

Government Orders

rupt many people get hurt. For some time I have been trying to get some protection for farmers and fishermen who are affected by bankruptcies.

I wrote to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans asking him to help fishermen. The best the minister said he could do was talk to his colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and see if it could be put in the Bankruptcy Act revisions. That was almost a year ago. We now have the government's revisions and there is still no protection for farmers and fishermen.

I and my colleague from Dartmouth and other members of the Liberal Party have been trying to make changes to Bill C-22. An amendment has to be put forward that will allow fishermen to retrieve goods from a bankrupt company after the value has been added. This gives greater protection to fishermen. Giving fishermen and farmers a so-called super priority when it comes to selling off the assets of a bankrupt firm should be considered. These are two small things that would give primary producers greater protection.

I would like to give another example of a problem that can happen in bankruptcies. Let us consider a farmer who is having financial difficulties and obtains employment off of the farm. This farmer, possibly in November, December and January works out and goes on unemployment in January. He could receive the UI all year. Then let us say in November or December the bank moves in and sells his property. What is above capital gains on the sale is counted as income for this farmer. Now the farmer will not receive one nickel of the money. It goes against his debts. Revenue Canada will then send this farmer a bill after he has gone through the problem of bankruptcy, the heartache and the worry. He has gone through hell. When he wants to get his life in order and start a new business, revenue Canada says: "I want that money back". The simple thing is that man does not have that money. He has used the dollars he has received in UI to feed his wife and family.

• (1600)

This is one example. It is grossly unfair and it blocks the person from getting back into business and becoming a productive member of society, as of course all farmers wish to be.

In my view there should be some strong measures put in the legislation to protect the primary producers of

Canada. It is certainly unfair that a primary producer is generally the last person to collect a nickel in the bankruptcy.

The situation must change if fisherman or farmers are to receive any benefit from the Bankruptcy Act revisions. The bill goes a long way in improving bankruptcy processes in Canada. However, it does not give fishermen or farmers in my riding the protection they need. As I explained previously, there are so many things that can happen.

I hope the government will listen and make the proper changes in order to give the farmers and fishermen the proper protection they need under this new legislation.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Speaker, on a point order. I would like to move at this time that the hon. member for Mississauga South be now heard.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I believe you may wish to find that the motion is out of order. I understood you to have said that I would be heard following the intervention of our hon. friend from Cardigan.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): This was a special few minutes for the hon. member because he has to catch a plane. I did recognize the hon. member for Edmonton Southwest after. It is now questions and comments and I do not think the hon. member can put his motion at this time.

If there are no questions or comments. Debate. The hon. member for Mississauga South on a question or comment.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member has taken a look at the wage protection fund that is proposed in this bill and if he thinks his constituents would be prepared to pay into a wage protection fund. I am thinking of his hospitals, municipalities and people who work in fields where obviously the organization is part of government directly or indirectly. They are not likely to go bankrupt. Does he think they will be happy to kick in? It is only 10 cents a week per person to start with but these things grow and grow.

I wonder if he had a conversation with people about that and if he has spoken to his small business community about that.