

*Government Orders*

of grassroot programs that used to be available under regional development programs are gone. Instead, we have the Western Diversification Fund operating just in the big cities. It is clearly tilted toward further support for big business and completely ignores the needs of small businesses in those northern communities.

As well, we see that northern tax benefits are under threat by a task force set up by the government. It is a tax benefit brought in a few years ago and then the government shut the door. It was a tax benefit that recognized the high cost of living and of keeping trained personnel in those communities, the high costs that are associated with living in northern Canada.

As well, the point that was alluded to by the member for North Island—Powell River is a very real factor in those northern communities. Rather than building up the infrastructure of post offices, communication systems, transportation system and telephones, what we see is the government listening to their big business friends who say: "We only need those services in the big cities. We need to provide those services as cheaply as possible to the big users. The people who live in the rest of the country, the vast majority of the land area in this country, can make do and have to make do." Instead of improving, those communities which can make an economic contribution to Canadian life are faced with the lower and lower services and are more and more removed from the mainstream of economic life in this country.

So what do we need? Certainly this bill helps, but it is just a drop in the bucket compared to what small business needs.

First, in Saskatchewan we need a farm program that is not going to centralize agriculture into a few big corporate farms at the whim of the international market. We see the government at the GATT and free trade, selling out the family farm sector. All that means is even more acceleration of the trend to even fewer farms. Predictions are that if the agri-business model takes hold, we might be down to 14,000 farms in Saskatchewan within the next 20 years. That means that thousands more businesses will disappear. In fact, whole communities will disappear.

We need a Bank Act that will do several things. It needs to put small business on an equal footing with big

business, both with respect to interest rates and collateral required and with respect to where those banking services are offered. They should be offered right across the country so that we do not keep sucking money out of the small communities and the frontier areas of this country to deposit for use by big corporations in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

We need regional development programs that, on a sector by sector basis, build up those resource areas that could make a contribution to the country and its economy. They could then make a contribution to paying off our debt.

We should be reforesting northern Saskatchewan, and all the forested areas that have been clear-cut and are being left to blow away in the wind. We could create a lot of employment and ensure the future viability of business in those communities by planting more trees.

We need to take the environment seriously. Given the small population of the frontier areas of the country, if we took the environment seriously and cleaned up our lakes, restocked the fish, and cleaned up the pollution from old mines, everybody in those areas would be working rather than having 70 per cent to 80 per cent unemployment rates.

Obviously, we need lower interest rates. Interest rates are the biggest killer of small business. We need an end to the GST. We need a recognition of community economic development corporations, co-operatives, and other alternate sources of capital that will allow people in those communities to pool their capital, raise new sources of funding, organize themselves into businesses, and look at business opportunities in their communities. We need new creative ways to do that. What we have seen is that former practices are being taken away. We have to return to some faith in the grassroots of Canada to be able to control its own destiny.

We need to ensure that the customers of small businesses have money. We have to have a full employment policy in Canada. People with welfare cheques and unemployment cheques are not the same kind of customers as people with pay cheques. If there is one thing that small business in the country and in my constituency would like to see, it is more people with pay cheques and fewer people with welfare and unemployment cheques. The people with those welfare and unemployment