



Press release

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Crisis in Quebec's manufacturing sector

**“THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT MUST WAKE UP,
AND WAKE UP NOW”**

- Gilles Duceppe and Henri Massé

Ottawa, Tuesday, February 27, 2007 – The Leader of the Bloc Québécois, **Gilles Duceppe**, and the President of the *Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec* (FTQ), **Henri Massé**, joined voices today to denounce the Harper government's laissez-faire attitude to the crisis hitting the manufacturing sector. This policy of inaction, they explained, has had a major impact on the workers and companies in the manufacturing sector.

“Over the past four years, 100,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Quebec, including 35,000 just since the Conservatives came to power. The Conservative government's current so-called strategy, consisting solely of tax cuts, has been an abject failure. Lowering taxes for companies that don't make a profit does absolutely nothing,” the Bloc Québécois leader said.

“The FTQ is in a very good position to assess the situation, and we insist on the urgency of the federal government's intervening directly with forceful measures to put an end to the current collapse of the manufacturing sector. These measures can take various forms depending on the requirements, such as new equipment, industrial parks or machinery. Our rapidly aging industrial sector must be rapidly transformed into a productive, competitive sector, that is, one on the cutting edge. There is no more time for new studies on the question. Action is needed. It's urgent,” added **Henri Massé**.

Gilles Duceppe and **Henri Massé** were accompanied on this occasion by the Bloc Québécois Industry Critic and MP for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, **Paul Crête**, and by workers affected by the crisis in the manufacturing sector.

Constructive proposals

Gilles Duceppe and **Henri Massé** are urging the Conservative government to quickly adopt the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Industry, which produced a unanimous report on helping the manufacturing sector. “The Standing Committee on Industry puts its finger right on the problem when it calls for a proactive industrial strategy. This report is a wake-up call for the government,” said **Gilles Duceppe**.

“The report of the Standing Committee on Industry is a step in the right direction and a solid foundation on which the House of Commons should build. It is essential that the government endorse it,” added **Henri Massé**.

The Bloc Québécois Industry Critic, **Paul Crête**, pointed out that the measures proposed in the report include accelerated depreciation to reduce the cost of investing and encourage the modernization of plants, a very substantial increase in federal support for research and development, changes to trade policy and legislation to provide better protection from unfair competition, and specific measures to speed up the adaptation of the most severely affected sectors.

“The Industry Committee report highlights the serious shortcomings of the government strategy. For example, it is inconceivable that manufacturing firms do not have access to accelerated depreciation for manufacturing facilities while oil companies, which are making exorbitant profits, are entitled to it for the development of the Western tar sands. Quebec manufacturers badly need help like that to begin the modernization that will allow them to remain fully competitive with the rest of the world,” he concluded.

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