

has approached me. He has been in touch with many of those industries in Montreal. We intend to meet with them as soon as possible to get their views on how we can turn the situation around. I think this is very important. Our party leader has agreed as well that something has to be done and has approved of our meeting with them.

I would not want to start making recommendations at this point before we meet with the industry, but we have agreed to meet with them at the earliest possible date. We will be making suggestions in this House to the government to save a very important industry, the clothing industry.

There are some very basic necessities that every individual needs to live. We need food, we need housing, we need education but we need clothing. We all need clothing. We need shoes and clothing. Why should that clothing not be produced in our own country? Why should we have to go abroad for most of our clothing? It is ridiculous. This is a principal industry and one that should be helped to expand, modernize and compete in the world.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel):** Mr. Speaker, I would have one comment to make following the excellent speech from our colleague, the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, who showed to what extent this government has abandoned the Montreal workers, failing to implement the recommendations of the committee headed by Mr. Laurent Picard, which had suggested a series of specific measures to pave the way to Montreal's economic recover. Unfortunately, years later, this report still has not been acted on. It could have helped bring economic renewal to Montreal, but it was not taken seriously. It has not even been given fair consideration by the Canadian government.

We are now faced with a truly alarming situation in Montreal. A recent study by the Quebec Planning and Development Bureau has shown that at the present time there are some 188,000 jobless people on the island of

### *Government Orders*

Montreal. Such a situation is absolutely unbearable! We all know to what extent Montreal is the engine of the Quebec economy. If the economy of Montreal were to collapse, the whole province could be affected.

So, I commend our colleague for his speech and I would like to ask him to tell why, in his opinion some of the main recommendations of the Picard report have not yet been implemented?

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right. In 1986, the Conservative government appointed Mr. Picard to chair a commission on the economic situation in Montreal. The commission studied the problem for several months and published a report containing 86 recommendations. It suggested creating high technology industries in Montreal and focussing on international trade.

But, Mr. Speaker, four years later, most of these 86 recommendations have been ignored, totally ignored by the government which itself created this commission chaired by Mr. Picard.

But other commissions have also made recommendations. There was the commission with Paul Lacoste, former rector of the University of Montreal, for the United Way in Montreal in 1990, which made similar recommendations, which recognized that the unemployment rate in Montreal was a disaster. These recommendations were also ignored by the federal government for what was under federal jurisdiction.

• (1320)

[*English*]

I could go on. There were other reports as well. There was a 1989 report by federal economist Jules Leger which referred to the growing number of unemployed and the poverty in Montreal. It made certain recommendations. Nothing has been done about that either.

It is not just a tragedy for Montreal, but it is a tragedy for all of Quebec and for all of Canada.