

*Adjournment Debate*

These grim answers to the economic situation are absolutely frightening. If I were not short of time, I could give a whole list of companies that have decided to go to the United States or to rationalize their operations in Canada as a result of this free trade agreement. I cannot do so for lack of time, but I hope that the parliamentary secretary has a good answer for me.

**Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the Hon. Member for Papineau—Saint-Michel for giving me this opportunity to inform him of what the Government is doing to help Montreal East.

The hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel mentioned of course the many plant closures, but he could not, for lack of time probably, mention also the great many jobs created in Montreal. I could talk about that for a long time.

I should like to re-assure the hon. member that the Federal Government is fully committed to the economic development of the Montreal area. I can also tell him that my colleagues of the Conservative caucus who represent the Montreal area are doing a tremendous job and that at every caucus meeting, they are eager to inform us of their success, and we are well aware of the problems occurring in Montreal, its poverty, and I can assure you that you will hear more about this in the future.

Together with the Quebec government and the city of Montreal, Madam Speaker, the federal government has sponsored the establishment of a committee responsible for the economic recovery and job creation programs in Montreal east. It is made up of four components:

A new Montreal east industrial recovery program for which the Department of Industry, Science and Technology will allocate a budget of \$35 million over the next five years. Of that amount \$13.4 million have already been committed.

There is an allocation of \$115 million, including \$19.5 million spent in 1988–89 by the CEIC, for the recycling and training of Montreal east workers; a \$125 million reserve made available over a five year period through the Federal Business Development Bank and earmarked for specific projects in Montreal east, including \$50 million already in loans already granted; and finally the participation with other Quebec departments in the financing and operation of a discussion and promotion panel on Montreal East.

Of course, the Hon. Member also referred to older workers.

As you know, the government and the provinces have agreed on a single package, the Program for Older Worker Adjustment, and should the workers laid-off by General Electric qualify for POWA, they will get financial aid to meet their needs between the end of their unemployment insurance benefits and the start of their old age pensions.

Madam Speaker, the government is, needless to say, very disappointed to hear that General Electric will close its light bulb plant in Montreal due to a decreasing demand for products made there. It is not true, as the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel claims, that most of the jobs in this plant will be transferred to the United States. We're talking about a responsible company that has been here since 1888.

This company has an extensive employee assistance program which is rather special and could serve as a model for other corporations.

I thank the hon. member for giving me the opportunity to speak on this, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.