

*Private Members' Business*

If I were going to suggest one thing, not to small and medium-size business but to the Government of Canada, it would be nice if all the various products and services that are bought on an annual basis were listed. Then the 1,700,000 entrepreneurs out there could scan through the index of products or services. It would be a real shock. Most businesses when they think of the Government of Canada, think it buys airplanes, Polaris 10s. They do not know about the smaller products and services that are bought.

Think about the number of cars and trucks that the Government of Canada purchases. Think about the number of contracts that one could or might participate in supplying all the parks in Canada.

There is an opportunity here for small and medium-size businesses that really goes beyond imagination. In my opinion, it is only limited by the amount that Canadian entrepreneurs want to hustle. What the person has to do is either get in the car or jump on a plane and come to Ottawa or go to the local Department of Supply and Services and say: "Here is the product or service that I have to offer. How do I get on the government list? How do I participate in this—

• (1740)

**An hon. member:** Use the computer.

**Mr. Mills:** Use the computer. Well for those small and medium-size businesses that are computer literate, and I am sure most of them are, hook up the modem and away you go.

The point of the matter is that there is great opportunity. We are talking about an institution that literally buys billions and billions of dollars in Canadian products and services annually. I would hate to see what would happen to the Minister of Supply and Services who did not give priority attention to small and medium-size Canadian entrepreneurs. The person would be out of business overnight if he or she did not pay attention to that force which creates 80 per cent of the jobs in this country.

I salute the member for putting forward this motion because, as the Minister of Supply and Services said so well, it gives us an opportunity to talk to the people of Canada in the small and medium-size business sector for two hours and tell them to take advantage of the opportunity that exists. If in any way, shape or form you run a small or medium size business and you feel that you have been abused by the Department of Supply and

Services then do not hesitate to write to any member of Parliament here.

My personal experience with a lot of other small businesses is that by and large, the Department of Supply and Services is one of the best run operations in the whole Government of Canada and I encourage Canadians to take advantage of it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Supply and Services):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Liberal member for Broadview—Greenwood for the good things he just said about the Department of Supply and Services and the work that it does to promote Canadian companies and try to have them obtain more.

We are all aware that the international economic environment forces Canadian companies, including our small and medium-sized businesses, to be more competitive. A trading nation like Canada cannot ignore the reality Canadians live with every day. I fully agree with the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt to do everything to develop and support viable small businesses that create jobs which are vital to the welfare of thousands of Canadians.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the government has put forward many initiatives in this regard, taking into account our international commitments, especially in the area of federal government procurement.

However, I certainly do not agree with the opinion or viewpoint of my hon. colleague on the best way to help our small and medium-sized businesses. I do not wish to discuss the principle, since we agree on that point, but rather the ways proposed to meet our business people's needs.

On this point, I wish to thank my hon. colleague for giving me an opportunity to speak and give an overview of my government's procurement policies. He will be able to see for himself that the Department of Supply and Services has reformed and adapted all its policies, in close cooperation with small and medium-sized Canadian companies.

Mr. Speaker, as you saw just now, the Minister of Supply and Services is very well informed of what our small and medium-sized businesses need to be competitive. That is why he launched a series of working seminars in 1989, in cooperation with representatives of small and medium-sized Canadian companies across the country. The message was very clear. Our small and