

Government Orders

I think for the member to suggest when we are talking about the Export Development Corporation not to talk about the Scarborough van plant when we are closing it this Thursday is a bit too sensitive.

Getting back to the Export Development Corporation, I think there is something else we have to talk about in this bill. I believe there are very few small businesses in our country that have a complete understanding of what the Export Development Corporation is all about. Would the member agree with that? It is a question of whose fault it is. We are on third reading of this bill. I can tell that this government has finally come to the realization that of the economic policies that it has been implementing in this nation very little is working.

• (1310)

It has also come to the realization that the people of Canada are not going to be fooled for the third time. This government has the greatest record for unemployment, perpetrating welfare, and shutting down manufacturing plants. It is the most incredible thing that it is here today while we are trying to be creative and constructive with the Export Development Corporation and while we are talking about the lives of 20,000 people in the city of Toronto and Scarborough that used to be called the Golden Mile in terms of manufacturing and production.

With this government we still call it the Golden Mile but it is inappropriately named because it is a pretty sad thing when one considers that the General Motors plant is the most productive in the entire fleet. I am going to quote a letter that Mr. Rick Fleming, the president of the Canadian Auto Workers Local 303, wrote recently:

General Motors has stated in their own admission, "the Scarborough Van Plant has been the most profitable assemble operation for General Motors in the world, bar none! The workers have been scheduled to work two shifts, six days a week, for every year of operation including up to date".

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. I remind the hon. member that the debate is on Bill C-118, an act to amend the Export Development Act and I would appreciate the collaboration of the hon. member.

Mr. Mills: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to get back to a tighter focus on Bill C-118 and I agree with you. It is a tough thing when one goes to a funeral of almost 20,000 people losing their jobs. One just cannot let it go.

Let us talk about the bill specifically. We need to give more support to the small business community with these new powers that the Export Development Corporation is about to receive. I stated at first reading and in amendments that I am totally supportive of the Export Development Corporation. I said it in this House of Commons before and I will say it again. I think the president, Paul Labbe, is doing a fantastic job with that particular organization.

However, I have to say that I as a member of Parliament am going to be very frustrated if this bill will not include the small business sector and if there is not an aggressive campaign to reach out and try to bring the small business community into the Export Development Corporation fold.

I hope the government will use the powers it has between now and September to push the Export Development Corporation to explain what the corporation is all about to the small business sector. I believe that if that happens then we will go a long way in creating some new jobs.

I also want to say one last thing to the government. It should not be afraid to call on the creativity of the public servants who are involved with the Export Development Corporation to help us rekindle the spirit in some of the plants that have been closed down because the people over there do not have the creative process left to find anything decent to put into them.

We cannot just ignore these people who are losing their jobs. Get the Export Development Corporation to go out and find joint venture investors. Go to different people who are coming here who could take over a plant that has the kind of facility it has and see if we cannot use the strength of those public servants to get those people back to work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I declare the motion carried.