

Government Orders

business across this great land of Canada. These amendments merit the full assent of the House of Commons.

• (1540)

[English]

Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member for Madawaska—Victoria's speech on Bill C-99 which of course was a Liberal point of view. It was just a reiteration of what she has been told to say by the government frontbench. The things she was saying do not seem to make a lot of sense to me.

The hon. member talked about how the government supports small business. Then she went on to say that the new user fee mechanism will no longer contribute to the deficit because the program is going to be on a full cost recovery basis. The reason the government was putting it on a full cost recovery basis was its concern and desire to try to balance the budget.

I agree with the government's desire to balance the budget but typically, here we are again; the government is going to do it on the backs of private enterprise. The Liberals are going to charge the businesses that borrow money under this act an excess premium on the interest rate. This money will be put into the government coffers and will be channelled through a bureaucratic system to reimburse the lenders that make the bad decisions and lend to small businesses that cannot under whatever circumstances repay the loan. If the Liberals are concerned about supporting small business, why are they doing that?

Some private sector businesses are going to reimburse the losses of other businesses. It will not cost the government one single nickel under this process, yet the hon. member says that the government supports small business. There are two contrary situations here. I would like to hear what the member has to say.

Mrs. Ringuette—Maltais: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the question put forward by the hon. member. Notice that the question is consistent with the third party policy of double talk. I have been here for the last two years and I have listened to the hon. member and his colleagues from the third party in this House talk about the fact that businesses in Atlantic Canada were receiving grants here, there and everywhere.

I am talking today about the federal government taking its responsibility toward the small and medium size businesses throughout this country. We are making sure that as responsible politicians, as a responsible government, we can provide the right environment and opportunities from coast to coast to coast for small businesses to create jobs, to look forward to competition and to make sure they can get ahead and increase exports. The member is saying that we do not know what we are doing.

On the one hand Reform Party members are saying to cut grants, cut everything, to even cut health care. Now they rise in this House to say it is not proper for us to make sure there is

security for small businesses to have access to capital and on the same wavelength to have access to exporting their technology.

For nine years I have heard political questions in the New Brunswick legislature and in the House of Commons, but I have never heard double talk to this measure from an hon. member.

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Madawaska—Victoria for her intervention today on behalf of small business. She has shown great leadership in the last two years for small business in her community.

No one in this House will ever forget the member for Madawaska—Victoria's very first intervention on this floor two years ago when she said: "We will be a government that is lean but not mean". Reform Party members obviously heard her say that but they do not understand where she was coming from.

• (1545)

Reformers forget about some of the great wins Canadians have experienced from Atlantic Canada in terms of business enterprise.

I want to talk specifically about a very small business which received a bit of help in 1979-80 from a Liberal government. I was there. It received about a \$4.2 million grant.

Mr. Williams: Sounds like patronage to me.

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): It was not patronage. I remember the principles of the country tended to be more Liberal than anything else.

It was the McCain organization. That very small business has grown to be one of the absolute jewels of industry not just in Canada but throughout the world. It has expanded its business not just in Canada but all around the world. It has created jobs and developed technology.

The Government of Canada got its \$4 million back within the first year. Since 1980 we have probably received 100 times that amount in taxes and job creation.

Reform members really irk me from time to time. They talk about the importance of entrepreneurship. They talk about the importance of enterprise having a proper environment to get the job done. Most of them come from western Canada. Companies in western Canada receive the biggest grants of all, especially in the oil and gas sector. They are given grants which are buried in the tax act. Those tax grants are no different from direct cash grants.

I support the thrust of Reform Party members when they talk about cleaning up, simplifying and developing a fairer tax system. However, they cannot take a cheap shot at an act of Parliament that is trying to help small business without realizing they are giving tens of millions of dollars worth of grants to businesses in their ridings through the tax act.