

although the Government won, it was the Opposition that took advantage of the spoils. We will be happy to present the trophy to its rightful owners in the House tomorrow. The trophy is currently in the possession of the opposition Parties. To the victors did not go the spoils. I know that the medical bills—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: Those of you who did not participate will know that we all had a lot of fun last night in a very non-partisan way, and I am sure we would love to see that spirit flow over into the House today.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Copps: I know that the medical bills that I will be receiving from the Member for Guelph (Mr. Winegard) will be very high. This Government has closed its eyes, as have the provinces across this country, to extra billing. Knowing the number of opted-out physicians in the City of Guelph, I am sure the opted-out bill that I am going to receive will be very high, but it will be paid accordingly.

On a serious note, Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by the comments of the Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie) who pointed to the demise of the modern economic system as dating back to 1972. First, I think he gave us a decade of good government on the Liberal side of the House, and for recognizing that I would like to congratulate him. I would like to make sure he stands up and clarifies that in the House. Second, and it is a point that I would like to relate specifically to this Bill, is his comment regarding the alleged Liberal-NDP coalition. We have heard the comments from the spokesperson for the New Democratic Party with respect to this Bill. They follow very closely along the position taken by the Government. I refer to the decision of the Government to introduce a Bill that will force small businesses into a position of not being guaranteed 100 per cent but simply 90 per cent liability. Anybody who has been in business will know that one of the greatest difficulties in establishing and maintaining a business is the problem of venture capital and cash flow. It seems to me that in this particular measure the Government is not going to back up small businesses 100 per cent. The Government is saying that it will only back them up 90 per cent. I have seen friends in my own constituency who have gone to their bank managers pleading for an extra month's extension on a payment. I have seen people trying to juggle the kind of cash flow between receivables and payables that can make or break a small business.

I would like to point out in passing that a number of Members in this House have referred to the difficulties faced by small businessmen. Of the new businesses generated in Canada last year more than 50 per cent were created by a new level of entrepreneurs, namely, by women of this country. I think it is about time that we excised from our vocabulary the notion that the only people who could be interested in business are businessmen. It has clearly been shown through past history that women, being the frugal sort that we are, have a greater opportunity to succeed in starting a small business.

Small Businesses Loans Act

That is certainly showing itself in the successful record of women in business which is beginning to emerge across Canada.

● (1650)

I cannot understand why the NDP supported the Government in what I perceive to be a very regressive measure, in particular as it relates to lending practices for small businesses seeking venture capital. They need the kind of loan guarantees which may in fact make or break them.

I am happy to see the Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight) here today. In terms of the housing industry, CMHC does not only say that it will guarantee a percentage. It says to the bank that if the borrower is prepared to put up a certain percentage, it will provide a 100 per cent guarantee from that point forward. I cannot understand why the Government is suggesting that the same financial incentives should not be provided to the small business sector.

I should like to take this opportunity to remind government Members of the promises which were made to the small business sector prior to the last election. There were a number of promises. We know they numbered in the three hundreds across all areas, but I will not debate that at this particular time. However, in the area of small business there were in fact 12 promises, most of which led to the idea of developing more accessible capital, in particular development and venture capital for small business, as well as reducing bureaucratic red tape and the difficulties currently being faced by small business people who expect to obtain loans. I should like to cite them for the record.

The first promise was to reduce the burden of excessive regulations and reporting requirements with which small business has to cope.

An Hon. Member: It has been done.

Ms. Copps: What has happened with that regulation? I am sorry the Hon. Member for Saskatchewan has not had a chance to read the Bill. If he had read it, he would know that in Clause 5 the Conservative Government is saying that from now on the Governor in Council will be allowed to change by regulation all registration of loans, procedures for submission, processing and payment, the fee, and the payment and calculation of the fee. The Government is taking a Pontius Pilate approach to streamlining small business loans. It is now saying, as of this clause, that it will wash its hands of any responsibility and that it will be the Governor in Council who will have the opportunity to do so through regulation which will not even be examined in the House by Members who were duly elected across the country. It will now be the responsibility of the Governor in Council to design regulations relating to small business loans.

There is nothing written in this Bill which will guarantee that the Governor in Council in fact will move to streamline the process. Rather than seeing an attempt to show some leadership to take economic matters in hand and to cut down on red tape, the Government is saying that it cannot do it and