

the North Shore, this special program does not apply to two cities, Rimouski and Sept-Îles, allegedly because their per capita income is a little bit over the regional average and their unemployment rate somewhat lower than the regional average.

If we examine the economic standing of the city of Rimouski in the whole territory I must admit that we wonder about Rimouski being excluded from a program which is extremely important and extremely interesting for a region such as ours. True, Rimouski is a service community, but it must be said that 83 per cent of the labour force in Rimouski are people who earn a living in the public, quasi-public and educational sectors. We have a regional hospital which provides jobs for many people and we also benefit from the decentralization of provincial and federal government services. People will agree with me, Mr. Chairman, that we have reached the saturation level when it comes to the decentralization of services, and we have even recorded a decrease in the number of jobs in provincial public and quasi-public services, particularly in the field of education.

● (2030)

This is what we find if we compare Rimouski to the rest of Canada, Quebec and other neighbouring cities. I would like to point out to hon. members that, according to the figures published in the *Survey of Market in 1980* of the *Financial Post*, the per capita income in Canada was \$7,225. For the province of Quebec, the per capita income was \$6,563, for the Rimouski constituency, \$5,160, for the city of Rimouski, \$6,675, for the city of Rivière-du-Loup, \$6,401, and for the city of Matane, \$5,566. I must admit that I do not find these figures too depressing, but I am certainly upset about the figures for the per capita added value for the manufacturing sector in the city of Rimouski.

The per capita added value is \$1,860 for Canada, \$1,857 for Quebec, \$483 for the county of Rimouski, but the city of Rimouski has only a \$166 per capita added value for the manufacturing sector. For the city of Rivière-du-Loup, the figure is \$1,563, and for Matane, \$1,130. I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I am somewhat envious of the per capita added value for the manufacturing sector of Rivière-du-Loup and Matane, which are not excluded from this investment tax credit or rebate. I would also like the Minister of Finance to note the important role that the city of Rimouski can and does play in a region like the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula. Rimouski is the most centrally located city in the region. It is true that we have government services. It is also true that we have a university, a community college and major teaching institutions, but it must also be said that Rimouski is seriously underprivileged as concerns manufacturing investments.

In this regard, these last few years, the city of Rimouski, and therefore all its residents, have benefited from assistance under certain federal programs to help create industrial com-

plexes and establish infrastructures so that businesses can settle in the area in the best conditions possible and as quickly as possible. This has been done especially thanks to financial assistance from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion totalling nearly \$1,250,000 for the creation of industrial complexes. Tax credits are now being granted to an underprivileged area, but the city of Rimouski has been excluded.

I would also like to note the economic conditions which now prevail on the North Shore, that is at Sept-Îles, Wabush, Schefferville and Fermont, where The Iron Ore Company has already announced the temporary or permanent lay-off of thousands of workers. This has a tremendous influence on the economic situation of the South Shore. For those of my colleagues who are not familiar with the area, I should point out that the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula are located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River and that the whole North Shore area is on the opposite side, as the name indicates.

However, traditionally, since this great territory has been opened, manpower has been recruited on the South Shore. This means that those who lose their jobs on the North Shore come back to our region because they come from there. The regions which will now have to face a major demand for new jobs will be the regions of the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula in particular, as well as the city of Rimouski.

Mr. Chairman, I wish the Department of Finance were now facing a completely different situation as concerns this investment tax credit, from which Sept-Îles and Rimouski were excluded on October 28. The announcements made by employers in the Sept-Îles area concerning the lay-off of thousands of workers were not expected on October 28, but this has caused major economic setbacks in the Sept-Îles area, so much so that the Departments of Employment and Immigration, Labour, and Industry, Trade and Commerce have found it necessary to create a fund or to implement a special assistance program amounting to \$350 million to help workers in areas such as the North Shore, which we are now discussing, to find other jobs.

This program will help business create jobs and ensure workers' mobility, if they so desire. We must remember that an economic happening in one area can affect another area. The economic situation prevailing in my area and on the North Shore on October 28 was certainly not the same as it is now.

Things have changed. Rimouski is at the heart of an area which is well equipped to satisfy the requirements of potential investors and should be considered with regard to this 50 per cent investment tax credit. I think that has become a question of social justice. People who will be coming back to the South Shore, the Lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé areas will need jobs, so I wonder what our priority should be. Should we increase unemployment insurance funds or should we give entrepreneurs the opportunity to set up businesses in areas such as ours through reasonable tax credits that answer real