

amended. Small businessmen are now encouraged to find they will be able to borrow money under the act to expand their businesses, and these amendments will really do a great deal. I have spoken to representatives of the chartered banks and they have assured me that this act has hitherto not been an inducement. Yet last year, despite the fact they claimed they lost money, they lent as much as \$80 million. So I believe that with the improvements in the legislation we shall now see a real volume of business being done to help the small business community.

I turn to the activities of the Federal Business Development Bank. Here is an institution which has served the Canadian businessman well. It now has nearly \$2 billion in loans outstanding, having lent over \$300 million last year. Its affairs are being conducted by an aggressive new management with new ideas, and I believe that this bank, too, will prove of even greater assistance to the small business community than it has in the past.

We also have the CASE program under the direction of the Federal Business Development Bank. Here is an important program which is being offered to the small business community. Almost 2,000 consultants drawn mainly from retired business people are advising at low or nominal fees and showing small businessmen how to improve their management techniques. Dun and Bradstreet, a firm specializing in bankruptcies, indicates that 90 per cent of bankruptcies are caused by poor management. Failure among small businessmen is all too frequently brought about by a lack of understanding of management techniques. The Government of Canada, through the CASE program, is bringing assistance to them which is unavailable in any other form at the price.

In addition, we have taken an important new initiative in moving toward the reduction of the paper burden by the creation of an office in government whose purpose is to reduce the paper burden on small business.

Mr. Whiteway: Hurrah for that!

Mr. Abbott: I am glad to hear that expression of enthusiastic support. I suggest that progress will be made, that we shall shortly see some demonstrable results from this program and that there will be far fewer forms to be filled in by business people and a great deal less government interference with their daily work.

I am sorry there is so little time available to me in which to give a fuller resumé of all the things this government has tried to do for the small businessman. Recently we opened a small business centre in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce staffed by a knowledgeable group of people who are there when visiting businessmen come to Ottawa. They will not only tell them where to go; they will help them with their problems, assist them in making appointments and give them advice with regard to government programs.

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In addition, this small business centre has a "hot line" which anybody in Canada can call. The number is Zenith 03200.

The Budget—Mr. Abbott

Anybody can call and get an answer which does not pass the buck but which really gives a response. I urge the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka to call that number when he gets home, to see if I am right.

While many other governments would sit back and ask who could do more, this government is not prepared to rest on its laurels, deserving as it may be. It is not prepared simply to acknowledge that in the last ten years Canada has enjoyed a growth and prosperity unequalled by any other country in the world with the exception of Japan.

We are now looking at a number of positive incentives such as the one I mentioned, the creation of small business investment companies and the setting up of venture development centres to help small businessmen who want to get into business find people with money.

The other day I sent a couple of officials up to Whitehorse, where they spent three days because we are very concerned that not just the great corporations which are making steel pipe or making valves, etc., receive the benefits of the pipeline. We are interested in seeing that the small business community also enjoys the benefits. When those officials returned they advised me that there is a great deal of enthusiasm in that community, and I believe we can do much to help them.

In addition to these positive, beneficial and progressive ideas and programs, responsible programs were enunciated in the budget by the Minister of Finance who, notwithstanding difficult times, accepted his responsibility, delivered a sober, constructive and responsible budget, and yet offered Canadians incentives.

What are we getting from the desperate crowd of power-hungry politicians opposite, who crave above all else to sit on this side of the House, probably by their desperation and irresponsibility permanently denying themselves that privilege forever?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Abbott: What we get from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) are reckless suggestions that they would cut taxes by up to \$3 billion. They would restrain government spending and do a lot of other things at the same time.

Mr. Whiteway: You are right.

Mr. Abbott: The hon. member says I am right. He is the only one who believes it because the Canadian people are not going to buy that kind of rubbish. The Canadian people will listen to that kind of irresponsibility and ask themselves whether they are satisfied to hear "Joe Who?"—the Leader of the Opposition—enunciate what he is going to do for the economy when he cannot even secure a seat in his own home town. Canadians will ask themselves whether they should listen to a man who is trying to urge upon his colleagues that same sense of irresponsibility. His colleagues are a feeble army of financial critics who are, to serve their own ends, attempting to foster in the minds of the Canadian people an apprehension that this country is going down the drain.