

*Government Orders*

This woman also pointed out the difficulty in financing. It was interesting. I made a speech last spring on small business pointing out the difficulties that the small business community had in dealing with banks at the present time that do 85 per cent of their financing. I pointed out the difficulties over and above that which women have.

I received a letter from the vice-president of a major bank shortly thereafter pointing out that the policies were policies of equality. That surprised me, so this past year I spoke to a number of business people across Canada and discussed whether they as women ran into any difficulties with the banking community. I have not yet met one who has not had some type of difficulty with the major banks in requirements of collateral. In a number of cases their husbands had to co-sign for their loans. Why?

We know that women are moving more and more into the small business area successfully. As the parliamentary secretary has pointed out, 22 per cent of all businesses with paid employees are owned by women, and that is growing. Our statistics also show us that as women move into the business community they are more successful in those pursuits than are men who start up a new business. They have a much higher success rate, yet they are treated like second-class citizens when it comes to getting loans.

I say to that vice-president of that bank that he may pay lip service and he may point out studies, but the studies I have seen and the people with whom I have spoken indicate that although it is changing it is not changing fast enough.

We have to start treating youth, women and small minority groups equally. Because of the success that women have had in business, it is not good enough to pay lip service and simply say that we are doing everything and they are being treated equally. When we talk to Newfoundlanders and people in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, northern Ontario, British Columbia and elsewhere across the country, we know that they are not being treated equally.

The small business community is required, unlike large corporations or large businesses, to put up more collateral. Even with the Small Businesses Loans Act guaranteeing 85 per cent of these loans, large banks still triple dip. They require personal guarantees, they require corporate guarantees, and they require collateral up to at least three times the amount of the loan. Often they require cross-guarantees of spouses. Yet these loans are guaranteed by the Small Businesses Loans Act up to 85 per cent.

This is where I would suggest the Federal Business Development Bank comes in. If properly managed and directed, it can be a definite advantage to the small business community as a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs, as a place where I as a business person could go to find out what I have to do to incorporate and investigate banking needs, accounting needs, and loan needs. The whole range should be dealt with in one shot and can be dealt with through the Federal Business Development Bank.

In addition, I would suggest that the Federal Business Development Bank could be used not as a lending institute of last resort but as a lending institute to ensure that small business people who are starting up and need capital at a reasonable rate to do so have a viable place to go. I suggest that we can do it if the will is there for the government to do it.

I would like to touch on farmers as a viable small business community before the hour runs out. We as legislators must recognize that farmers are a major small business thrust. We must look at assisting them as small business people in looking at the future of our country. More and more farmers are becoming sophisticated. They have all their books on computers, but like other small business people they need help in training to be able to run their businesses as businesses. The Federal Business Development Bank and the Farm Credit Corporation could have and should have a thrust in this area.

I simply want to encourage this government to pay attention to the small business community, the community of the past, the community of the future, and the community that we in the New Democratic Party say will be able to lead this country into a strong economic future for all Canada.