

You know, Mr. Speaker, that for several years several members from all political parties have addressed the issue and it is well known that the Liberal Party has always turned a deaf ear to the recommendations made in this Chamber.

So, I will not be long, Mr. Speaker, for I know that after a certain time this motion cannot be passed. I will sit down with great pleasure and as the seconder of the motion, I congratulate the Hon. Member for Drummond (Mr. Guilbault), and I wish him luck with it.

● (1430)

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I would like first to congratulate my colleague from Drummond (Mr. Guilbault) for his motion to the effect that the Government should consider the advisability of establishing a salary insurance protection fund, responsible for ensuring that workers of a bankrupt business will get the salaries owed to them.

Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that I agree completely with my colleague, that the present bankruptcy legislation is obsolete giving no adequate protection to the worker whose employer is bankrupt. I agree with my colleague on another point: the absolute priority is not a practical solution for reasons he mentioned.

As to the solution he puts forward today, namely the establishment of a salary protection fund for workers, it is along the same lines as the solution recommended by the Senate committee which examined previous legislation and it is also similar to the solution put forward by the Advisory committee on Bankruptcy and Insolvency in its report published in January 1988, and to what the Government will propose.

Although we can say now that the details concerning the operation of the workers protection fund still needs some refinement, the protection of workers is paramount in the reform of the Bankruptcy Act which the Government is about to table.

Salary Insurance Protection Fund

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I can say that the Government is not prepared to let the bill end up where the six others did. We are now consulting all interested parties, among others the provincial and territorial governments, the Canadian Federation of Small Business, the Canadian Bar Association, and the ACEF of Quebec. These consultations will enable us to put the finishing touches and, hopefully, the bill will be tabled in the not too distant future.

Mr. Speaker, I might add that the bill the Government has in mind will not be a major overhaul of the legislation, but for opens it will deal with five or six issues which we think are much more urgent, so perhaps I might just mention them: first, protection for wage earners; second, secured creditors and receiverships; trade reorganizations; consumer arrangements and bankruptcies; preferred claims, including those of the Crown and, finally, amendments of a technical nature.

Mr. Speaker, such are the priorities of this Government, and I can say how very pleased I am that the Hon. Member chose to present this motion to the House. I hope the Bill will be up for consideration as soon as possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to call it three o'clock?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, it being 3 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 24, at 11 a.m.

The House adjourned at 2.36 p.m.