

—the first time, the registration fee and the loss-sharing per loan of 85-15 and it was stated during discussions of the bill by Minister Bissonnette at the time that it was anticipated that because of those changes—

—and I repeat—

—because of those changes there would be a reduction—

There was an anticipation of a reduction in the numbers of dollars. We saw that for the first time in the first year following the introduction in the fiscal year 1985-86.

It was not an accident. The government did not think it was good and would create more loans and more business. It knew when it presented those amendments that it was depriving Canadians access to this program, which is the only program that really works. It has less bureaucracy, it is being managed by the financial institutions. There is no government bureaucracy involved. It is simple and everybody understands it. But because the government made such fundamental changes, the program is almost useless, because in five years there was 50 per cent less in dollar terms and in the number of loans. I think this is a disgrace. This is a government that gives a lot of lip service to small business but when it comes to doing something, it does the opposite to what small business needs.

[*Translation*]

At the beginning, Madam Speaker, I said that I was anxious to put forward several positive ideas about what could be done today to help this most important area of our economy which creates the greatest number of jobs. The fact is that over the past five years, I have been looking into small businesses and, as a Member of Parliament, I have carried out several consultations and travelled throughout this country. At the time, following all these consultations, I had divided the role played by the federal government in this area into four main components. First of all, information. We have here in Canada approximately 560 different programs either federal, provincial or municipal to help small businesses. The great number and complexity of these programs are a source of bewilderment for business people who do not know where to go to obtain all the relevant information to apply for and obtain assistance under these programs.

In 1984, the Federal Business Development Bank announced a program called *Aide* in French and *Aim* in English. The purpose of this program was to enter in a

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computer all the assistance, information and consultation programs directed at small businesses to make them more accessible to people. This was a pilot project, and instead of encouraging this program—of course, this project could have been improved upon by being made more readily available, by making it an information tool for small businesses. The government decided otherwise and completely cut off its assistance to the Federal Bank; although it is still there today it is only for reference purposes and practically speaking, it no longer exists. Therefore, that phase has long disappeared and is now part of the history of the Federal Business Development Bank.

For instance, without really creating a bureaucratic network, the Government could have provided a service. But it would not have been enough, in view of the fact the offices of the Federal Business Development Bank are only located in major centres but the government could have used the services of the various boards of trade. It could have made arrangements with municipal development corporations and other organizations representing small businesses.

Within all these programs, it could have included all markets and statistical data provided by Statistics Canada to provide essential information which small businessmen need to operate a business.

This reminds me of the man who wanted to open a pastry shop and who, while passing through a commercial street, noticed a recently opened pastry shop with a long line of customers waiting to buy cakes and loaves of bread. He said to himself: "This is a fine place where I could open a second pastry shop." Therefore, without investigating whether there were enough potential customers for two identical businesses to survive, the guy went ahead. He found a store close by and opened his shop after spending a huge amount of money. After six months, he realized that both pastry shops could not survive and that one of them would have to close for lack of customers.

If this man had been able to check the federal census and all relevant statistical data, or if he had been able to contact a development board or a chamber of commerce within his community, he would have had access to all the management tools necessary to make the proper decision as to whether this was the right kind of business to get into and the right location.