

Titan boss says France has 'beautiful women' but no idea how to 'build a business'

By [Elizabeth Anderson](#) Friday, 22 February 2013

Maurice Taylor, head of US tyre giant Titan, pumps more fuel into the fire with another attack on France.

Maurice Taylor, the chief executive of American tyre firm Titan, has managed to offend most of France in the last few weeks. But why stop there? Taylor has lashed out again at the French government, saying its ministers have no idea how to run a business - although he praised French women and wine and said he himself was named after the iconic French entertainer Maurice Chevalier.

The outspoken American CEO had incensed the French earlier this month when he lambasted the country's business conditions, especially its wages and work ethic. 'The French workforce gets paid high wages but only works three hours,' Taylor responded after he was asked to consider investing in the loss-making Goodyear tyre plant in northern France.

'I have visited that factory a couple of times,' he added. 'They get one hour for breaks and lunch, talk for three and work for three. I told this to the French union workers to their faces. They told me that's the French way!'

In the letter addressed to Arnaud Montebourg, France's minister for industrial renewal, Taylor said France's industrial base was under threat from low productivity and cheap imports.

'Titan is going to buy a Chinese tyre company or an Indian one, pay less than one euro per hour wage and ship all the tyres France needs. You can keep the so-called workers. Titan has no interest in the Amiens North factory,' he wrote in the letter dated 8 February, which was published in a French newspaper earlier this week.

On Wednesday, Montebourg hit back with a written reply published in financial daily Les Echos. 'Your words, as extremist as they are insulting, show a perfect ignorance of our country,' Montebourg wrote. 'Be assured that you can count on me to inspect your tyre imports with a redoubled zeal.'

The Titan boss [has now responded](#), saying that France's political class is 'out of touch (with) real

'You call me an extremist, but most businessmen would agree that I must be nuts to have the idea to spend millions of US dollars to buy a tyre factory in France paying some of the highest wages in the world....The extremists are in your government, who have no idea how to build a business.'

Taylor then added: 'your government let the wackos of the communist union destroy the highest paying jobs.'

'At no time did Titan ask for lower wages; we asked only if you want seven hours pay, you work at least six.'

However, Taylor did reserve some praise for the French: 'France does have beautiful women and great wine,' he said. He also revealed he was named after the iconic crooner Maurice Chevalier.