

Government Orders

Of course, he needed proper refrigeration, equipment, et cetera for that. He mapped out three potential locations for the banks. It would create 12 new jobs. He went to the bank and read all the brochures from the Federal Business Development Bank. He met every criteria. He filled out his application and had other experts check it. He went to the Federal Business Development Bank and his application was refused.

The person processing the loan did not even have the courage to sit down with him and say why his application was refused. The refusal came in a letter through a third person. Is that not terrible?

The government wants to create jobs and increase the number of small and medium sized businesses in this country but how can we with that kind of mentality in our banks? The Federal Business Development Bank is a government bank. Surely to goodness our banks have a corporate citizenship responsibility.

We as Canadians have duties and responsibilities to our country. With the millions and billions the banks make, surely they have a duty and responsibility to save our beautiful country. They can save it by helping to create jobs and stimulate new businesses. They will take a loss on this one or that one, but that is the risk one takes in business.

When the economy is good, the banks are great at taking risks. They lend to the hilt as they did for farmers and others. When the economy goes bad they call in all their loans. They could not care less if a whole family is wiped out in farming or business.

I think it is high time this Chamber sent a message out coast to coast saying: "Wake up banks. You are Canadian corporate citizens. Do your duty. Do your responsibility to this country".

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Parkdale—High Park who spoke moments ago about the role small and medium sized firms and businesses and entrepreneurs play in the economic vitality of our country.

Amendments to the Small Businesses Loans Act started in 1961 and have been under constant revision and modification so bridging between government and businesses can meet the reality of the marketplace. It is an opportunity to have a debate in this Chamber that should go from words to action. For the last number of years members from all sides, and particularly members

from the government side have said with great fanfare and rhetoric that the Canadian small business network is the backbone of our economy. It is the greatest producer, creator and innovator of jobs and different techniques in our economy. Yet budget after federal budget, we open those books that are carted in by our pages and have the benefit of a couple of days of analysis. We go through those very colourful brochures that speak in glowing terms to the small business network but when you get a phone call in your constituency office from the small business entrepreneur around the corner looking for help, there is none.

This provides us with an opportunity to not only speak to the small business people out there but to do something for them and the future of small risk takers and medium sized firms still operating from someone's basement waiting to be created and explode into the marketplace. We have to make that transition. In Toronto alone there are 185,000 fewer jobs today than there were before the start of the recession. A lot of this can be attributed to the failure, unfortunately, of that small business entrepreneurial sector which the government has let down.

In the industrial and commercial areas of my riding of York West there are mostly small and medium sized firms. They are hurting and have been calling out for help for the longest time, yet we are deaf to those concerns. A lot of attention is being focused on those big business players and we know the role they have played with this government. We know the comfort zone that exists between the government and that level. We know the role they played in the last election campaign.

I do not want to begrudge the success of any large business entrepreneur who started in his or her basement or leased 1,000 square feet, had the family working seven days a week and now has a big business. God bless him or her.

When it talks business or says it is the government of business, that does not give this government the right to exclude this large sector of small and medium-sized firms. We do so at our own peril. When we talk about the problems afflicting that marketplace we can obviously and quickly look to the GST. Talk to those small business firms and ask them what effect the transitional expenses of implementing the GST system have had on them and what the GST has done to deflate their businesses and marketplaces.