

cent over the next three years. Seven research centres will be closed, two of them in Quebec. The closing-down of the centre in La Pocatière, for example, will eliminate 30 jobs and result in savings of \$1.5 million and that of the farm in L'Assomption will eliminate 19 jobs and result in savings of \$1.3 million.

Yet research is the most important ingredient in the creation of jobs, and the development of agriculture and animal production. What would you think of a farmer who has to reduce his costs and decides he is going to stop buying seeds? That will be a fine way to cut spending, but at the same time, it will cut all his income.

We are acting exactly the same way when we start cutting research and development. We keep producing with the same methods and they eventually become obsolete. We forget about the future and our products become less competitive because our production procedures are obsolete and we cannot lower our costs.

An hon. member: There is a lack of vision.

Mr. Laurin: That is all part of the planning problem I was talking about at the beginning of my remarks. That is what is lacking with this government. Cuts were made not because the government has a well thought-out plan, but because cuts had to be made.

• (1155)

To give you an example of the slash and burn policy of this government, let me deal once again with the closing-down of the farm in L'Assomption in my riding. A lot of research and development was being done there. They had new horticultural products ready for marketing. Those products would have been viable; a fine example of applied research. The whole farm was cut anyway.

The government put up a new farm building in L'Assomption at a cost of \$3.5 million. It was inaugurated last fall. This year, it is being closed down and 19 employees are being sent home. What about the equipment there? They do not know yet what they will do with it. Is this the kind of planning we can expect from this government? Is this the way the government intends to deal with the most viable research and development resources in Quebec? If so, the Bloc Québécois cannot stand and watch while Quebec farmers are being treated unfairly, as will be very well demonstrated by other Bloc speakers today.

This kind of situation cannot be tolerated and this is why we will speak loud and clear against that.

[English]

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the hon. member talk about a loss in jobs, particularly in the research area.

Supply

Everyone is concerned about losing jobs in research. We all know the importance of research. It is one of the top priorities Reform has targeted in our budget and in past documents dealing with the budget.

I agree with the Liberal philosophy with regard to research. I believe that at least what they say is the best approach to take regarding research. Research should be targeted better. There should be more partnerships developed with the private sector so taxpayers dollars are in with private business dollars to form partnerships to end some of the duplication in research and to spend the research dollars better. Private business needs to take a bigger role in targeting research so research is being done in the areas most likely to pay off well to business in terms of improvement. In this case we are talking about agriculture.

I agree with the Liberal philosophy presented with regard to research. I am concerned about the loss of jobs in research. We cannot afford to lose the research. There is room even in research to do a better job with the dollars we have.

While I agree with the member's concern about the loss of jobs, I ask the member for his comments on the loss of jobs that will result from the cuts the government has made not going far enough. In other words, there is no definite deficit target set in the budget. Because there is no definite target business will not have the atmosphere it needs to expand and or new businesses to be set up. As a result there will be fewer jobs in the future and certainly the jobs that could come—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I will take a moment to express the Chair's dilemma.

[Translation]

We have a topic of great importance. Many members, on both sides of the House, from all parties, have already indicated they wanted to take part in this debate. If we are going to share our 20 minute speaking time, and break it down into two 10 minute periods, each followed by a 5 minute question and comment period, I would ask all the speakers from all parties to keep their questions simple, direct and short, so that the member who just delivered his or her speech can give a proper answer. Everybody should keep this in mind. And I hope that we can proceed in this fashion.

I give the floor to the hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Laurin: Mr. Speaker, I will give a short answer if you can tell me how much time I have left. One minute. My answer will have to be short.

What I wanted to say when I spoke about the farm in L'Assomption as an example of the government's lack of planning is that a week before it was closed down, the employees did not know the experimental farm was to be closed down.