

Government Orders

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry that the government House leader has left the House.

I would like to put this on the record. It is a question that I asked last week following the statement by the Prime Minister who is a very strong supporter of redress for Japanese Canadians. That redress settlement is not completed.

I wanted to ask the government House leader but perhaps whoever is standing in for him would forward this to him. When will the government proclaim Bill C-63 which you will recall was the act to establish a Canadian race relations foundation, part of the redress resettlement, in view of the fact that this bill received Royal Assent way back in February 1991? This House went through the whole process of debate for many months prior to that.

We need to have this bill proclaimed before this session ends.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the question has been received and will be taken into consideration.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade) moved that Bill C-118, an act to amend the Export Development Act be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is truly export day. We had NAFTA before lunch and now we have Bill C-118, the bill to amend the Export Development Act. That is the legislation which governs the Export Development Corporation.

If there is one thing that I hope all members of this House will agree upon, it is the importance of bolstering the capacity of the Canadian economy, to strengthen it in any way so that Canadians now and into the future have every opportunity to prosper and grow.

If there is one thing that I am particularly proud of after serving nine years as minister it is the leadership that this government has shown in preparing Canada's economy to meet the fierce competition of the new global marketplace.

Canada is a trading nation. I think we are all very well aware of that.

• (1530)

On a per capita basis, we trade twice as much as the Japanese and two and one-half times as much as the Americans. Canadian companies that compete abroad learn what it takes to compete anywhere. They and their work forces become less and less vulnerable to foreign based marketers, sweeping in and beating them on price or quality on their own Canadian shelves.

They are ready for that kind of competition because they have faced it internationally. With the better market share here and new market share abroad, these companies grow. They create good jobs. If we are going to remain a high-wage society, Canadian-based companies must be able to compete everywhere.

[Translation]

Ever since this government came to office, it has emphasized the importance of Canadian entrepreneurs being competitive players beyond our borders. No other government in Canada's history has done more to open up new international markets, including North America, which is the most important marketplace in the world. And no other government has done more to encourage Canadian companies to expand internationally.

[English]

These efforts have already had an impact. The strength of our exports which I referred to extensively this morning which have to keep growing if Canada is going to maintain its status as a leading international economy were of critical importance in sustaining this through a debilitating world recession.

It is our exports once again that are leading us out of this recession. The bill before us would modernize the Export Development Act, enabling the Export Development Corporation to become a more dynamic institution for Canadian based enterprise operating abroad. If we are encouraging more Canadian firms to operate abroad, we must do what we can to minimize the risks and difficulties that these companies encounter. This is where EDC comes in.