

*Government Orders**[English]*

I do not think it has some of the negatives that some people pretend are there. It is a small amount and could benefit some of the same people who are going to make the contributions.

*[Translation]*

Those comments were made by my hon. friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell while answering questions about peoples concerns with a tax. So I would like my colleague to tell me if he has changed his mind since, because when I heard him say those things a few weeks ago, I thought his comments rang true. I thought his remarks made sense. I was glad to see that one of my friends on the other side understood the problems that we had and that we had no choice. You even mentioned that employees would be involved, since we would only pay 90 per cent, and that there would be some sharing by employers and employees. I thought this approach was constructive and positive, much simpler and much more practical than super priority.

Therefore, I would like to get the hon. member's opinion on this, since his comments were very positive. I would like to know where he stands today.

*[English]*

**Mr. Boudria:** Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, the minister has just said that I agreed with the member for Portage—Interlake. All members, Felix and I, opposition members, third party members and his own colleagues were unanimous in our decision. Yes, I did agree with the hon. member for Portage—Interlake, but not on what the minister is saying we did. I invite him to read the report.

**Mr. MacDonald (Dartmouth):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have consulted with both the parliamentary secretary and the New Democratic Party to determine if there was unanimous consent not to see seven o'clock until after my colleague from Malpeque has had an opportunity to participate in the debate. I think, if the Speaker consults the House, he would find that there is such consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is there unanimous consent for the suggestion of the hon. member for Dartmouth to give more time to the member for Malpeque?

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, there have been such discussions. It is my understanding that the hon. member for Malpeque has a short speech of perhaps 10 minutes. We would be prepared to give consent for her to deliver that speech now. We would not want to encroach unduly on Private Members' Hour and we hope that the vote at the end of that hour can still be held on time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate this evening. This bill is one that is certainly overdue. As we know the legislation on the books now was presented in 1949. It is time that we had new bankruptcy legislation.

I know that this bill covers many areas. This evening, since I am limited to 10 minutes, I will try to stay within that timeframe and address three of the areas under this legislation.

The first I want to talk about is wage earner protection. The situation right now pertaining to the legislation of 1949 is that employees of a company that goes bankrupt have a legitimate claim for \$500 in unpaid wages out of the assets of that bankrupt company. There are a lot of problems with that. Certainly \$500 does not represent very much today. That figure was set in 1949 and simply today, 42 years later, that amount is inadequate.

• (1900)

The second is that according to statistics only 72 per cent of employees did not collect even their \$500. I am sure that all members have at one time or another talked to constituents who have been in a situation where a company has gone bankrupt, a company for which they have worked for maybe a year, five years or ten years. All of a sudden it goes bankrupt and they cannot get the wages due to them. Certainly we are seeing that more and more these days.

Last week statistics came out from Statistics Canada which showed that bankruptcies in Atlantic Canada increased 62 per cent over September of last year. In this climate, if an employee loses his job today because a