

The financial conditions which we inherited from the previous Government is forcing us to ask the people of this country to make certain sacrifices to restore lost wealth and redistribute it more evenly among needy ridings.

I understand quite well the situation of Montreal East. I also understand quite well the areas where, for instance, unemployment exceeds 20 and 25 per cent. We could of course designate areas throughout Canada but it is not always the most effective solution.

As far as Montreal East is concerned, if we are to be somewhat unbiased, we will admit that this Government has made tremendous efforts throughout the metropolitan area of Montreal. Members of Parliament are not always involved in such things.

Personally, I could also complain that I have not seen any plant providing 1000 or 500 jobs spring up in my riding during the past 16 or 17 months. No. However, I am pleased to see today that close to 700,000 jobs have been created by the private sector in Canada. Jobs have been created in the various provinces. The Greater Montreal area has not been neglected, Mr. Speaker. Quite the contrary. I do not blame the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) for reminding the Government of its responsibilities or for seeking help for his riding. Yet, I should like him to possibly recognize that the private sector which is now playing the part it should have played all along, has created between 600,000 and 700,000 new jobs across Canada. Montreal has not been forgotten because, as the Hon. Member will certainly recognize, unemployment in the Greater Montreal area alone has decreased by 1.2 per cent. Over 100,000 new jobs have been created in the province of Quebec and, I believe, 39,000 in the Greater Montreal area.

Also, a number of important projects have been announced. We have demonstrated our interest for Montrealers, especially those residing in the eastern section, by setting up an inter-departmental committee, chaired by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret). I know my colleague wanted to reply personally to the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie, but because he was prevented by his outside obligations from doing so, I have agreed to try and reply objectively to the remarks made by the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie and possibly reassure Montrealers by saying that we hope we can reduce further the unemployment level, something we have already managed to do.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult for this Government—and I hope the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie will remember that—to accept lessons from an Opposition which will go down in history as responsible for losing 100,000 jobs a year over the past 15 years.

● (1730)

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be malicious and I certainly do not want to be accused of partisanship, but there are some things which should be said, and the hon. Member for Saint-

Regional Development

Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) will know what I mean. Certain things have to be said. We have had some results. For many years, we had a Government which I have reason to remember and which I saw myself in this House for at least 18 years except for nine months, and during that time, the number of unemployed increased to 1.5 million. I think that Montreal and especially the eastern sector suffered under the previous Government. The hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie speaks about certain industries, such as Canadian Steel Wheel or Foundry, and says that there are only about 100 or 200 jobs left in these industries, but I must say that, according to my information, the number of jobs had already begun to go down 10 years ago.

It is therefore not the fault of this Government which, for nearly 17 months, has been trying every day to correct the mistakes made by the previous Government. In spite of all that, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition even tries to suggest that we are causing problems for the elderly and that we are not sensitive to their needs. That is shameful and indecent.

In view of all this, Mr. Speaker, I say once more that I am quite glad that this Government is my Government, that it can claim to have created over 600,000 new jobs, brought interest rates down lower than since 1979, I believe, succeeded at bringing down inflation to under 4 per cent, had the confidence of businessmen as shown by the present level of investment and opened up to the private sector.

Last February, if I may give a few examples to the hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie since he has forgotten to mention them, and I know that it was an involuntary omission on his part, our Government announced two important investment projects which will create 2,500 jobs in the high technology sector at Pratt and Whitney and SPAR Aerospace.

An Hon. Member: That is on the south shore.

Mr. La Salle: It is not far from Eastern Montreal to the south shore, Mr. Speaker. I know people in Joliette who work in Montreal. In fact, they are quite happy to do so and I am happy for them.

In those circumstances, although I am not saying that the invitation by the Hon. Member for Montreal—Ste-Marie today is a negative step, I simply wish to insist, Mr. Speaker, that for the past 17 months we have been busy redirecting our economy and putting Canada back on the road to prosperity, as well as restoring the status that Montreal had lost under the previous administration.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, when the head offices started to move from Montreal, it was not the Progressive Conservative Party that ruled—

Mr. Ouellet: It was your Péquiste friends.

Mr. La Salle: —and some people even revelled in labelling Ottawa "French power". Well, Mr. Speaker, that "French power" is what caused those head offices to leave—