

*Government Orders*

• (1020)

If we had carried on with the deficit that we had, the rise in interest rates would very quickly have prevented investments in the private sector, thereby also preventing the creation of jobs. What we did was to foster the economic climate which will promote investments and new jobs in the private sector.

The member opposite has no idea of what is going on in the Outaouais, which is my region, when he says that the federal government is keeping it in a state of dependency. If you look at the 1971 census figures, you will see that, back then, one third of all the jobs for our region were in the public service. By comparison, last year only one fifth of the jobs in the Outaouais were in the public service.

In other words, 80 per cent of the jobs in our region are not in the public service. In the national capital region, there are more jobs in the service sector than in the federal government. It is based on that necessary economic diversification that our government developed a plan for the region which will allow the private sector to create jobs that are needed and that will reduce the excessive burden on taxpayers, since the federal public service had become too big.

I have a question for the member opposite regarding dairy producers. Quebec provides 48 per cent of the milk production in Canada and it exports that production elsewhere in the country. Should the province separate, where would it sell its milk, which costs two to three times more than the milk which we could get from the United States? It goes without saying that the rest of Canada would buy its milk at a cheaper price. Quebec's separation would totally destroy its dairy industry. While the federal government adjusts prices at the national level over a certain period of time, the member opposite wants to destroy the dairy industry in Quebec.

As regards public servants, the actual number is 3,000 for the Outaouais, taking into account the five provincial and three federal ridings. We are told that Quebec would absorb the federal public servants, there are 50,000 of them, plus the other 50,000 public servants they already have. They put the 3,000 public servants from the Outaouais and the 100,000 for all of Quebec in the same boat. These people would want us to believe that they will absorb all these public servants, a measure which would cost them \$4.4 billion.

Given the analysis made by the hon. member, my question is this: Does he know Quebec sufficiently well to hope to create a better future than the one that we, federalists, have found to be adequate for over 125 years?

**Mr. Bergeron:** Mr. Speaker, I have a problem with the minister's somewhat sweeping statements. When he says that more than 400,000 jobs were created across Canada, when he

says that thousands of jobs were created in Quebec, he implies that it was all thanks to the federal government.

Last year, the federal government did not set up a single job creation program, with the exception of the infrastructures program, which is a program of temporary jobs. The government is just riding the wave of economic recovery. Jobs are being created and it says: Look at that, we created those jobs. This is entirely misleading. The federal government had nothing to do with it, and I think it is rather absurd that the minister should go around bragging that they created those jobs.

The government planned to create 45,000 temporary jobs through the infrastructures program and then turns around and cuts 45,000 jobs in the Public Service. I heard the minister say that only 3,000 jobs would be lost in the Outaouais. I hope he is right. We are going to keep tabs on those figures and the region will as well. We can only hope the cuts will not go over 3,000.

However, that does not deal with the real problem. The minister says he knows the Outaouais area well, but if he took a more active part in the activities of the Commission on the future of Quebec in this area, he would realize that his knowledge of the Outaouais is partisan and incomplete, since a number of people who appeared before this commission kept telling us—these are not my words—that the region's economy was dependent on the federal government.

The minister quoted some figures just now. He said that, at one time, one of every three jobs in the Outaouais was in the federal public service. It is now one out of five. With the cuts being made by the government, it may go eventually down to one out of ten. My point is that considering the economic dependence the federal government has artificially created in the Outaouais, is the federal government—and the minister did not answer this question—is the federal government prepared to offer financial compensation by investing in an economic diversification fund, to compensate for the number of jobs lost in the public service? To get back to the notorious question, if I can call it that, because it is more like, I will not use the word misleading, but a very—

• (1025)

**An hon. member:** Very pernicious.

**Mr. Bergeron:** —pernicious, thank you, a very pernicious statement that sovereignty would destroy Quebec's dairy industry. First of all, I want to say that I am dismayed at the minister's lack of confidence in Quebec's dairy industry, and furthermore, the minister ought to know that the milk produced in Quebec is probably the best quality milk in North America. There are no two ways about it. It is the best. No doubt about that. If you want to buy a quality product, no problem. Milk from Quebec can meet the highest standards in the world.