

*Adjournment Debate*

initiatives of this government have had one result: to throw Canada's economy and Montreal's in particular into a slump. They have destroyed families by depriving them of their income, of their jobs and of their salaries.

On March 18, the minister of Labour has stressed that in order to create jobs it was necessary to teach people new technologies. But, I told him that a new knowledge is useless if one is unable to put it into practice. A person will be able to put his newly acquired knowledge to good use only if we create new jobs and if Canadians have a renewed faith in their economy. Unfortunately, this government has managed to achieve exactly the opposite, since jobs are more difficult to find and Canadians in general have less confidence in the economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the situation today, we see that in Quebec the bankruptcy rate has increased by 40 per cent in the first few months in 1991. According to Statistics Canada, 1,618 individuals have asked for the protection of the Bankruptcy Act. If the minister wants to increase confidence in the economy, these figures won't help. As for the government's effort to create jobs, I would say their record leaves much to be desired.

I have just mentioned to the minister that people need jobs in which they can use their new knowledge. However, by reducing funds for research and development, the government is not encouraging job creation. Between 1987 and 1990, government spending in that area decreased from 1.4 per cent to 1.28 per cent of the GNP. Mr. Speaker, again, I ask the government: How will they resolve the unemployment problem in greater Montreal and throughout the vast Montreal region? What will they do to help save the 1,800 jobs being threatened at General Motors, in Boisbriand, in the Sainte-Thérèse area? What measures will they introduce to put Montreal's economy back on track? What help will they provide to the 225,000 unemployed in the Montreal region to finally revitalize this economy the government seems to have forgotten?

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is almost up. I just wanted to explain how it feels to read articles such as there: Poverty gaining ground in the Montreal region; 615,000 people living in poor households, 50 per cent in Montreal. Montreal, once the biggest city in Canada, has

become the unemployment capital of Canada, the welfare capital of our country. The time has come for this government to assume its responsibilities and stop the dramatic loss of our country's very valuable human resources.

[English]

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I wish to respond in greater detail to the questions of March 13 by the member for Saint-Léonard.

Let me first say something about jobs. Between 1980 and 1984 when the Liberal government was in power, 4,000 jobs were lost in Montreal. Between March 1985 and March 1991, 96,000 net jobs were created in Montreal. We know that more needs to be done, but the hon. member belittles that great city if he paints a picture of unrelieved gloom.

We know assistance is necessary. The statistics make that clear. This government is taking a number of measures beneficial to the economy of Quebec, and Montreal in particular. Agreement has been signed with the province of Quebec to spend \$440 million in federal funding over five years, between 1988 and 1993, on economic development in all regions of Quebec.

The government is very concerned about the challenges faced by certain neighbourhoods in Montreal, especially the southwest. In April 1989 the federal government responded to the Creesom report and announced that it would provide the following assistance in southwest Montreal:

Employment and Immigration Canada will allocate \$32.5 million over the next five years on various labour market initiatives. The government intends to work with the local community to develop sustainable jobs and more qualified labour. For the last two years it has been working with RESO, an economic development corporation, to establish training priorities. For example, EIC is presently developing with RESO a special school where local residents can receive training assistance.

Industry, science and technology will provide \$15 million to establish an industrial recovery program for southwest Montreal.

The federal government will also provide housing and financial assistance to southwest Montreal. Forty-eight million dollars in Federal Business Development Bank loans has been allocated over the next five years to promote economic activity in this area.