

*Oral Questions*

[English]

## LOSS OF JOBS RESULTING FROM GOVERNMENT CUTBACKS

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. On Tuesday, I asked the right hon. Prime Minister if he would confirm that an assessment had been made by the government in respect of employment consequences as a result of the more than \$2.5 billion in cutbacks announced by the government. I asked whether he would confirm that the assessment indicated there would be a net loss of something like 100,000 jobs to the economy. As usual, he did not answer.

I ask the minister, considering that Informatrica Limited, an economic consulting firm in Ottawa used frequently by the federal government, produced a report today which points out that there will, indeed, be 94,000 jobs lost as a result of the government's cutbacks, is there a federal government assessment showing similar results; and, if so, would he table it?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of such a study by the government. If you take those cuts separately, of course you can come to such conclusions but on the other hand we think that with a budget which relates more closely to the means of the federal government, we will be in better position to create a climate of confidence in the Canadian economy. Of course, if the climate improves in Canada there will certainly be more than a mere replacement of jobs by new activities in the private sector.

[English]

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe I understood correctly what the minister just said. Is he saying we will create economic confidence in the country by a policy that results in 100,000 more unemployed Canadians? Is that what he just said? In relation to that, I would ask the minister to make it perfectly clear that he is saying, as the Minister of Finance, he is unaware of an assessment being done by his own department on the consequences to the economy of a cut of \$2.5 billion from the economy. Is he unaware of any study being done showing those consequences?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, certainly I am aware of the consequences. We decided it is extremely important to create a proper economic climate in Canada and that we should show some restraint in the public sector. This was discussed at the first ministers' meeting in February and we, including the Premier of Saskatchewan, decided collectively that we must have more room in the Canadian economy in order to create the proper climate in which to have better growth created by the private sector. I do not believe all jobs in Canada should have to be created by the public sector.

**Mr. Broadbent:** As usual, Mr. Speaker, this incompetent Minister of Finance does not answer the question, but goes off on a tangent. He should publicly apologize, in fact, to Premier Blakeney, who said—

[Mr. Chrétien.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Does the hon. member have a final supplementary question?

● (1422)

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I will deal with that matter later today in the debate. My final question to the Minister of Finance is, if he had no assessments made about the consequences of the \$2.5 billion cutback to the economy, could he tell us, since 17 independent forecasters have suggested that unemployment next year will remain in the neighbourhood of 9 per cent, if his department has done a study to indicate whether the 17 independent forecasters are correct? Does the government expect a 9 per cent rate of unemployment? If they have such studies, will they do for us what other governments around the world did a long time ago, that is, table the studies so we can consider them?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I will deal with this problem in my budget speech in four weeks.

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[Translation]

## AGRICULTURE

HEAVY RAINS IN NORTHWESTERN QUEBEC—INQUIRY  
WHETHER PRODUCERS WILL BE COMPENSATED FOR CROP  
DAMAGE

**Mr. Gilles Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, considering the problems derived from the economic climate I think we could also touch on problems due to the natural climate through a question directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

Throughout the summer, we had very bad weather and a lot of rain in northwestern Quebec and northern Ontario. Following the discussions I had with the Minister of the Environment concerning studies on artificial rain falls, farmer groups from northwestern Quebec are asking the Minister of Agriculture whether farmers should not be compensated for the loss of production due to rainfalls in their area. Is the minister aware of that request? What does he intend to do?

[English]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is aware that unless requests come from the provinces in which the producers are located, we will not act. In this case, I would think all their crops would be covered by the crop insurance which is available to them. If crop insurance was available to them and they did not take advantage of it, there is no way in which the government would be involved in any form of compensation to them.

[Translation]

**Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary to the minister.