

*Government Orders*

Mr. Speaker, on July 13, 1990, I informed the government opposite in a press release about unemployment in our riding and the whole eastern Ontario region and I then appealed to the government opposite to look into this issue which I thought would get worse.

So with my colleagues, the members for Stormont—Dundas and Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, we showed at that time that eastern Ontario had lost nearly 3,000 jobs.

I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at that time we certainly did not expect the situation to become as serious as it is today, although it was already serious then.

In 1990, the summer of 1990, my colleagues and I showed the government that, for example, in Hawkesbury, 85 jobs had been lost with the closing of Canadelle Inc. or Wonderbra if you prefer; 78 with the closing of Laser International; 23 laid off at Mercedes Textile; 38 at Sun Wheel; 20 at Rail Car in Alexandria; 75 at Tradition Windows; 100 lost their jobs in the shoe industry and 30 at Alexandria Molding. The same thing happened in the Cornwall region, so well represented by my colleague from Stormont—Dundas. They lost over 1,000 jobs. The Renfrew region, represented by the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, lost some 1,600 jobs.

All in all, then, we could find and identify 3,127 jobs that had been lost for the people in our region. But, Mr. Speaker, it went from bad to worse. At that time, we asked the government to intervene. We asked the government to help the people of Eastern Ontario who needed work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we saw then that the government did not care about it, so much so that the Minister of Supply and Services, who is the political representative for Eastern Ontario, ridiculed our complaining about the lack of employment in our region. Even the constituents of the minister responsible for Eastern Ontario were angry about what he did.

[*English*]

I have here an article from *The Ottawa Citizen* of July 19, 1989, in which a municipal councillor from the constituency of Lanark—Carleton, which is represented in this House by the Minister of Supply and Services, was

indicating to us that the problems being raised by the opposition members were indeed serious.

I would like to read from the article:

Dick's statements raised the concern of Coun. Dennis Staples who said council should contact the MP for a meeting and show him the "very real" concerns of the town.

"The economic situation in Smiths Falls is not exactly rosy," said Staples.

Faced with the inaction of the government in this area, my colleagues and I tried a second initiative to convince the government of how much we needed help. We asked the municipalities whether or not they agreed with us that the economy of eastern Ontario needed help. This is what they said. The Township of Pakenham adopted a motion asking the federal government for help. The Township of Lavant, Dalhousie & North Sherbrooke, the Township of Grattan, the Townships of Head, Clara and Maria, the Corporation of the Village of Chalk River, the Town of Gananoque, the Village of Merrickville, the Town of Prescott, the City of Brockville, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, the Village of Chesterville, the Township of Roxborough, the City of Cornwall, *le comité de développement économique des comtés de Prescott—Russell, la ville d'Alexandria, le canton de Hawkesbury—Est, la corporation du village d'Alfred*, the Corporation of the Township of Lancaster, the Corporation of the Township of Kenyon, the Village of Maxville, the Village of Lancaster, *la corporation de la ville de Hawkesbury, le canton de Plantagenet Sod, le canton de Longueuil*,

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I could list some more for several minutes. All those municipalities asked the government opposite to assist the economy of Eastern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, my riding is only a few kilometers away from Parliament and I sometimes get the feeling that the Peace tower is casting a shadow over the problems facing my riding, however hard I try to disperse the cloud or shadow obscuring the issue.

The fact is, at the moment 50 kilometers from here, in Hawkesbury, in my riding, the unemployment rate stands at 16.6 per cent.