

Government Orders

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not like it any better than the hon. member, but this really has nothing to do with the Export Development Corporation. This was a corporate decision made by General Motors.

Ford just made a corporate decision to invest billions of dollars in a Canadian plant and hired 1,100 more people for jobs. These things happen. That is a rationalization where 20,000 jobs were being lost by General Motors around the world. It is not just Canada. It has nothing to do with the Export Development Corporation and what we are debating. I would suggest that the hon. member stick to the subject matter of the bill.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The rule of relevancy is the most difficult parliamentary rule to apply. Again, I ask for the co-operation of hon. members on both sides of the House. I did hear the hon. member mention a funeral, but this was in reference to a plant in his riding of Scarborough. I would ask him to keep his remarks more relevant to the debate.

• (1305)

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the member for Brampton, the minister responsible for privatization, would talk about Ford. I applaud Ford for adding another 1,000 or 1,500 people but that does not take away from the 3,500 people, plus the spin-offs that are being lost at GM.

We are not here in this House as Her Majesty's constructive Loyal Opposition to let something like this go by without a moment's discussion or debate in the House of Commons.

What does this have to do with the bill? This has everything to do with the bill.

Mr. McDermid: It has nothing to do with the bill.

Mr. Mills: The member for Brampton said it has nothing to do with the bill.

This is where the government has really thrown out the creative process. Part of the role of the Export Development Corporation is to encourage, to support, put packages together that will help expand and develop our exports.

I do not think it is wrong to mention on the floor of the House of Commons that we have a highly skilled force of 3,500 men and women in the centre of Toronto that right now are looking for the creativity that an export development corporation has. They are looking to see if the Export Development Corporation with its reputation and its access to people all over the world could maybe bring someone to this plant and hopefully get it back to work.

I am not ashamed to lean on the strength and track record of the Export Development Corporation to say please look out there and see what you can do.

General Motors did not have the creativity and does not have the wherewithal to hold this plant together. The purpose of government is not for those that are advantaged. We are not here to look out for those companies that are doing well right now. Our role in government is to look for those people in our communities and our cities that are disadvantaged. When considering direct and indirect jobs, 20,000 is a very large number.

I do not think it is wrong for us to call on the skill of the Export Development Corporation to please try and find someone that would help put this skilled labour force back to work. That is why I think this Scarborough van plant has a linkage with the Export Development Corporation.

I remember back in 1981 when the Motorola plant at Steeles and Woodbine in Toronto was about to close down. Through the auspices of the Export Development Corporation and with its support the plant developed a world product mandate for a couple of new products. That helped keep the Motorola plant open. It helped find, create, put in financial support and went a long way in keeping the Motorola plant open and productive and it has a world product mandate.

I am telling the members that I hope the Export Development Corporation could use the same skill and resource to maybe find or put some ideas on the table to help put these people back to work.

I know the auto business right now is a tough competitive business but this was one of the anchors of our manufacturing base in Toronto. This was one of the sectors of our economy that we could always count on but right now we are going through a very tough time.