

In his economic statement he committed support to small business through the Small Businesses Loans Act. There are approximately 960,000 small businesses now eligible under this act. In the last two weeks several small business people have come to me. They have been to financial institutions. The financial institutions say they either know nothing of the Small Businesses Loans Act or they are not going to co-operate.

• (1455)

When will the minister stop ripping the heart and guts out of small business and start promoting this piece of legislation?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the bill was initiated by this government. My understanding is that it is currently before the Senate.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for his co-operation. He and I and our colleagues over here are on all fours on this particular piece of legislation.

I have had discussions with a number of financial institutions and banks which are very supportive of it. I have had discussions with chambers of commerce and small business organizations that are looking forward to this legislation. It is a very major advance forward and will help the small business community very much. He and I both agree that the small business sector is the main engine of economic activity and job creation. This will be very helpful.

**Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same minister. I sat in committee. I worked with this government. We co-operated and put the bill through in record time. The banks were there. They committed to support this. Your minister of small business committed. It is not happening.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure the hon. member knows how to put the question through the Speaker and I am sure he will.

**Mr. Mills:** In this country, small businesses are our greatest hope for new job creation. My question through you, Mr. Speaker, is when will the Minister of Finance honour his commitment? When will he give us an undertaking to promote this bill throughout Canada and

also call in the banks so that they will begin to act on their own commitment?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I generally appreciate the hon. member's enthusiasm. We have already had discussions with the banks.

The legislation has not received Royal Assent. As soon as the legislation receives Royal Assent we will conduct the kind of campaign the hon. member is talking about.

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## IMMIGRATION

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration.

Yesterday the department of immigration announced the closing of eight local offices throughout Canada and the virtual closing of 28 others. This is simply to proceed with the centralization of its services in Vegreville, Alberta.

How can the government so callously leave thousands of Canadians without important immigration services simply to prop up the re-election possibilities of the Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** The hon. member refers to the member for Vegreville. For his information, for over 25 years now the minister has been re-elected to this House and knowing him, I know he is in for another 25 years.

The hon. member is suggesting that Canadians would be deprived of services. I want to correct the record and correct his statement because it is not correct.

The Canadian public will be better served with this case processing centre. Instead of people having to line up in offices and wait hours for service, they will be able to use a mail-in system. This has been proven to be very successful, so the people will be better served. More important, Canadian taxpayers will save money and I know Liberals do not care.

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce):** Mr. Speaker, this proposal to replace face-to-face immigration interviews by a centralized paper review in Vegreville, Alberta will take longer. It will generate more errors. In the long run it will cost more. The pilot