

Small Businesses Loans Act

Mr. Speaker, this sounds much more like a prepared speech than questions and comments.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Taylor): I think the point of order is well taken. The Hon. Member has now spoken for five minutes. I would suggest that you put your question, if you have one. We will give you 30 seconds to finish your comments. Is that satisfactory?

[Translation]

Mrs. Duplessis: I hope, therefore, that Hon. Members opposite will support this bill which could create new jobs and ensure our economic recovery, for it is well known that small businesses are the engine of the economy.

[English]

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly did not hear a question in the Hon. Member's comments, so it is very difficult for me to reply. I have to give her some credit because it looked like she had a prepared text which was typed out while I was speaking; I do not know where the secretary was.

However, I think the Hon. Member has missed the point because there was no correlation whatsoever between what she said and what I said. She is supporting this Bill. I mentioned earlier that I am not so much against what is in the Bill but what is not in it for small business. Anyway, this Bill has a regressive aspect to it inasmuch as there is a 1 per cent charge on loans to banks. I have talked with representatives of financial institutions in my riding. I hope the Hon. Member has talked with her financial institution representatives in order to obtain their feelings on it. I challenge her to visit my riding and discuss it with the managers of banks, credit unions and other lending institutions. They will tell her that this 1 per cent stipulation will not work for them. Therefore they will not be very co-operative as far as lending money to those who really need the dollars is concerned.

That is the point I am trying to make. I certainly respect the Hon. Member's comments and views, but in the real world out there it is extremely difficult for small business. It is extremely difficult for them, unless the business was inherited from a family member or from someone closely related, or some government came along with a substantial grant. Even with a government grant, provincial and/or federal, they require operating capital. This is where many small businesses fall down. It is the fact that they do not have the capital with which to operate after they have established themselves. That problem is not dealt with in the Bill. I hope the Government takes a look at it in committee to see if it could bring in some program which would be of real assistance to small business.

● (1210)

[Translation]

Mr. André Plourde (Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for giving me my first opportunity to speak to this honourable House. My reason for making my maiden speech as the Member for Kamouraska-Rivière-

re-du-Loup at this particular time is that the Bill before the House today is an excellent one and is worthy of the set of measures the Progressive Conservative Government is proposing to restore the health of our economy. It is therefore an honour and indeed a duty for me to express today the concerns of the people of Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup with respect to Canada's economic future, because it is my sincere conviction that if we are to restore this nation's economy, we must start with the regions. They must have a say in the matter. The fact that I am speaking today to the Parliament of Canada on their behalf is the most precious gift I could ever offer my constituents and is also the measure of the thanks I wish to extend to a team of workers and representatives in my constituency, because in Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup, we also live by the words: "Co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration", a motto that honours this Government of which I am proud to be a Member and which reflects honourably on all Canadians.

But, Mr. Speaker, what do the people of Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup want? They want jobs, and they want food on the table. The Bill before the House today is concerned with exactly that, because if we stop to think for a minute, we will realize how important small business is to our economy.

In fact, it is very easy to understand. We only have to ask: What sector generate the greatest number of jobs? The answer is easy: small business!

Over the period 1978-1982, at the height of the recent depression, they generated almost all of the new jobs that were created. Today, they account for 30 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product in the private sector. Numbering over three quarters of a million, they make up 96 per cent of Canadian businesses and are managed by a class of entrepreneurs who reflect both this country's economic vitality and the image of our changing society. Their average age is 35 to 45, with women on the increase. Their number has increased threefold between 1964 and 1980. And people under 30, anxious to take risks and confident of investing in this country are now twice as numerous as they were 15 years ago.

But for the SMBs to fully exercise their role as the locomotive of our Canadian economy, they must have the means to do so. In order for a business to create jobs, it must operate. And in order to operate at a fair rate, it must provide for a minimum of competition, which means that it must improve, modernize and adjust itself. And in order to do that, the owner of that industry must have access to the funds that are available.

Already, Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Government has taken a major step towards the promotion of financing for Canadian SMBs by creating Investment Canada, which will build a climate of confidence liable to attract foreign capital and to strengthen the backbone of our economy. All our regions will benefit.

In the case of the Province of Quebec especially, an ancillary agreement under the Canada-Quebec RDA has been