

Not too long ago, General Motors announced that they were planning to shut down their plant in Scarborough, Ontario. That Scarborough closing scheduled for 1993 would result in the loss of 2,700 jobs. Then yesterday we get the announcement from GM again that they will now proceed with the shutting down of an Oshawa plant, this one with some 3,700 jobs.

The Minister tells us all about the beauties of the GST and the FTA, and here we have an industry of vital importance to Canada, an industry in which prior to the FTA we had a good understanding with the United States under the Auto Pact. We are now hearing of closing after closing, and unemployed people increasing in numbers every time.

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, we have had a recession, and during a recession—

**Hon. H.A. Olson:** Have we ever had a recession. We are still having it, too.

**Senator Murray:** During a recession, the country loses jobs, as it most emphatically did and to a far greater extent in the recession of the early 1980s. But that is another matter. I think it is an indication of the recovery that we have now recovered more than half of the jobs that were lost during the recession. If you want to look at a longer time frame, since 1984 you will find that almost 1.4 million new jobs have been created since that time in this country under this government, and to some extent thanks to this government's policies and to the course on which we launched the country with respect to economic policy.

**Senator Molgat:** Could the Minister tell us whether the protection that we previously had under the Auto Pact with the Americans is still in place? It seems to me that what was working very well prior to the FTA is now falling apart.

**Senator Murray:** Honourable senators, the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact is still very much in force, as the honourable senator knows. I mentioned a few moments ago that exports had increased more than 22 per cent in the second quarter. I can add that automotive exports accounted for more than two-thirds of that increase.

## PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

### INCREASE IN SPENDING—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Louis-J. Robichaud:** Honourable senators, the question I am about to ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate is prompted by a story I read this morning in the *Ottawa Sun*. It is headed:

The Prime Minister's Office spends \$102 million.

A title does not necessarily upset me, but I kept reading.

Spending in Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Privy Council Office has ballooned to \$102 million from \$46 million only two years ago.

I kept reading, but the rest is immaterial.

[Senator Molgat.]

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean-Marie Simard:** Honourable senators, perhaps the honourable Senator could keep on reading. The rest may not be totally immaterial. There is even a reference to certain senators from a party which, by the way, you have supported indirectly during the big debate on the GST.

**Senator Robichaud:** No, no. There is a whole list, but it is not related to the question I am about to ask the leader of the government. Senator Simard, who talks non-stop, had better be quiet at this time.

**Senator Simard:** The Liberals have asked me that for years. It is but one of their recommendations that I did not follow and I am none the worse for it.

[English]

**Senator Robichaud:** My civilized question to the Leader of the Government in the Senate is this: Considering the fact that the Privy Council Office is costing the taxpayers of Canada \$102 million, and considering the fact that the Senate of Canada is costing the taxpayers of Canada much less than half that amount, would it not be better to abolish the Privy Council Office rather than continue talking about abolishing the Senate?

**Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I will not be incited by the honourable senator—

**Senator Robichaud:** Can we hear the answer, please.

**Senator Murray:** I should say that I welcome the opportunity to explain that the increase in spending in the Privy Council Office is due in very large measure to the increase in the number of commissions of inquiry that have been established. In 1980-90, the commissions of inquiry activity spent approximately \$3 million, while the 1990 expenditures totalled \$44.4 million dollars, for a difference of \$41.4 million.

In 1989-90, the two major commissions in operation were the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront and the Commission of Inquiry into Use of Drugs and Banned Substances Intended to Increase Athletic Performance. During 1990-91, in addition to the two previous commissions, there were an additional five commissions in operation, the Commission of Inquiry into the Air Ontario Crash at Dryden, Ontario, the Royal Commission on National Passenger Transportation, the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, and the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future.

• (1450)

## POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order. There is something wrong with the sound system.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Excuse me, honourable senators—

**Hon. C. William Doody:** Could we have some order, please?