

Government Orders

today, the ink is dry and we have gone one-third to our employees, one-third to me and one-third to my partner. I am very proud of that.

Over these 19 or so years that we have been in business I am embarrassed to say that we have been the recipients of one grant from the government. We got \$16,000 through western diversification. I am in the photo finishing business. I think somehow the \$16,000 grant from the federal government came from the Western Grain Transportation Act. Figure that one out. How did my photo finishing business end up getting about \$16,000 from the Western Grain Transportation Act through western diversification?

The real question here is that we qualified for the grant because a person came knocking on our door and asked: "Are you doing any expansion? If you are, I can get money from the federal government for you. You do not have to do a thing. All you have to do is open your books. I will go through them and I get 25 per cent of anything you can get". I thought long and hard about this because we had gotten this far without a nickel from the government and would it not be nice to get everywhere without a nickel. But then I thought that we were paying the taxes and if we did not take advantage of these bonehead programs our competitors would, leaving us at a disadvantage. Therefore we did.

We received that particular grant because we were getting involved in another aspect of the business. Our investment was \$300,000. Does anyone in this House reasonably think that any business person would make a business decision of whether or not they should make an investment of \$300,000 because they can get \$16,000 from the government? Absolutely not. And any business person who would, should probably not be in business in the first place.

● (1320)

Over Christmas I was having coffee with one of our employees in the lunchroom. I said: "Joan, if you have a word to say, here is a chance to say it. What would you like me to say?" She replied: "Tell them to stop having the government take money from me to give it to somebody else. I am barely getting by on \$10 an hour. Tell them I am sick and tired of the government and other people wasting my hard-earned money".

When was the magical mystical moment that we as members of this government or elected members of any order of government suddenly went through a magic laying on of hands and became venture capitalists? It did not happen. We as government take a dollar in taxes from business or individuals. We take it into government, we chew it up and spit it out as 20 cents. We give that 20 cents to someone else to go into competition with the very people who gave us the dollar in the first place. It just does not make any sense.

One can see in any newspaper the government grants and government loans, government money for nothing. There are over 600 grants through the various government agencies that people can get. Peat Marwick Thorne has a book on how to get money out of the government. Large businesses have people on staff that do nothing but get money from government.

If we had a Klondike today it would not be out west or in the north. It would be right here in Ottawa where there are people mining for gold whose business it is to get money out of the government. Well that money people get is money which is earned by individual taxpayers, \$10 and \$20 at a time and we have to think about it in that context.

It must have been over 20 years ago that an hon. member of Parliament coined the phrase of corporate welfare bums. Well it has not changed.

Mr. Blaikie: David Lewis.

Mr. McClelland: That is right. It was David Lewis. It has not changed. It is not the role of the federal government or any government to take from individuals and decide who are going to be the economic winners and losers in society. That is the role of private entrepreneurs.

We would go a long way in reducing this tax burden on Canadians if we were to stop this insane practice of government grants and handouts to business. If a business does not have what it takes to run on its own, it should not be in business in the first place. If a business has to have money from the government to be established you can bet it is going to have to have money from the government to continue.

The government's role then in business, at least in my opinion, is to have an infrastructure program that allows for consistent high quality education in the country so that we have a resource pool of people to get into business. Roads, sewers and other infrastructure, consistency from orders of government and environmental standards, that sort of thing. But most of all there should be a tax environment that rewards investment and entrepreneurial risk by allowing those who actually do something to keep some it.

A final and important point is that we should elevate the status of innovators and entrepreneurs in our society to a level commensurate with the commitment in what entrepreneurs, investors and risk takers actually give to our society.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member on his address. Having come from an entrepreneurial background myself I share many of his feelings and views.

However there is something I have learned over the last four or five years about government grants, or government handouts to use the hon. member's expression. I have learned that the largest number of grants given to corporations, whether they be small, medium or large, through the Government of Canada do not come from the various line departments whether it is industry or western diversification as the member cited. In fact