

Our government must continue to confront the issues which challenge the growth of our citizenry, such as illiteracy. The societal and individual costs of inaction are too immense.

I call upon our government to continue the fight against illiteracy. Our objective should be each and every Canadian having basic literacy and numeracy skills at a minimum. For Canadians and the country's sake, we should expect and receive nothing less.

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[Translation]

#### SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

**Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi):** Mr. Speaker, on this Small Business Week, thousands of entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to exchange information and discuss business matters relating to the theme "Quality and Productivity: The Competitive Edge".

Today's business people are dealing with world-wide competition and increasingly demanding customers. Canadian businesses must not only match the prices and services of their competitors on a local and regional scale, but strive to be competitive on a global scale. That means providing products and services that their customers want and can count on.

Small businesses and large companies alike must design and implement specific strategies dealing with quality and productivity.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government showed its support by launching the Canada Business Merit Award Program.

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[English]

#### BILL C-21

**Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, tonight one of the most harmful pieces of legislation, Bill C-21, the UI bill, will be passed because Liberal senators have capitulated.

In May, Liberal Senator Jacques Hébert stated:

—not only must we resist until the government agrees to negotiate fairly with the Senate to reach an honourable compromise, but if we do not, we would betray millions of Canadians who have supported us so far, we would betray the most vulnerable among them, the poor and the disadvantaged, the unemployed in this country.

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The Liberal deal has betrayed these Canadians. It includes the passage of the clawback on family allowances and old age pensions.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration must recognize that Bill C-21 will be devastating to Canadians as we enter a recession. The new variable entrance requirements contained in Bill C-21 make it even more difficult for displaced workers to collect benefits, even though they have been paying higher premiums since the first of the year.

If the Tories are bent on proclaiming this legislation, then I urge them to do so with compassion. Delay the implementation of new and tougher VERs and implement the old requirements. Workers have been betrayed by the Liberal Senate and now must look to the minister for hope. I appeal to her, take a second look and help unemployed Canadians.

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#### SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

**Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte):** Mr. Speaker, October 21 to 27 is Small Business Week in Canada.

Small Business Week recognizes the important contribution of small businesses to the Canadian economy and provides a forum through which the exchange of new information can be shared between small and medium-sized businesses throughout the country.

Small business account for nearly three-quarters of the jobs created in the country over the past few years and one-quarter of the profits and wages from businesses which have fewer than 50 employees. It is no secret that small business is the engine which drives our economy in Canada.

The government recognizes the importance of fostering a strong business community throughout the country, and the creation of ACOA and WDO have brought unprecedented economic development and prosperity to the regions.

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#### DAIRY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan):** Mr. Speaker, dairy farmers on Prince Edward Island are very concerned about the future of their farm businesses and the security of their families and rural communities. By