perhaps he should talk to his former colleagues about the strength of this economy.