

*Government Orders**[Translation]*

I am surprised to see that this government will not listen to the sensible suggestions made by its own members on the consumer and corporate affairs committee. A consensus was reached by the New Democratic Party, the Conservatives and the Liberals on requesting that a worker trapped in a situation where his company goes bankrupt be considered a secured creditor, in which case the money owed him, between \$2,000 and \$3,000, can be paid.

I know my constituents do not want another tax. So we must not levy another tax to set up a fund to help workers trapped in a bankruptcy situation. It would be better to take this money from existing funds. The federal government has plenty of money, but unfortunately, the government tends to waste it.

One of my constituents, Mr. André Dubois of Saint-Bruno, who is fed up with the GST, wrote me as follows: "Politicians in general don't work for us but for their own personal glory, and they don't care about the well-being of Canadians. All programs are launched on a short-term basis. What we need is the will to change our political perspective and our political traditions. Programs, goals and promises should no longer be changed after each election".

• (1410)

The Canadian public wants some common sense from this government. Instead of more taxes, it wants the government to spend smarter. No more spending right and left on plane trips that may or may not have been necessary. No more wasting money on those big limousines you like to use because you happen to be in government. No more spending money on your friends in the advertising business who expect a reward for supporting you in the last election. All this has to stop. The time has come to spend money on our workers, to give them more protection. I believe that if you would only realize that, Canadians would be far better protected than they are at the present time.

[English]

In conclusion, I would just like to add that a lot of people out there are involved in these bankruptcies as workers and they realize that presently they have no protection, or very limited protection at best.

I have pleaded for retroactivity in this Bill C-22 because it is important that there be protection for those people who went through the recession and who represent the largest group concerned. If we pass this bill without retroactivity, they will be left high and dry. We must not allow that to happen.

I spoke with the government Whip and I explained why this was necessary. I told him that it does not appear that super priority or retroactivity will cause the banks any harm. I believe that essentially what we are looking for is protection for Canadian workers. I believe that with a minimum of good will from the other side of this House we can work together as we did in committee and protect all workers.

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to say a few words on this important piece of legislation.

I want to begin by congratulating my friend and colleague, the hon. member for Dartmouth, on the masterful way in which he has directed our party's analysis and response to this legislation which touches a very complex and difficult set of issues. It affects in a profound way the conduct of business everywhere in Canada. As he has done on so many subjects since being elected to this Chamber, the member for Dartmouth has tackled this bill with enthusiasm, skill and with sure-footedness.

The reform of Canada's bankruptcy laws is long overdue. Our current Bankruptcy Act dates back to 1949. In the face of the manifold changes that have occurred in the Canadian economy and in the business environment in the past 42 years, the provisions in this legislation are increasingly anachronistic and woefully out of date.

These years have witnessed a growing library of departmental reviews and parliamentary studies and at least six failed attempts at legislation. Clearly all members of this house share the desire to see this legislative attempt succeed.

We applaud the government on having introduced this bill and also on having submitted it to pre-study before second reading. We think that was an eminently worthwhile thing to do.

The member for Dartmouth and other members on this side of the House have worked assiduously to enable the bill to be improved.