

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS—PURCHASES

Question No. 2,339—**Mr. Stewart:**

Did the Department of Fisheries and Oceans purchase precious metals from Georgetown Shipyard, Georgetown, Prince Edward Island at a cost of \$27,890 and, if so (a) what were they (b) for what purpose?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): The Department of Supply and Services awarded a contract to Georgetown Shipyard, Georgetown, Prince Edward Island on behalf of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The contract was for the purchase of steel rods, reinforcing bars, washers, nuts and bolts, and was valued at \$27,890. Our records indicate that these supplies were to be used to repair small wharfs.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker: The questions enumerated by the parliamentary secretary have been answered. Shall the remaining questions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Madam Speaker: Shall the notices of motions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1980

MEASURE RESPECTING BANKRUPTCY AND INSOLVENCY

The House resumed, from Tuesday, May 19, 1981, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ouellet that Bill C-12, respecting bankruptcy and insolvency, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to rise this afternoon to share some thoughts with the hon. members of the House of Commons on Bill C-12, an act respecting bankruptcy and insolvency. I suspect that at first glance many hon.

Bankruptcy

members thought that we should be paying particular attention to this bill before us, recognizing the experience of the government in areas of bankruptcy, its success over the years in bringing us to the brink of bankruptcy and, as some people would suggest, its bankrupt policies in respect of a number of programs and perhaps even some principles.

I want to recognize the very excellent presentations made by a number of people on this side of the House in the last number of hours in reference to some of the details in Bill C-12. I am specifically referring to the hon. member from Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly); the hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish); and, indeed, the hon. member for Cambridge (Mr. Speyer) and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald). Rather than repeat a number of the fine points they made in their presentations yesterday, I want to focus my comments today on matters of economics and speak on Bill C-12 within an economical or political context, contrary to the comments of the minister who mentioned in his introduction of the bill that it had nothing to do with economics and little to do with politics. Having listened to a number of hon. members speak to this particular bill, that is certainly anything but the truth when one considers the very obvious economic and political overtures attached to it.

In an effort to present a historic pattern regarding bankruptcies, one would immediately recognize that over the last number of years bankruptcies have certainly been on the rise. Business bankruptcies, just to identify one category, numbered 3,905 in 1977. In 1980, business bankruptcies numbered 6,600. Over a three-year period there was an increase in excess of 40 per cent. Of course, if one were to look at the first quarter of 1981, one would see that in absolute numbers, the number of business bankruptcies, farm bankruptcies, personal bankruptcies and other is indeed higher in some cases than in previous years. Between 1975 and today, the number of bankruptcies has more than doubled. When referring to the number of bankruptcies amongst farmers; businesses and individuals, we are speaking of a phenomenon that exists from one end of Canada to the other. It is found in virtually every region, every subregion, every municipality and village. Bankruptcies are occurring at rates that not many years ago would have been considered unacceptable and even unbelievable.

● (1530)

I suggest that this is only the tip of the iceberg, Mr. Speaker. In discussing Bill C-12 and bankruptcies, we are just dealing with what we can see above the water, so to speak; nine tenths of the situation is kept from discussion by this particular bill.

If one were to look at the businesses that declare bankruptcy, one would find that there are many others that simply find the struggle not to be worth while, that pay off their debts and close their doors. Other businesses, of course, would simply be put into receivership. From the record it would appear that for every small business bankruptcy, between three and six small