

has been able to achieve is 7.3 per cent which was in September.

Since September the rate has gone up again to 7.4 per cent in October and up to 7.6 per cent in November. The Minister of Finance himself has predicted an increase in the unemployment rate to 8.5 per cent in 1990 and other think-tanks such as the Conference Board of Canada have predicted a 9 per cent unemployment rate.

We want the government to take these job losses and these plant closings seriously, and so do the workers who are losing their jobs. It does not do these workers any good to remind them of the fact that in a general way jobs have been created in different parts of Canada. What do the workers at General Electric want to know? What do the workers in other plants want to know? I have the list of the plant closings in Montreal: Gillette, 590 jobs; Weston Foods, 360 jobs; Simpsons, 1,000 jobs; VIA Rail, et cetera, et cetera; the list goes on.

Those individuals want to know what is the government going to do to help them get similar types of jobs. They do not want to hear over and over from the Prime Minister and the Minister of Employment and Immigration what a wonderful job they have done in bringing the rate of unemployment down to 7.3 per cent, now up to 7.6 per cent.

I hope tonight that the parliamentary secretary, responding on behalf of the minister, will tell us what programs, what policies the government has to help those people who have lost their jobs to free trade, who have lost their jobs to rationalization, to structural changes. Those are real people and they want real answers to their questions.

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I want to respond in greater detail to the question of December 4 put by the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

Let me say at the outset that the General Electric plant that he is talking about produced bulbs for projectors. The plant was quite old. Technology has changed. People are using VCRs today, and they made the decision they did to move the balance of that reduced production to the United States.

### *Adjournment Debate*

The metropolitan area of Montreal with its diversified activities and infrastructure is a major force not only in the Quebec economy but for Canada as a whole. There has been a significant improvement in the over-all employment situation over the past five years, especially compared to the experience during the 1980-1984 period.

In the four years up to August 1984 employment in Montreal declined and the unemployment rate rose. In marked contrast there were 148,000 more people employed in Montreal in November 1989 than had been in November 1984 shortly after this government took office.

Despite vigorous growth in the labour force there were some 46,000 fewer unemployed and the unemployment rate at 8 per cent is 3.7 percentage points lower than five years ago. In the last year alone employment is up by 16,000, unemployment is down by 13,000 and the unemployment rate has dropped almost one full percentage point to 8 per cent.

The Montreal labour market is dynamic with many firms opening and expanding, more than offsetting the cases of lay-offs or closures that the hon. member cites. While there were lay-offs announced in November, there were also positive developments. These included the announcement of construction of a \$250 million waste treatment plant in east Montreal, the discussion of construction of a \$225 million office complex, and the expansion of a refinery in east Montreal at a cost of \$200 million. This follows upon earlier announcements such as the \$2.3 billion contract obtained by Bombardier with the Aerospatial of France.

Since 1985 joint action by various levels of government on the economic situation in Montreal includes two major initiatives on the part of the federal government: in 1985, the creation of the ministerial committee on the development of the Montreal region to advise the government on how to consolidate Montreal's role as a centre for development; in 1986, the creation of the committee for economic recovery and revitalization of employment in east end Montreal.

There have also been concrete initiatives by the federal government, especially Employment and Immigration Canada, to help Montreal. For example, in 1988-1989 Employment and Immigration Canada invested \$87 million in the city of Montreal through programs under the Canadian Jobs Strategy. A total of