

The Address

countered in the past few years. I will not put a political perimeter on it because I would be accused of being partisan, which of course is not in these days.

If we cannot take credit here, it is safe to point out that we are focusing on the difficulties that small businesses have encountered in all seriousness and with great enthusiasm and a certain amount of hope.

While indeed small businesses are very concerned about the deficit, a major difficulty they have, they are primarily concerned about moving ahead in what we hope will be a growing economy.

Just this weekend I participated in an economic conference in my riding. I pointed out that people should not be waiting for big buildings and large industries to be brought in because 55 per cent of our gross national product in the last two years was related to businesses of five or less.

We on this side of the House are convinced that small business is important. However, I would ask the hon. member if he could give me some indication in outline form, as time does not permit him to reveal perhaps all the ideas he may have, what he might consider a good initiative or measure to take for small businesses to give them the kinds of breaks and the hope that I believe he is looking for.

● (1215)

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I believe that what this country is missing as we look and ponder what can be done for small business is the realization of the importance of business initiatives and the increase in jobs that will be stimulated by that.

I think one of the biggest business initiatives we could have is to elevate the feeling of the small businessman to that of a hockey player in this country. I think that they feel left out. We elevate and make national heroes of other people when really the heroes in this country are the people who create jobs and they are in small businesses.

[Translation]

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I would like the hon. member for Okanagan to explain briefly what he has in mind when he says that the government should create a climate that is favourable to job creation instead of lending money to businesses. What does he mean exactly by that?

[English]

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I feel it all relates back to the whole issue of deficit reduction. In order to stimulate the economy and give the entrepreneurs who would create this new employment for Canada we must first

address our financial situation in this country which is an immediate reduction in spending by this government.

Mr. John Cannis (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the hon. member's support for small business I could not help feeling that he must have taken extractions from our red book. I think it is clearly emphasized how job creation and small business is an integral part of our program.

I was more concerned when he turned around and said that deficit reduction is the main and most important issue. If I am not mistaken I think in the greater metro caucus we have twice had people before us from the business community. There were two major banks as a matter of fact. We have pushed them to extremes to start co-operating with small businesses.

The member indicated that we must reduce the deficit and that it is the main priority. If people are not working then we cannot reduce the deficit. If they are not working then we are supporting them. We are draining our already depleted revenue. The emphasis is on getting the people working. Let us bring some dignity to the House as the Prime Minister has often said and let us reduce the deficit accordingly.

Mr. Hart: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

First of all I would like to say that all good ideas should always cross party lines. It makes no difference where they come from but as I mentioned in my speech we have made Canadian history by electing 52 Reformers to this place. However, over the last few days I have sensed that there are more Reformers or more ideas to reform in this Chamber than just the 52 sitting here.

We feel deficit reduction is a very important part. Subsidy programs and initiative programs have a dismal rate of success in this country. It is evident from all statistics we have where the jobs are coming from. Eighty-five per cent of all jobs came from the small business sector. We need to stimulate this.

I have talked to the business people in Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt and around this country and they all point to one thing. People do not have confidence in a country that is as mired in debt as we are.

● (1220)

We have to address this problem soon so that Canadians will have a feeling of goodwill and the spirit to invest in their country and create the jobs through small business.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by congratulating you on your new responsibility.

I would like to begin my address by also thanking my constituents of Broadview—Greenwood for giving me a second term in this Parliament of Canada. I grew to have a deep sense of respect and appreciation for this Chamber, especially in the last three years of my first term. I found it a bit intimidating the first