

Small Business

acceptable. We now have to move to be sure that it is understood, and the minister must do more lobbying with the bankers and be damned sure that it gets down to the branches because this is where the difficulty lies. I hope we will see the day when the small businessman can go into a chartered bank that will say: "We know about the Small Businesses Loans Act, here are the necessary forms, fill them out and we will consider your application".

I do not wish to put all the onus on the banks because it is a two-way street when borrowing money. The individual borrowing has to supply adequate information to the banks if he is going to expect to get a loan. I suggest to the minister that he put together a booklet on how to get a loan through the Small Businesses Loans Act. Many people just do not know what is required, and I know this from the number that I talk to. I tell them quite openly if they are turned down by one bank to go to another. After all, we have six banks and we are not tied to one.

If the banks choose not to move in this area and the minister cannot make any progress, when we are looking at the Bank Act revision I will suggest to him that perhaps near banks, *caisses populaires*, trust companies and credit unions should move into the field covered by the Small Businesses Loans Act. Somewhere along the line we have to find funding for the small business sector, and it must be more than we have now. We have to find credit facilities. If we do, I know there will be more entrepreneurs and the hiring of more people.

I know this from people of my own acquaintance and from experience of my own personal business. In my own little business we have designed three products we hope to receive the patent for within the next 18 months. We did this all on our own without any assistance from the government. We are just one small company, and there are thousands across this country that have far better abilities than my company has. I know that it can be done and that we must move into this area to assist the small business sector. If we take this action, I know that Canada generally is going to gain. I urge the minister to heed my remarks and find some way to move in this direction in the very near future.

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, in this critical period when vast changes are occurring over a very short period of time, it seems difficult for those participating in these changes to have a clear perception of what is happening. Only much later is the nature of the crisis described by historians.

● (2042)

The failure to perceive global crises perhaps explains the nature of the deliberations in this House over the last year, with emphasis on alleged RCMP misdeeds, concentration on elections and polls and the kinds of events that occurred this afternoon. These factors, I believe, tend to belie the true nature of the period in which we are living.

The quantum leap in the problems facing all nations, the unheard of phenomena of growing energy shortages globally,

and the failure of conventional techniques to deal with these problems either because the techniques are not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem or because they are, worse still, counterproductive, are factors which should suggest to all that we are in a critical period, a period between one era and another.

One of the characteristics of the era that we have lived through is the great faith in bigness. If something is big it has got to be better, cheaper and more efficient. I believe one of the causes for the changes in our time which will bring the end of this era is that faith in bigness. It is my belief in a new era, when we come to grips with these problems and the nature of this crisis of our time, that we will find smaller units and smaller groups, smaller businesses and smaller governments. These are some of the things which will characterize this new period.

I am pleased today to be involved in this debate on small business. I would like to congratulate the hon. member for High Park-Humber Valley (Mr. Jelinek) and those who were responsible for putting this motion together. I think the motion is well thought out. I would also like to congratulate the Minister of State (Small Business) (Mr. Abbott) for his response. It seems to me that in this debate today there has been a general good mood in terms of this problem. We all see different things that can be done, but in general we are looking at suggestions from all over this House so as to move in an intelligent direction, a direction which I think presages a new era.

Dealing with the motion, there are a couple of areas which I perceive as being important. One of the ways that governments can change direction is in their purchasing policies. Certainly I believe that governments, because of the very large nature of the operation, can make some significant advances in supporting small business by adopting purchasing policies which will support small business. The minister alluded to this. We have taken some steps but I am sure more can be taken.

The notion of a consortia of small businesses is one that I find particularly pleasing provided, of course, the consortia themselves do not become a large business. There are many ways this can be done. Perhaps more than anything John Bulloch's group and other groups in this country are explaining and pointing to a direction to make this possible.

I agreed with the minister when he took some exception to the limited nature of the definition of small business as described in the motion. One definition might very well be "owner-management" but I think this definition, as the minister explained, is somewhat limited and should be broadened and made a little more flexible. Generally in this House we know what we are talking about when we are discussing this problem.

In my area of the country, which is northwestern Ontario, we see some problems which communities and small businessmen are facing. I see that there are things sensitive governments can do to resolve some of these problems. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that in the first three or four years I was here I was not very happy with the approach taken to small busi-