

Government Orders

correctly, of 60 days. The 60 days' notice has not been given, as far as I am concerned or as far as I have knowledge of it. It looks as if the government has dispensed with this. I am not sure, as a member of Parliament, where I stand at this point.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member could meet with me in my chambers in a few minutes. I probably could give the hon. member some assistance.

Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

SMALL BUSINESSES LOANS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-56, an act to amend the Small Businesses Loans Act, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee.

Hon. John McDermid (for the Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

• (1520)

Mr. McDermid (for the Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Jack Whittaker (Okanagan—Similkameen—Merriitt): Madam Speaker, certainly I would like to speak on this bill. The bill itself, I believe, is an important part of a very important small part of where I think that the government should go in the area of small business.

The bill would extend at the present time the Small Business Loans Act for a further three years to ensure that certain loan guarantees of the government for the banks are insured for the small business community. That in itself is advantageous from that perspective. I would certainly like to see this bill passed by March 31 to

ensure that those small businesses that are affected will be able to have their loans guaranteed and proceed.

We must look at not only this legislation but at what this government has done for the small business community over the past some years. We see in its last two budget years there were cuts to the Federal Business Development Bank of some \$13 million last year, and \$18.5 million this year. We have seen shutdowns of rural post offices, which are of major assistance to small business. In small communities people come in to the post offices to visit, to talk to each other and extend out into the community, purchasing within the business community, doing their business in town.

We also see the high interest rate policies of this government. We know that this affects a great many small business people because they do not know from day to day what their expenses are going to be for interest rates. The uncertainty of being in business is bad enough without having the added worry of these excessively high interest rates that the government, quite frankly, can control somewhat, but which it has chosen to let rise at the expense of the small business community.

What else have we seen this government do? Last year in particular, but as well as this year, we have seen cuts in the tourism budget. Much of the tourism in British Columbia in particular and in Canada in general is run by the small business community. In our experience in British Columbia we have seen the rates of tourism increase as the government expended money to advertise tourism. We know that government intervention and government expenditures on advertising assist tourism and the small business community.

But what has this government done? It chose to cut back, again at the expense of the small business community and tourism. That is reflected, I would suggest, in lower tourism rates throughout most of Canada with the exception of those provinces that have put in major inputs into advertising tourism.

What else is there? The small business community does not seem to get the same tax breaks that large corporations get. We question why. Is it not important to Canada, I suggest to the Minister of State for Privatization, that the small business community is an integral part of the economy of Canada and should be treated as