

Government Orders

per employee. He apparently prefers the super priority. I am afraid of the super priority because I believe that is going to inhibit the ability of small business to borrow from banks. I do not want to do that in any way, shape or form having said that lack of capital and lack of a line of credit is the main reason why businesses go under.

With those few remarks, I will pass the baton on to someone else.

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin here by mentioning, perhaps for a third time in this House, that this proposed bill is not going to make it difficult for small business to get loans.

I worked on this committee, I worked on this bill and I would like to illuminate the hon. member with some additional information he may not have that came from business. I am specifically speaking about the Quebec Contractors Association. These people came before us and said: "Look, in Quebec we have to deal with super priority. That means that the workers are first in line and whenever there is a bankruptcy they get their money first". That is what we are asking for here in this bill. I asked the representative: "Well, what does that do for the banks and the caisses populaires and all those other lending institutions?" They said: "You know, it is funny. We not only have that, but we also have a tax or a lien in the construction in Quebec. Do you know what? The banks are not kicking". It has worked out pretty well. It has worked out for not quite several decades, but at least, I believe, since 1980.

I was surprised because I have heard the government say: "If we let workers have what they are due, the small businesses will never be able to get loans". That is not true at all. I think that we have to set the record straight.

I should add, by the way, that I do not think we should add another tax. My party does not believe that we should add another tax. Canadians are fed up with the taxes that we have had already. My party is fed up with the taxes that we have had already. We would like to see a more creative solution. We think that there is one. That creative solution is for the government not to spend the very little money that we already have on science projects. These are of little value in western Canada and British Columbia. Even our national scientists have said

there is no reason to spend this \$250 million. This \$60 million or \$70 million that we are asking for to protect workers could be coming out of general revenues if the government would learn not to spend money foolishly. That is what it is doing. We are having a \$400,000 travelling committee to learn about prosperity.

We are having a great deal of money being spent on committees. We are having a great deal of money being spent on things which most Canadians would feel are superfluous. We are asking in this bill for approximately \$60 million to \$70 million. That money, as it has been expressed here, would come out of a tax. It must not come out of a tax, even if that tax is going to be 5 or 10 cents per worker. There is no such thing as a free lunch. We have said that. The Conservatives used to say that before they were in government. Now they pretend there is a free lunch.

It is not a free lunch and those people who need this money should not be taxed. Businesses should not have to pay the tax. What should occur, as I said before, is that this should come out of general revenues. There is money there for it if the government would just quit wasting the little precious money it has left.

The important thing to remember is that the people who are in bankrupt situations, the workers, must get their money right away. If they have priority, even before the government, these people will have a greater chance of getting their money than ever before.

I rise to speak on this Bill C-22 mainly because I am afraid that the government, as much as it pretends that it wishes to help workers involved in bankruptcies, does not really intend to take the committee's recommendations on super priority and revenues coming in order to protect the money that they will get from general revenues. I believe that this government is going to want to bulldoze through another tax, the 33rd tax that it has passed since it has been the government.

I will not accept that, and neither will Canadians. The members of all parties in that committee, Conservatives, NDP, Liberals, have actually presented some sound suggestions that the government can use in order to deal with this very difficult situation.