

Government Orders

That has been the biggest accomplishment of our committee. We have made a very strong impact in causing the men and women who are managing the banks to reflect and review the way they have been dealing with business. Not big business. We all know that whenever big business wants a \$500,000 or a \$3 billion loan the banks trip over themselves trying to lend those larger businesses the money. In the past few years some of those loans the banks were tripping over each other to give to the larger businesses ended up coming back in their faces, or part of them came back in their faces.

We were not really concerned with the larger corporations. We respect the larger corporations and the job creation contribution they make to the community, but we were concerned with the small business community and the fact that the small business community represents virtually all of the new job creation that is happening in this country. I believe and I know many members opposite believe that those quarterly accountability sessions are shifting the attitudes of the banks.

Ultimately, it does not matter what side of the House we sit on, we are here for one reason. We are here to get the economy of this country going again. The economy is only going to start going again when collectively we can work at creating an environment where business can flourish and give men and women the dignity of a job. That is the most important thing we can be working on today.

It is no secret that there are just under three million men and women who do not have work. I cannot imagine getting up in the morning and not having a job to go to. Many of us here have been blessed with the fact that not only do we have a terrific opportunity to serve our country right now, but we have also had the opportunity to work throughout our careers. Very few of us have felt the pain or the assault on our dignity of not having a job. That assault on dignity is the toughest thing a man or a woman can face. Our number one responsibility is to assist in creating an environment where business can take those risks and chances to get the economy going. That is why we on this side of the House, supported by members opposite as well, believe that whenever we can pass an act of Parliament that will improve on creating more jobs, even if they are minor improvements, then we are on it right away.

● (1520)

It is important that a bill like this does not take a long time to go through the House. That is why it is important to work together. If we can work together and get the proper amendments in this bill, then this kind of cohesion gives confidence to the marketplace and the people who execute this bill, the banks.

This bill is not executed by the government. After it is passed by this House this bill will be implemented by the financial institutions in Canada. The bank managers make the decision as to whether or not that taxpayer guarantee should be given to a

small business man or woman. The implementation of the act is totally delegated to the financial institutions. Because of this guarantee those bank managers can take a bit more risk. Ultimately that is going to assist in getting the economy going.

The small business sector represents the greatest hope we have for putting Canadians back to work. It is going to accomplish that once the proper environment is put in place. Also, the small business man or woman does not tend to create a lot of bureaucracy and therefore can be more efficient when operating a small business. They tend to have much closer relationships with the men and women who work with them. The family-like environment which happens in a small business in many cases generates the kind of activity that allows creativity to flourish, that allows productivity, which allows business to create better products at better prices.

That is ultimately the reason our exports are going to be our hope as well. In the last few months our exports have been holding the economy together. Many of those exports, for example in the automotive sector, came from small and medium sized corporations. Some of them are organized in larger institutions but many of them are small, individual plants with a maximum of 30 to 50 workers.

We have to stop thinking of small business in the traditional way it has been thought of in this Chamber. For many years in Ottawa most of the attention was given to the larger businesses. The larger businesses had the resources to come to Ottawa and lobby their MPs or they had the resources through accountants and lawyers to do the work on the basic grants and support systems that were in place. Larger businesses had the resources to get their tax credit put into the tax act because they could afford to lobby the various departments including the Department of Finance.

● (1525)

In the last two or three years we have discovered that a lot of these larger businesses with all the great contributions they have made in terms of job creation and research, are not creating the same kind of economic thrust. Now it is the small business community. Many of us have had to reorient ourselves, go back to basics and reacquaint ourselves to try to understand what the small business community really needs.

Even though I frequently talk about access to capital, there are a couple of other things the government is going to have to address as well. We have to take up the challenge to reduce the paper burden and red tape. How many times do we hear that small business men and women are spending more time pushing paper and government forms than on their own businesses? We have become a nation of paper pushers. We have to realize that along with access to capital we must reduce the red tape and paper burden.