

The Address—Mr. Cassidy

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to some broader issues concerning what was announced in the Throne Speech and the statement made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) last night. As Hon. Members are aware, I am now my Party's critic for Treasury Board and Science and Technology, but I have also been appointed Chairman of our Caucus on Quebec, and, Mr. Speaker, we intend to further develop the New Democratic Party's action on issues that concern Quebecers, as well as the activities of our Caucus in the Province of Quebec.

I am afraid that since the September 4 election, there has been a change in the Government's priorities. During the election campaign, the Government . . . the Progressive Conservatives said that their priority was jobs. Now it is the deficit, and they maintain that if they can get rid of the deficit, that will attract investment and create jobs.

Since I am going to deal with issues that concern Quebec, I sincerely wonder whether these policies will really affect the situation of Quebecers. Will investment solve the unemployment problem in Quebec in the near future, considering that a majority of Quebecers voted for the Progressive Conservative Party? They elected 58 PC Members to sit on the Government benches. I believe that Quebecers did not vote simply for the theories of Ronald Reagan or Neo-Conservatives, but for a real change to solve the unemployment problem in Quebec and throughout Canada.

The facts are as follows: Unemployment in Quebec has now reached 12.8 per cent compared with 8.9 per cent in Ontario. There is a difference of 4 per cent between the two provinces. Regionally, unemployment has reached 25 per cent in Rouyn-Noranda, 21 per cent in Chicoutimi and 15 per cent in Hull and the Outaouais compared with 8 or 9 per cent in Ottawa. Unemployment is now 14 or 15 per cent in Trois-Rivières. That is the situation. However, the Government is trying to convince us that, if the deficit begins to decrease, this will promote investment which will in turn help correct the situation.

Is the market place going to reduce the difference between the unemployment rates in Quebec and Ontario? Definitely not, in my opinion. What we need is for the government to show leadership and to give priority to employment and not to concentrate only on the deficit.

Will the private sector create jobs in Chicoutimi or Rouyn-Noranda? I do not think so.

What has happened in the past? Many industries in Quebec, such as the mining and the textile industries, have specific problems with which the Government of Canada should be dealing instead of ignoring them. However, the new Government seems to be planning to ignore these problems in the belief that the market place will solve them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind you about the situation of the Iron Ore Company of Canada. This company had as its

president Mr. Brian Mulroney before he became Prime Minister—

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to remind the Hon. Member that this is not the Ontario Legislature. The Hon. Member must, not use the Right Hon. the Prime Minister's name. I must also correct him on his use of the name of the Hon. Minister of Finance. He must not address them by their names.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I am newly elected to this place, but in the future, I shall definitely refer to the Right Hon. Prime Minister and to the Minister of Finance by their titles.

When the Prime Minister was president of Iron Ore, he closed down the Schefferville mine. At the time, some 600 workers received compensation and separation pay totalling \$9 million. However, between 1980 and 1982, the American owners of Iron Ore of Canada received \$225 million in dividends while 600 workers received separation pay amounting to \$9 million and 1,200 workers were laid off without getting any compensation from the company. These were people who worked in Labrador or for the railways owned by Iron Ore of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this is how the private sector operates. This is what happened to a private company in Quebec.

[*English*]

That is a good example, Mr. Speaker, of why we are concerned about the promises of the Government, that the free market on its own will suddenly invest and bring jobs back to places like Chicoutimi, Schefferville, Rouyn and Noranda. We quite honestly do not believe that that will in fact occur. We intend to be very active in our attention to the Province of Quebec. As I said in French, I am now heading a Quebec committee of our caucus. We have a Quebec committee in our Party as well. We will be working there because now we are the second party in terms of representation in the House of Commons from all of English Canada, and after 1988 I want to make sure that we are the second or first party in this Parliament representing the people of Quebec as well.

• (1610)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that in the course of the statements made in the Throne Speech and in the economic statement of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), so little reference was made to the problems of technological change which we have to learn to manage if we are to survive successfully the next ten or fifteen years. I believe that responding to technological change can only be done if we do it together. I welcome some of the statements made by the new Government concerning seeking consensus, conciliation and consultation. But consultation is empty if you are not prepared to share in decision making. One of the most urgent problems, it seems to me, in responding to the challenge