

The Address

us record growth. It has given us record bankruptcies of small businesses and of people across this country: 6,258 in March of this past year. That is up 52 per cent from a year ago. Ontario has suffered an increase of 78 per cent.

We all know that for every single bankruptcy of a small business there are at least two other small businesses that simply shut their doors and lay their people off. The jobs and the hopes those small businesses had disappear.

The Conference Board of Canada, usually a friend of this government, came out this past week with a relatively unbiased source of information, indicating that this government and this country will have the worst growth record of any industrialized country in the entire western world; another record for this government to think about.

Did you see, Mr. Speaker, any of this harsh reality in the throne speech? Did you see any statement which recognized that we are in a recession? Did you see anything which indicated that we have lost 418,000 full-time jobs in the past year, that we have lost 6,000 in the past month? Not a thing, just brave words about prosperity.

This economic disaster is a tremendous challenge to our unity as a country. It is a challenge which this government is not meeting and will not meet with the empty words in this throne speech. It talks about a paper on learning with absolutely no detail, a suggestion that of course it does not take money to do anything about learning. There is no recognition that it is the government's very own cutbacks in financial support for the provinces, through Established Programs Funding, money which goes to education, which is creating the educational crisis across this land.

The government talks again about free trade and how wonderful free trade has been. I would have thought that the government would at least not have had the effrontery, the gall to stand up in this Parliament and talk about how free trade has helped this country in the face of 418,000 permanent job losses in the past year.

• (1200)

Mr. McCreath: Where did you get that figure?

Mr. Langdon: Right out of Statistics Canada.

Mr. McCreath: And how many new jobs?

Mr. Langdon: How many new jobs? There have been 109,000 new jobs, all of them part-time, in the past year. The total loss of employment in this past year has been well over 300,000, even if you include part-time jobs, which most people in this country are not looking for. They are looking for full-time jobs.

I suggest to members across the way that if they are not prepared to believe me, they should look the statistics up in the daily Statistics Canada, May 10, 1991. It states that full-time employment decreased by 418,000.

There is a great deal of talk in this throne speech about the need to be flexible and the need to be able to adjust in this country. The previous minister talked about this need. Yet this government's promise of the very best adjustment policies ever to be seen in any western country disappeared the day the election ended in 1988 and we have not seen any of it in the House of Commons since.

[*Translation*]

I have never heard such an empty Throne Speech! There is simply nothing in it. Lower interest rates are mentioned, but the job is left entirely to the private sector without any kind of assistance. To help and reassure the people, the government has promised some more major economic restructuring, this time with a free-trade deal between Canada, the United States and also Mexico. That is supposed to make us more competitive on global markets. The government also talks about improving education opportunities and promoting job training. But how can we trust a government that keeps on cutting funding in that field?

[*English*]

What should this speech have said? There should have been action in it for small business especially. There should have been serious hope of a government loans program that would help small business across this country. There should have been bankruptcy reform which small business has been pushing for for years and which this government still has not delivered. There should have been responses to farmers across this country.

I have just returned from a trip across western Canada in which farmers talked to me about their unhappiness with GRIP. They see the Gross Revenue Insurance Program as something that would simply not respond to