

*Government Orders*

revamp the unemployment insurance entitlements without considering the other component pieces is not right.

All members have been working very hard on the report on access to capital. Hopefully it will be presented to Parliament by the end of June and some of the recommendations will find their way into a revised approach to regulating the financial institutions and the way they deal with small and medium sized businesses.

While I am on the specific area of access to capital, it is interesting that we are discovering in committee many new opportunities to access capital for small businesses that will become apparent to the 900,000 entrepreneurs that are trying to re-spark the economy across Canada.

The insurance companies, the mutual funds, the stock exchanges and all other financial instruments have suddenly discovered in the last six to nine months that the real future or the real action in terms of the new economy, especially the knowledge based economy, will be with the small and medium sized business sectors.

I am optimistic that all kinds of capital will be available in the not too distant future for people with good business plans and good ideas who have the courage to take risks and achieve.

Another aspect of the budget strategy linked to the Bill C-17 review or revamping of the unemployment insurance entitlement is that we have reviewed in committee what has been going on with the goods and services tax. The issue of the GST has not gone away. As the government we are not running away from that issue. We know what Canadians think about the GST. It is a complex, inefficient tax, especially for the business community across Canada. It has added to the cost of doing business or the paper burden, an issue we cannot run away from.

The whole tax review issue is part of the budget strategy. It is being handled in the finance committee. That is something we are coming to terms with. It is a lot more difficult actually than the access to capital issue. We can put our fingers on access to capital in an easier way but dealing with reform of a tax act is very tough, very difficult. We are meeting that challenge. Hopefully by the fall we will have some recommendations in that area.

Another area also linked to the budget strategy concerns the reduction of paper burden. Committees in the Department of Industry and the Department of Finance are dealing with ways in which we can reduce the paper burden of business in the country.

When we put together all factors in the equation Bill C-17 starts to make some sense. As I said, in isolation it is a very tough bill. I recognize members of the Bloc Quebecois are nodding that it is a tough bill. We recognize we cannot look at revamping unemployment insurance entitlement in isolation. If we dealt with the bill in isolation obviously the criticism would be well founded. It is very difficult in a time when people are

unemployed to put pressure on unemployment insurance benefits. We have to look at it in the context of a total strategy. We have to look at it in the context of trying to put the fiscal framework of the country in order. When Canadians see it in the context of an overall plan they will be a bit more understanding of what we are trying to achieve.

• (1025)

During this very difficult time of reviewing the fiscal framework of the country and trying to regain some stability and confidence we have also had to deal with the Bloc Quebecois. We as members of Parliament came to the nation's boardroom. We were elected to Parliament to build the country, to make the environment of Canada better. I have been an elected member of Parliament for six years but I have worked on the Hill since 1980. I had the privilege of working for someone who I believe was one of the greatest prime ministers the country ever had, Prime Minister Trudeau.

I see Bloc members getting excited already. They recognize that if Trudeau were here they would not even exist. He would not even give them the time of day because he would not stomach the fact that people would be in the nation's boardroom trying to destroy it. It is very difficult to sit down with people, whether they are business people or educators, who do not understand the country. The people in this room are supposed to be building Canada, yet they are here trying to destroy it.

It is a real mystery for us to try to comprehend why they would want to become part of an organization. Usually when one joins an organization, whether it is a community group, a hockey team, a school or some other kind of a club, one comes to that group of men and women to try to make it better. The logic of having an organization where people sign on to destroy it is difficult for me to comprehend. It is nothing personal. In my mind it is very difficult to understand.

The point I was trying to make is that we are dealing with an economic strategy aimed at putting people back to work in every riding of the country: in all the ridings of Quebec and all the ridings of Alberta. It is very difficult to do so when saddled with a group of men and women sowing seeds of dissension and doing their level best to destroy economic confidence in the country.

They stand in the House of Commons to criticize revamping the unemployment insurance system. It is the role of the opposition to constructively criticize what we are doing on this side of the House. We welcome it. I have been a member of the opposition. I believe in its right and the responsibility to stand to criticize the flaws in a particular piece of legislation being put forward.

• (1030)

It is totally disgusting that there is a group which is not really constructively criticizing. If those members were constructively criticizing for the benefit of all Canadians they would stop