

Government Orders

I know I cannot display it, but I am holding in my hands the book *Co-operation Projects for Foreign Investment in the Liaoning Province*. It is one of the smaller provinces in China, 40 million people in the one province. We went up to Shen Yang City which is the economic capital of Liaoning province. They invited us to come back in October with a second group from small and medium sized businesses. There are 1,000 opportunities for joint ventures with Canadian companies in this book alone. If we do not get out there these opportunities are going to go to our American, German and French friends because they are all over there.

•(1040)

The Prime Minister's strategy on China was right on. They love Canadians. We have a great reputation because of Dr. Bethune and former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau whose name is gold over there. If we went over there and as members of Parliament encouraged small and medium sized businesses to go to China we would have all kinds of opportunity to put our people back to work.

Some members might ask: "What about human rights?" That is a fair question when talking about China because of its history. Interestingly enough they are very sensitive to that issue and we talked about human rights. I know some members might dismiss it but I learned something on my trip to China. If you have not been there you should not criticize until you know what is going on.

This was the first time I had been there. The 140 men and women on our mission were approachable because of their value system and caring style. We were asked questions about our country, about our educational system, our social service system, how we look after the disadvantaged in our community. Not only were they businessmen and women, they were also educators and social workers who explained what goes on in our country. That might represent the best way for us to make change in the value system of that country.

I chatted with Premier Rae when he was over there and he shared my view. I have to get a little dig in at the premier. He was over there with the multinationals, the large Canadian corporations whereas our contingent was the small and medium sized businesses. It is interesting that Premier Rae was with eight or ten of them—and I am not putting them down; they are very important to our economy. However, when this government made a commitment to help small and medium sized businesses during the last campaign as is well stated in the red book, our trip to China was further concrete testimony that we are not going to walk away from that.

In closing I encourage all members of Parliament to look at the opportunities which exist in China to help put those unemployed men and women in their ridings back to work or to help small businesses expand.

I notice the Bloc members once again with their sarcastic smiles. It is interesting. I have listened in this House for five months now and I have not heard one constructive idea from the finance critic of the opposition party. Not one constructive idea. Not once did I hear him say anything good about what we have done in this budget as an overall strategy. Not once have I heard him stand up and say: "I love Canada".

This is the nation's boardroom; it is not the Quebec legislative assembly. This is Canada and this is what you should be doing here. You should be building Canada. Constituents not just in my city but right across the country are fed up with you people coming to this Parliament of Canada and doing nothing. Then when we put forward constructive ideas to help put your constituents back to work and not just ours, you sit there with your smug, sarcastic smiles.

•(1045)

The Deputy Speaker: The ostensible point of order is the question about addressing remarks to the Speaker precisely to avoid the kind of thing that is going on right now. Second, I would remind the hon. parliamentary secretary that his comments at the moment do not appear to me to relate very closely to the bill at hand.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I take your point. Every now and again I become so emotional about my country.

An hon. member: Don't apologize.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): When I have to sit in the nation's boardroom with people who are trying to destroy it, from time to time my emotion gets the better of me. I find this hypocrisy distasteful at times. At any rate, I want to get back to the bill.

Bill C-17 was a tough decision made by the government to revamp unemployment insurance. It was not done in isolation. It was done in the context of a very good strategy put forward by the Minister of Finance and the minister of state for finance who I have the privilege of sitting next to in this Parliament.

When we look at the work we are doing on access to capital, the work we are doing on tax reform, pushing small business to go abroad, and when we see the opportunities that are out there, if we all work together, then within very short order we could really get Canadians feeling good about themselves again. The best way to get them to feel good about themselves is putting them back to work.

I believe that we as a government are on the right path.

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, the day Bill C-17 is passed will be a sad day in Canadian history. Let me say to my hon. colleague who just spoke that it will be a sad day because of this bill which has the support of his government and, for the most part, of the Reform Party.