

Oral Questions

If the government does not accept the report of the provinces that 400,000 jobs will be lost as a result of this goods and service tax, why does the government not put on the table in this Parliament its impact studies? How many jobs does it think will be lost as a result of the goods and services tax? Tell us the truth.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that the people who have jobs today who did not have jobs in 1984 are a lot happier than they were when the Liberals were in office when there was stagnation, high unemployment, high inflation and a feeling of desperation across this country. That has changed. Ask the young people, within whose group the unemployment rate has dropped by about 7 or 8 per cent in the last four or five years.

The fact is that the figures do not lie. There has been an outstanding performance by the economy. In 1984 when the Minister of Finance outlined his program for economic renewal, this member's leader said that we were going to lose 125,000 to 150,000 jobs. They were wrong then and they are wrong today.

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VIA RAIL

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, only this government would claim recovery from a world economy as it professes to do.

My question is to the Minister of Transport. VIA services in Ontario are the most used and supported and vital to the economy of Ontario and Canada in the areas of tourism, business and jobs, not to speak of the well-being of our seniors, students and travellers.

Municipal leaders, the transport committee, the premiers and millions of Canadians have called for a moratorium. The minister knows that a moratorium for one year will not cost hundreds of millions of dollars, as he has just professed, if you do not have to lay off those people.

• (1140)

I ask again, will the minister wake up, see the light, listen to the people, listen to his own piece, and invoke this moratorium?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, first of all, that the trains will continue to run in Ontario as in any other province except Newfoundland

and Prince Edward Island. We will have passenger train service everywhere in the country.

I know that Canadians want the train, but Canadians have agreed too that for the last five years this country, for once, has been managed by expending the money we have. We do not mortgage our money for 25 years as was done before. We want to expend the money we have.

I want to manage the transportation system in a way in which we can consider all modes of transportation. To do that, we must consider cuts where necessary in order to have a balanced, fair, good and efficient service in the country.

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Transport. Does the Minister realize that his decision, which is also his government's decision, may cause the province of Quebec to lose 10,000 jobs? Why does he keep saying no to the Premier of Quebec, the mayor of Montreal, the mayors of Quebec, the former and the present mayor of Quebec, the mayor of Trois-Rivières, the municipal councils of 300 towns and municipalities in Quebec, including the City of Chicoutimi which is represented by the Chairman of the Quebec Caucus, and no as well to the *Front Commun des Syndicats du rail-FTQ*, all of whom want a one-year moratorium? Is the Minister prepared to put his credibility as Minister of Transport on the line and keep saying no to all these people who are asking for a one-year moratorium?

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am sure the Hon. Member did not intend to be unnecessarily alarmist, but when he talks about 10,000 jobs in Montreal, that is just not true—

Mr. Ouellet: In the province of Quebec.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): —in the province of Quebec, but the Hon. Member, who is from Montreal, knows perfectly well that 95 per cent of the railway jobs in Quebec are in Montreal. So whether he says in Quebec or in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, it is still not true. We have given the exact figures. Exactly 962 jobs will be abandoned in Montreal, but these lay-offs will be handled with all the resources available under collective bargaining agreements, as the Hon. Member is well aware. Second, both in Quebec and elsewhere, and this applies to the Premier of Quebec as well as to the Premier of Ontario, to the mayor of Montreal and to the mayor of Toronto, none of these people, when they approached the government, were able to tell the federal government that they could invest the necessary funds. On the