

*Routine Proceedings*

What the government says is that some form of tariffication is a solution to our problems, that somehow under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, that will be allowable and our farmers will just do fine. Well that is not the case. I am really not sure if the government has come to any sort of understanding of the importance of the supply managed commodities in terms of its effects on the rural infrastructures.

I know we have a number of rural members here tonight and I want to say to them that in rural Canada times are getting tough. In rural Canada when a government closes down post offices, as in the hon. minister's riding, when it closes down opportunities, when it closes down certain programs that help fund rural agriculture it makes times difficult.

We have been doubly hurt in southwestern Ontario over the past few years because the government has not committed any special programs to southwestern Ontario. We have funding programs for northern Ontario, in some of the areas of Canada and some of the smaller provinces. In my area, which is in the southwest between major centres, we have difficulty in terms of creating employment opportunities for our people. Unfortunately the government has provided no programs to help give them opportunities for jobs.

• (2205)

As I said, agriculture is important in my area. I have fought many fights in this House regarding my tobacco farmers as I mentioned earlier in reference to my Whip. Over the past few years the government has not provided any sort of alternatives to these farmers. It has talked a lot about certain programs, but these programs have not been around the last two years. The REDUX program has not been available to these farmers to help them deal with some of their problems. The Alternate Enterprise Initiative program which is to help farmers move into other areas has not been available the last year.

Before I go I want to talk about trade. Canadians get a sense, right or wrong, and that is debatable on the other side, that the free trade deal has not benefited this country. I hear that from people throughout Canada and in fact people are coming forward and saying that. We are finding out we do not have access to the American market that was promised in the free trade deal.

I feel that this government, instead of negotiating a NAFTA and adding another country into the pot, should first solve some of the problems of this deal. We have debated that over the past few years and it seems to me that the government once again is just moving ahead on this issue without first addressing some of the concerns and some of the problems that Canadians have had in terms of trade.

The biggest problem we have in generating jobs in our area is small businesses. Small businesses just do not have adequate financing. The Small Businesses Loans Act needs reform and adjustment.

This government has not addressed the concerns of small businesses in this country. In my area small businesses that want to create jobs and could create many jobs are being closed down by banks. I know hon. members are experiencing the same problems in their areas where banks are really getting tough because of some of the difficult times.

The Federal Business Development Bank should be out there helping these companies. In my area in particular, the Federal Business Development Bank has been acting more like a bank than as it should. I know hon. members were here when that bank was set up. These business people do not have access to the capital they need to create jobs. Unfortunately without access to this capital there will not be the jobs available.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I want to particularly thank the Chair and yourself for the fine job you have done in this Chamber over the past few years. I know we have been on some delegations together and I saw you in action on the weekend at the Conservative convention. I think you did a great job there. I also want to take the opportunity to thank my leader and my Whip for their fine work in this House. I look forward to seeing my colleagues across the floor after the next election. I will save a seat right here for the hon. member and I am sure it will fit him well.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard):** Madam Speaker, I realize only a few minutes are left for comments, before we adjourn. I don't intend to spend a lot of time commenting on the remarks and statistics of the government House leader who presented the motion