

that at ten minutes to three o'clock this afternoon the bill referred to by the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) was distributed.

**Mr. Jelinek:** Mr. Speaker, hon. members will note that my motion is rather lengthy. The reason for that, of course, is to catch up on lost time, the time since the Department of State for Small Business was formed two and a half years ago. It was just over two and one half years ago that a long awaited and welcomed move took place when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) appointed a member to his cabinet who would be responsible for looking after the interests of the small business community. At that time a glimmer of hope arose within this vast and major sector of our economy, and we hoped that at long last specific action would be taken to reduce the maze of bureaucratic regulations, controls, and directives, and that the general paperwork onslaught would be replaced with meaningful, incentive-oriented programs. Unfortunately our hopes have turned to disappointment. What seemed like an emerging light at the end of a long dark tunnel turned into nothing more than a marathon of studies upon studies.

● (1602)

In the meantime, we have attempted to offer a number of realistic recommendations dealing with the potential solution of the Canadian small business problem, in the House as well as across the country. We have developed a number of positive programs which we were looking forward to implementing as early as this coming fall. However, the Prime Minister put a monkey wrench into that by postponing the call for a federal election. Now that we will have to continue to suffer the government's inability to deal with the problems at hand for at least another few months, and possibly a full year, we would like to present a number of recommendations and proposals which have received general acceptance from the small business community, some of which are outline in the motion before us.

As we all know, because small business is the backbone of the Canadian economic way of life; because Canadian-owned and operated enterprises are diminishing rapidly, as witnessed by the number of bankruptcies which increased over 38 per cent in 1977 from the previous year, not to mention the number of businesses which are moving south of the border in order to operate within healthier economic climates; and because of the importance of restimulating the small business community, we must deal with the matter on as strictly a non-partisan basis as possible. Therefore it is my hope that the government will consider seriously, either by stealing, begging or borrowing, some of our recommendations. In fact the government does not have to stoop to that. It should consider seriously some of the recommendations, if not all of the recommendations and suggestions, that my colleagues and I will make today.

Before dealing with the recommendations, I should like to compliment the hon. Minister of State for Small Business (Mr. Abbott). I am sure that compliment comes as a surprise to him. I compliment him for taking at least the initial, long-

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awaited steps in attempting to reduce the paperwork burden which is so harmful to small businessmen, and for having produced the CALURA amendments. Also I compliment the minister and his predecessor for initiating the many studies, as outlined in the minister's booklet entitled, "Perspectives". These studies are all that have taken place. Unfortunately, those ongoing studies do not solve, in any way, shape or form, the present problems and concerns faced by small businessmen in this country.

I know we have received promises of action by the government, even as recently as last Friday when the minister indicated that he hoped to bring new programs before the House soon. We heard them in the throne speeches of 1973, 1974, and 1976. We heard them in a number of budget proposals. Yet, next to amending or updating existing programs, such as the Small Businesses Loans Act, no specific incentive oriented programs to assist small business have been implemented.

I sympathize with the minister because he is living in a policy vacuum. The small business community is slowly becoming aware of the fact that he is offering nothing more than lip service. Is it any wonder? I do not blame the minister himself. I blame the government and the Prime Minister for creating a lame duck department which does not have the power or the right to deal directly with the problems and potential solutions of the small business community. Imagine the unfortunate position of being dictated by and responsible to the minister from Crowfoot, who is serving out his time in parliament very quickly.

The manner in which this ministry is set up creates yet another horrendous bureaucratic animal, where the minister is responsible to so many other departments and ministries that he loses track of who to see, about what, and when. Therefore our first recommendation is to make the small business secretariat independent of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, as well as other departments, and basically to make it a one stop service centre. Instead of keeping small firms abreast of all aspects of government policy, the sector divisions of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce are usually ignorant, and small producers often are forced to deal with several other divisions of that department, as well as with other departments and agencies. I am referring, for example, to special import policy, enterprise development, revenue, finance, DREE, and the anti-dumping tribunal, just to name a few.

The small business secretariat, as proposed by our party, must be made aware of the policies of other departments regarding small business. It should be capable of co-ordinating the various policies so that a small firm requiring assistance will have the benefit of a one stop service centre and will not be shunted from department to department. Small firms are far too important to be kicked around.

Although the Ministry of State for Small Business has failed to develop programs and policies beyond the promise and study stages, after two years and two different ministers,