

Borrowing Authority Act

resources management policy the Government follows and, more particularly, what kind of future we have as residents of Ottawa and the region with a Conservative Government which shows little mercy in its attempts to blame public servants for all its problems.

As you may recall, in May 1985 the Government announced that 15,000 public service jobs would be eliminated and, out of these 15,000 jobs that will disappear, we can reasonably expect that roughly one third of those will be in the national capital. As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Government happens to be the main employer in the National Capital Region. Its presence is very significant because, from an economic standpoint, each Government job has a job-creating factor of about 1.5, which means that each federal Government job creates one job and a half in the service industry, in the private sector. Well, Mr. Speaker, again recently when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) made his Budget speech and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) told us about his plan to reduce Government programs by \$500 million, it was announced that there was a hiring freeze and that Government expenditures would also be cut back to the tune of some \$500 million. Now one can readily relate the impact of that decision to the quality of life of the people in the riding of Ottawa-Vanier and the entire National Capital Region. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the Budget the Conservative Government decided to cut \$500 million. It is a decision it made and which I respect because this Government was elected with a mandate, on its commitment to make cuts in the Public Service. Mr. Speaker, I do not agree. I did not vote for this Government, I can assure you. But when we are told that this Government wants to save money or reduce the deficit at the expense of public servants, well, Heaven knows we are sick and tired of hearing the old refrain that public servants are to blame for the Government's deficit!

Mr. Speaker, in my comments at the second reading stage, I referred to the deficit. I talked about interest rates. I talked about the national debt. I talked about everything that had any connection with the issue. However, I repeat that federal public servants are not to blame for today's high federal deficit. The international economic situation is to blame, and probably a number of factors beyond the control of this country.

Between November 1985 and February 1986, the number of unemployed in Ottawa-Carleton rose by 10,000. In 1985 the unemployment rate was 6.7 per cent. It is now 8.8 per cent. Those figures do not include the Public Service cuts that will become effective on April 1, at the beginning of the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the cumulative effect of the two Budgets plus the announced cuts in Government spending will have a very serious negative impact on the National Capital Region.

In the time remaining, I would like to talk about the Government's policy to cut the size of the Public Service, and I

would like to make a few comments. The Government intends to reduce the size and cost of the Public Service by increasing productivity, privatizing certain federal activities and, if economically feasible, by contracting out certain other activities. This means that first of all, the Government increases productivity, and second, it tries to reduce federal activities by privatizing them without really explaining how it is going to be done, and by entering into service contracts with the private sector for services formerly provided from within the Public Service.

Some time ago I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) what was the Government policy on privatization, for instance, and he told me: There are documents and they will be made public. The Hon. Member will see for himself what the objectives and criteria are. Well, I never did get any document, and the Minister's officials even denied the existence of documents on the privatization policy announced by the Government.

Mr. Speaker, it might be useful if at last the Ministers of this Government were to come clean with respect to information. If they have a specific policy for privatizing certain services such as translation or the general maintenance of buildings they should spell out the cost-benefit of that privatization, tell us exactly what savings the Government is trying to make, and what economies of scale are involved.

It is utterly impossible for anyone to understand that policy aimed at reducing personnel and blaming public servants on one hand, and on the other at proclaiming: We are going to privatize. So they eliminate public service jobs and then brag about having created jobs in the private sector. Can you imagine! Mr. Speaker, the number of translators was cut down, so what does the Government do now? Close to \$5 million for translation have been added to the budget of the Secretary of State. Where will it be done? Outside the Government, in the private sector. I am wondering what common sense and what kind of reason they can use now to make us believe that it will save money. No savings there. And there is no job creation either because they eliminate a public service job, they lay off a public servant and tell him: You are surplus, we no longer need you. Then they say they have created a job in the private sector. Mr. Speaker, I wonder just where the logic is in that: eliminate a public service job, supposedly to create one in the private sector. It does not create jobs. It does not maintain a rising level of job creation. All it does is to maintain a Department service, a translation service.

For instance, 136 Secretary of State employees, including 116 francophones and 100 women, have been told they are surplus employees. They include 82 translators, men and women, who average eight years of seniority. This Government policy is contrary to the personnel policy of the Treasury Board. Indeed, I looked it up in the Management Manual—Personnel Management, Volume 4—and it reads: