

Government Orders

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a second group of petitions, again from all across Canada including my riding, numbering some 800 signatures, which prays that Parliament act immediately to extend protection to the unborn child by amending the Criminal Code to extend the same protection enjoyed by born human beings to unborn human beings.

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[Translation]

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if question No. 215 could be made an order for return, that return would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 215—**Mr. Abbott:**

What are the names of all the Department of Justice Standing Legal Agents (including civil and criminal legal agents) as of September 1993 and as of June 1995?

Return tabled.

[Translation]

Mr. Milliken: Mr. Speaker, I suggest that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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● (1525)

[English]

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS ACT

The House resumed consideration from October 24, 1995, of the motion that Bill C-99, an act to amend the Small Business Loans Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Pierrette Ringuette—Maltais (Madawaska—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to speak to the House today regarding Bill C-99, an act to amend the Small Business Loans Act.

This is a very important bill, because the program administered under the Small Business Loans Act has an impact on the Canadian economy. The amendments before the House today, which are part of an ongoing process aimed at reinforcing the Small Business Loans Program and making it sustainable, will help improve the climate in a sector that today generates the strongest economic growth and increase in employment in Canada, and I am referring to small business.

It is common knowledge that small businesses have become a major moving force in the Canadian economy. During the past 20 years, we have seen a remarkable increase in the number of new small businesses in Canada. That small businesses are so important is borne out by the fact that in 1991 Canada had, if we include self-employed workers, more than two million small businesses with fewer than 100 employees, an increase of 50 per cent over 1981.

Small businesses today, many of which are dynamic innovators, will help to define the future development of the Canadian economy. In fact, according to the statistics, Canada increasingly relies on the growth of small businesses to create jobs, diversify economic activities and compete effectively on global markets.

Small business has a profound impact on the Canadian economy and will remain the main source of economic growth and job creation.

That is why the present government's main priorities include ensuring that the small business sector is healthy and prosperous.

Take, for instance, the issue of access to adequate financing. As the government was told repeatedly by members of the industry committee, the ability to obtain financing by contracting loans is extremely important for small businesses. Lack of adequate financing will restrict the growth of small businesses and jeopardize the future prosperity of this country. That is why the government passed a bill that will enable the Federal Business Development Bank, once it has been restructured, to improve its response to the needs of small businesses. As a result of changes introduced by the government, the bank will be in a better position to finance innovative small businesses in the new economy.