
Downsizing deals - UK PM Mr Gordon to help protect Corus steelworkers

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It is reported that British Prime Minister Mr Gordon Brown has pledged he stands ready to help save Corus jobs and get the beleaguered steel industry moving again. He was responding after facing mounting criticism that his government was spending hundreds of billions bailing out banks while allowing the steel industry to collapse.

Mr Brown revealed that he had been in talks with Indian steel baron Ratan Tata, whose giant company bought Corus in 2007. He added that business minister Mr Pat McFadden had also been in parallel talks with Corus CEO Mr Kirby Adams.

Ministers have offered GBP 5 million in training support for Corus workers. But Rotherham MP Mr Denis MacShane has called on the government to go much further and pay redundant staff a GBP 20,000 annual retainer and employs them in public sector or community work until steel orders recover. And Sheffield Council's Lib Dem leader Mr Paul Scriven has said South Yorkshire's steel workers have had a "raw deal" compared to bailed out bankers.

Mr Brown insisted his government was helping Corus and the steel industry. He said that "What was announced at Corus was very disappointing for all of us and for all those of who have jobs in the industry. We know that steel is particularly affected by the world downturn. We know that as an industry there is a reduced amount of steel around the world. We are committed to do what we can to help Corus through these challenges."

He added that "I have also talked to Mr Tata, who is the owner of Corus, about what he can do, and Pat McFadden our minister has been talking to Kirby Adams, who is the chief executive officer of Corus. We have offered GBP 5 million already in training support for new jobs across Corus sites. We are helping with our train-to-gain scheme so some people can get short time working but also get help with training and we are talking to the company to do what we can to help. But we stand ready to help Corus in what they are trying to do, not only to save jobs but also of course to get the steel industry moving again."

(Sourced from www.thestar.co.uk)

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