

Supply

years in a row. This is sound management by a sound Government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Chambly (Mr. Grisé) criticized the situation in 1979. Can he tell me why—if the Liberals were so bad in 1979—he was a candidate at a Liberal Convention and was defeated? Does he not look today as a wet blanket, for having been defeated at a convention? He switched party but he does really have the people's interests at heart.

Mr. Grisé: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we see very clearly that when one has to face reality, to face actual facts proving the good management practices of a positive Government, one that works well . . . Some people tried to belittle it in the last election by creating fears, by telling people that if they voted for the Conservative Party, the elderly would lose their old age pensions, Mr. Speaker. Since September, 1984, old age benefits have been raised. We will continue to raise them.

Mr. Malépart: Why don't you answer my questions?

Mr. Grisé: Mr. Speaker, it is so difficult for the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) to recognize a positive fact when he sees one that he can't help but run away and being resistant to anything positive.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa-Centre): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to take part in this debate on the Main Estimates. Today we are considering the \$100 billion in the Government's Main Estimates. In fact, I see this as an opportunity to talk about the situation in Quebec. I know the previous speaker talked about good news for Quebec. It may be the Opposition perspective to see the problems that still exist in Quebec's economy, and I think we have a duty to ask, not just in the House but across Canada: How can a Government with 57 Members from Quebec have done so little to restructure and strengthen the economy of a province that is so important to our Confederation?

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, according to the latest polls Quebecers indicate they are so dissatisfied with the performance of the Mulroney Government and their 57 Government Members, that they have dropped the Conservatives to third in the ratings. The Conservatives now have 28 per cent; the New Democrats, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of our party in Quebec, have 30 per cent; and the Liberals, even if they are leading, have been unable to recover the strength they have traditionally had in Quebec, owing to the lack of leadership of their Leader, the Hon. Member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Turner), and also because of the problem Quebecers still have with the way the Liberals governed when they were in power.

Perhaps I may give an example to show how Quebec compares with the rest of the country. Although unemployment in Quebec has dropped since September 1984, the unemployment rate is still 10.6 per cent, compared with a national average of 9.6 per cent. How does it compare with its neighbour, the province of Ontario, where I come from? In Ontario, the unemployment rate has dropped to 6.9 per cent. Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, in Ontario, the unemployment rate in Toronto Metro is 5.8 per cent, 1 per cent below the provincial average. However, Quebec's largest city, Montreal, has an unemployment rate that continues to hover at 10.7 per cent, with 160,000 unemployed in the metropolitan area and an unemployment rate above the provincial average.

How does Montreal compare with the rest, with the other industrialized cities in central Canada? Well, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Toronto with 5.8 per cent, Windsor with 7.4 per cent, Hamilton with 5.1 per cent, and even my own City of Ottawa which is experiencing economic difficulties thanks to Government cut-backs and problems at the Technological Institute, the unemployment rate in Ottawa stands at 8.8 per cent.

We have real problems and we are wondering: As mentioned by the Hon. Member who just spoke, is Government management really all that good?

Recently, Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, some 2,000 shipyard workers of Sorel's Marine Industries marched on Parliament Hill to express their concern about Government mismanagement of the shipbuilding industry, particularly as a result of something which occurred this year. The former Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, Mr. Stevens, the Minister of State (Small Businesses) (Mr. Bissonnette), and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Côté) gave Versatile Vickers Company President Peter Paul Saunders, who comes from Vancouver but happens to be the head of two of the three Quebec shipyards—

They gave Mr. Saunders a mandate to rationalize the shipbuilding industry in the province of Quebec. When Marine Industries workers came to Ottawa, they expressed concern about the letter sent to the Quebec Minister of Industry, Mr. Johnson, in which Mr. Saunders said bluntly that he was given that mandate and that Marine Industries shipyards should be closed. The owner of two of Quebec shipyards proposed the closing of a third shipyard and its conversion to heavy industry. Apparently, there are no shipbuilding contracts.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of State for Small Businesses told them that Mr. Saunders had no mandate from the Government to rationalize the industry. However, a few days later, the Minister of Industry said the opposite. The two Ministers contradicted each other and have not been able to get their act together. We asked the Quebec Minister of Transportation, who is the Acting Minister for that very important department, to withdraw the mandate given to Mr. Saunders because of an obvious conflict of interest, and to consult all parties involved, the three shipyards, as Marine Industries was never