

Improvement Loans

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. At that point I was in conversation with another hon. member and did not hear the hon. member's remarks. I am sure that if the remarks of the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Brisco) were unparliamentary or not customary to the language of the House, he will withdraw them if they were offensive. I did not hear them. Before I make a ruling on that, I will have to wait until *Hansard* is out tomorrow.

Mr. Brisco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no idea why there was an interjection from the other side. I am sorry the hon. member has an expression of concern. I realize there were some exchanges across the floor.

I would like to emphasize to the Minister of State for Small Business that not only are we concerned with the weight and volume and interjection of so many departments and ministries within the federal government, but we are also concerned with those same interventions by counterpart departments within provincial governments. As was indicated by the hon. member for Okanagan-Kootenay, we are faced with what amounts to harassment not only by provincial tax officials but by federal tax officials.

Recently one of my constituents, a gentleman of some 80 years of age, returned from a trip to Spokane, Washington, where he had occasion to see a dentist and get his dentures relined or something of that nature. He spent the enormous sum of approximately \$2.85 in Spokane, Washington, all that he could afford as a pensioner. When he returned to Rossland, British Columbia, it was not too long before someone from the provincial tax department contacted him with regard to his heavy purchases in Spokane, Washington, and asked for the provincial government's 5 per cent.

I cannot think of anything more objectionable than some tax hound going after an 80 year old senior citizen to get his 5 per cent or 7 per cent pound of flesh on a \$2.85 purchase. That provincial tax hound must have obtained his information from some federal counterpart. How else would he have known about it? He must have obtained the information through either Customs or Immigration. I am not pointing the finger at any one Customs officer or any one border crossing, but I have to conclude that he obtained it from someone in authority. This kind of irritant to a pensioner is only an example of the irritants that are multiplied by 100 times for small businessmen.

The minister has indicated that he is genuinely and seriously concerned about cutting through the weight of bureaucratic material that flocks into the offices of small businesses. I hope he will address himself to that particular concern.

There is one other area that I hope the minister will also consider. I hope that within the FBDB in each province there will be somebody with that degree of imagination and business perception that when someone approaches them with an idea they want to put into production or go ahead with, they will be of some assistance. Someone may approach them saying, "I know this thing will fly, but I do not know where to go from here." That person is not likely to get the extra help he needs

[Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi).]

from FBDB, nor is he likely to get it from any government source. The most sensible response in British Columbia is likely to come from the B.C. department of economic development.

● (1510)

I think the B.C. Development Corporation has been doing a commendable job. The minister could do worse than consult in depth with them regarding treatment of the interesting and imaginative schemes, some of which offer great possibilities and will fly, but still need direction. If the hon. gentleman would take it upon himself to see that there are imaginative people engaged in this process, there might be a prospect of putting more small business men into the community and employing more Canadians.

A final frustration I would direct to the minister is the frustration I see with reference to the establishment of FBDB offices where these applications are handled. I noticed last summer with considerable concern and alarm that an FBDB office had been established in the city of Williams Lake. I am sure it is very good for the community, but I notice there is no such office at Trail, Castlegar, in Nelson or, to my knowledge, in Fernie. That whole territory is covered out of the Cranbrook office. If the Cranbrook office is of the view that it can handle both the east and the west Kootenays, I wonder why it was considered necessary to put a small business office in Williams Lake, less than 100 miles south of Prince George. I wonder why the government has failed to reply to questions which I placed on the order paper with regard to the establishment of that office.

I wonder why it is that the FBDB picked a location in downtown Williams Lake which was a prime economic and trading value, the best spot in town. The old building had been destroyed by fire. Somebody put up a new building and the FBDB moved in after spending I don't know how many thousands of dollars upon changes. I do not know why the department has failed to answer my questions asking why the contracts for furniture, carpeting and so on, were made with people far removed from the community. There was no one in Williams Lake who sold an office desk or a typewriter.

How many people are working at Williams Lake? How is it that Williams Lake now requires a storefront operation in a prime location as opposed, say, to working from a second floor office? Why was no reference made to the banks in that community which have a better awareness of the requirements of small businessmen than does FBDB?

How many applications which originated in Williams Lake were processed in 1975? How many were accepted and how many were rejected? I should like to know what criteria were utilized to determine the need to open an office at Williams Lake. I should like to know how many employees are presently on the pay-roll there, and how many applications were processed in 1976 by the Williams Lake office. How many applications have been processed since the office was opened? I should like to know how much these operations cost, and I