

The Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Finance would be jointly responsible for authorizing the use of these funds. This would speed up the process, an important consideration when we realize that speed is often essential when concluding contracts with countries overseas.

As the Minister for International Trade pointed out, streamlining the EDC is one of the most important elements of the government's comprehensive policy aimed at making Canada more competitive on the international markets.

The Export Development Corporation cannot spearhead Canadian involvement in global markets. That is up to the private sector. However, once these amendments have been adopted, the EDC will be able to play a far more effective role as a catalyst in helping Canadian businesses enter the modern global market.

As I said earlier, I am proud to be associated with Bill C-118, and I am confident that all members of this House will recognize the importance of international trade for the economic, social and cultural future of our country and will join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish, I would like to present a motion, seconded by the hon. member for Perth—Wellington—Waterloo.

[English]

Pursuant to Standing Order 26(1) I move:

That the House continue to sit beyond the normal hour of adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C-118, an act to amend the Export Development Act.

And fewer than 15 members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Pursuant to Standing Order 26(2) the motion is adopted.

Motion agreed to.

• (1645)

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise on behalf of my party today. As our critic for international trade said earlier, we on this side of the House are in support of the bill.

The Export Development Corporation is one of the few Crown corporations the Conservative government has managed to leave intact. It is one of the few organizations that has survived the cut, cut, cut. In fact the bill today modernizes and expands the capacity of the Export Development Corporation. We on this side of the House support this.

Government Orders

As the Minister for International Trade and my colleague for Etobicoke North said, the country depends on its export activity. This is the greatest hope for job creation in the country. Anything we can do to expand the capacity of the Export Development Corporation is something we support and applaud.

It is another example of how we in opposition will get behind the government to support a bill going through the House expeditiously if we feel it is meeting the objective of job creation. Today the number one priority is putting people back to work, and the bill certainly passes the test of meeting and assisting that objective.

A previous example of our co-operating so well was the Small Businesses Loans Act. Just before I came into the House today I was speaking to Blair McRobie, vice-president of government relations for the Royal Bank of Canada. He was telling me that as of today all the branch managers of the Royal Bank and all its loan officers are fully apprised of the Small Businesses Loans Act. I am absolutely convinced, now we have the loan officers aware of the Small Businesses Loans Act and once we have let all small businesses know, we are going to be putting more people back to work because small business represents the greatest hope for new job creation.

That brings me to a concern I want to put on the floor of the House about the particular Export Development Corporation. The minister said in his remarks today that the Export Development Corporation had approximately 2,000 clients of which approximately 50 per cent are small businesses. That represents about 1,000 businesses doing work with the Export Development Corporation.

If there is one flaw or one concern I have about the Export Development Corporation, it is that most small businesses are not even aware it exists. They are not even aware that the Export Development Corporation exists, let alone all the services, all the products, and all the various export enhancements it provides. I would like to suggest to the government—and we will be raising it in committee—that we must make sure we let the small business community know about the Export Development Corporation. We must make small businesses aware that this particular Crown corporation exists. If we take the same approach with the Export Development Corporation as we did with the Small Businesses Loans Act, I am confident that once again we will have another factor in the economic recovery equation to inspire or to give new hope, new opportunity, for the entrepreneurial spirit that exists out there.