

*Small Businesses Loans Act*

the distribution of wealth. If they want to distribute wealth and do the right thing for those people at or below the poverty level, we will have to direct the attention of this House, and of all members of this House, to the creation of wealth. With the creation of wealth we will address the distribution problem.

I stand here and debate with the hon. member because I do not believe that we can address the distribution problems in the country by attacking wealth creation. The small and medium enterprise business sector is a wealth-creating sector of major importance to the quality of life in this country. That is the reason I was strange on the comments made by the hon. member for Hamilton-Mountain.

On the other hand, last evening when we were dealing with Bill C-28, which is a bill to amend the Fisheries Improvement Loans Act, I was fascinated by the remarks made by, and I pay great compliment to, the hon. member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly), a member of the New Democratic Party. His address was eloquent, his sincerity was in place, he had a great grasp of the industry on the coast and of its needs, and I compliment him for his contribution to the debate on Bill C-28.

I want to return now to the subject of Bill C-17, third reading of which was introduced by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the hon. member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel). We have had a good debate on Bill C-17, and much of the debate on Bill C-20, which is to amend the Federal Business Development Bank Act, has overlapped it. We had a good discussion with the minister and his staff in committee. However, there are a few points that I think are pertinent to interject into third reading debate.

The parliamentary secretary paid compliment to a suggestion I made in that the debate and forum for inputs to the over-all financial review that we are talking about and anxiously waiting for are important. All of these bills, such as Bill C-28 and Bill C-17, are bills that amend different patchwork programs of need within the Canadian economy and community. These are going to get us into trouble. All we are doing is running after amendments to take care of the inflation component within our society and allow a measure of catch-up in these different programs.

The review which the minister has under way should take into effect all of these bills and give us an over-all program. As the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) said in committee, we should project ahead for 25 years the financial needs of the Canadian economy rather than spending all of this time amending bills just to take care of the inflation component that has eroded the purchasing power and capital of the country. The review is important. In committee we were seeking to have that review opened up.

We can either go the way they have in the United States by putting in a small business act where we create a magnificent plethora of regulations, rules, administration, Senate and parliamentary committees, and we heap more and more regulations on to that wealth-creating community with very little activity. Or, we can perhaps start working toward and calling

for a standing committee of the House of Commons for the small and medium enterprise business sector, where the advocacy role of the small business secretariat and the minister for small business can have a forum to discuss all of the legislation that comes into this House affecting positively or negatively that sector. That would strengthen immeasurably the advocacy role of the secretariat and the function of the minister, who represents the economic wealth-creating community in Canada.

At the moment we have a dedicated secretariat and we have a minister of state. But other ministers have more power to deliver the cookies and the goodies than the minister of state. He is really a eunuch within the delivery system. The small business community in Canada needs a forum in which its needs, aspirations and problems can be discussed. It needs a forum to protect it from the imposition of legislation coming down from other departments and ministries.

● (1250)

I suggest once again in this third reading debate that we give serious consideration to the creation of a standing committee of the House of Commons responsible for matters pertaining to the small and medium enterprise sector of Canada. It would be a vehicle that the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Lapointe) and the secretariat serving that minister of state could staff as the secretariat of that committee. I think we should strengthen the advocacy role and be an open part of deliberations such as the whole study of financial needs of that sector.

My colleague the hon. member for Edmonton West had a suggestion that is also worthy of consideration. The member of Parliament, you and I, Mr. Speaker, are not technicians in all aspects of expertise within the economic community or within the social community. We need a forum or vehicle whereby the experts of the country can deal one with the other and make reports. Those reports are very valuable to the members of the House of Commons who are representing the emotional level of their constituency in the over-all country of Canada.

The hon. member for Edmonton West said that we need a royal commission as the vehicle for involvement in that study. He and I are both afraid that that financial review in Canada is going to be limited to the experts within the civil service, the Canadian Bankers' Association, which is another body that is dealing in expertise in a narrow field in terms of society at large, and the Economic Council of Canada, all bodies of absolute experts. These experts could in a royal commission that is open to the public broaden the inputs and the audiovisual portion of those inputs so that, when the matter comes to a parliamentary committee or to parliamentarians who are not experts in any one specific field, we judge as a jury.

If we are going to make Parliament work, which we are going to have to do to build a better Canadian community and society, we have to start taking on more the jury function as members of Parliament and strengthen our standing committees so that members, representing the emotional level of the land, can meet the experts in those committees.