

Government Orders

I am delighted to be on this side of the House, led by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and other members of the cabinet who have put the highest priority on job creation and economic growth.

It is time that the compassionate side, the understanding side of government was foremost in the eyes of Canadians. It is time that the people of this country know that those people they have put in positions of power are determined to see that life improves, that this country, the most favoured one on earth, lives up to its potential and ensures for each of its citizens the kind of life that our birthright should be giving to us.

I look at the specific programs that were promised in our much vaunted red book and again I am reassured because we are keeping our promises. As members of Parliament, as the governing party, as all members of this House, whether in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition or on the government side or sitting as independents, we know that the people of this country have said to us that there is much to be proven.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to receive a second or in some cases a third or a fourth election from our own electors cannot rest on our laurels because we too have much to prove to the people of this country. It is absolutely essential that the question of trust be restored between those of us who sit in this chamber and the people who put us here. It is absolutely essential that the profession to which each one of us belongs, the profession of politics, be allowed to earn back some of the much lost lustre that we saw go down the drain over the past number of years.

I believe that this can be accomplished, not easily, not quickly, not overnight, but it can be accomplished.

I am delighted, for example, that the infrastructure project that was much talked about during the campaign is underway and beginning in all parts of this country. I am further delighted that programs such as the residential rehabilitation assistance program and the youth service corps will be initiated to create jobs and to restore perhaps the most important element, the element of hope for Canadians of all ages.

• (1240)

We know what the job is before us. We know that we must invest in Canada's businesses. We must work with small and medium sized businesses which are certainly in my much beleaguered region of the Atlantic the backbone of the economy.

For five years on the other side I railed at a government that did not listen and seemed to have a search and destroy policy with regard to the Atlantic. Atlantic Canada does not deserve to be the stepchild of Confederation nor will it remain so under the policies of this government.

Small business is the way to go in Atlantic Canada. The infrastructure projects that are being worked on there right now will be the jump start. In the long term it will absolutely be the change in policy toward small business, the unfettering of small business that will bring us into our proper place.

I have said for five years and I hope for a further five years I will say we do not like to come cap in hand. We are a very proud region. We are a region that has sent to other parts of this country educators, lawyers, politicians, community activists, bankers, you name it. We will continue to do so.

Governments must understand that those of us who come from the Atlantic region are really disjointed and cut off if we have to stay somewhere else for too long. We live in a very special part of the country. It is a part of country that we want our children to be able to inherit from us and to be able to make their place in the greater Canadian society.

We are very fond of our brothers and sisters in central, western and northern Canada. We like to visit. We like them to visit us. However we do not want to see the four small provinces clinging to the Atlantic Ocean become have not provinces but provinces that stand as equals in Confederation.

We believe that this will happen because of the policies outlined in the red book. We believe that this will happen because of the commitment of the Prime Minister. We believe that this will happen most definitely because of the determination of the people of those four provinces.

The federal government understands full well its responsibility to the people of this region and indeed to the people across the country. It is important that we keep the promises we made and we will do so. It is even more important that the country as a whole sees the results of these promises in the programs that the federal government will put forward.

It is important, for example, that the Canadian government provide capital to attract high tech business such as the Red Cross blood fractionation facility scheduled to be built in Halifax. This facility alone will create up to 400 permanent high tech jobs and \$11 billion in economic spinoffs in the metropolitan area and the province of Nova Scotia.

This would be an amazing project for almost any centre in the country. In Atlantic Canada, it is the kind of thing that we have been seeking and attempting to attract for a long time. I must compliment the provincial government in Nova Scotia, most particularly the minister of development, for the work done to bring that plant to the metropolitan area.

Our government also must take advantage of the fact that Canada is a trading nation. Jobs and prosperity depend on our ability to sell products abroad.