

tee program is achieving its goal of making credit accessible to firms which might otherwise be denied it.

You will recall, that we introduced the small business financing program in the last budget as a quick means of being able to lower the cost of refinancing businesses that were in financial difficulty.

The additional competition anticipated from the recent overhaul of our financial services regulatory environment should improve the access of small businesses to financing. Businesses unable to obtain conventional financing can approach the Federal Business Development Bank for term loans, equity financing and venture loans, as well as innovative approaches to assisting them in managing their affairs.

Labour-sponsored venture capital funds are also developing into an important source of equity financing in those provinces that have passed compatible legislation.

Finally, we will continue to monitor the issue of small business access to financing to ensure that this critical sector of the economy has the resources it needs to realize its full potential as we move on the road to recovery.

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton):** Recently, the government chose to close a supply depot and base in the city of Moncton. The result is that 250 civilian people will be put out of work. This base was promised to the community. It was promised to have a new facility. The hundred million dollar commitment was, in fact, made by three ministers of national defence.

This government has now reneged on that promise. What is interesting is that it reneged on this promise a month before a task force was to report on just exactly how the military's facilities should be rationalized and how we are going to deal with base closures. I asked myself why the minister would choose a month before this independent report was coming down to make this announcement to close the base.

There are a couple of reasons. The obvious one, if you read the report, is that there was no mention of the Moncton base closure in that report. Obviously, the independent study did not even know the government intended to close the base. I can only conclude from that that this was a purely political decision taken at the very

last minute by a very politicized department and a very political minister.

Second, if you look at the recommendations in the task force report, one can only conclude one thing. This minister did not want to be held accountable to those recommendations and have to deal with those recommendations and do what is necessary under those recommendations.

The report recommends a couple of things that are of interest. Number one, it suggests an independent agency, and I quote from the report: "In order to translate ministerial proposals into government decisions we see a need for a process that will enable members of Parliament, affected communities and the public to ask questions and to assess DND's case; and also provide time for federal and provincial agencies in affected communities to work out mitigation measures; and thirdly, to limit partisan political considerations in closing the base". Obviously, it is that last item that this minister does not want to deal with.

As well, the recommendations create a responsibility for the federal government. Again I quote from the report: "We see federal responsibility for mitigating the effects of base closures as a natural extension of this responsibility, and Employment and Immigration Canada is the obvious department to take the lead in developing a federal policy". God help us in Moncton if that department should be responsible for initiating that process because the minister has already said that he would do nothing for Moncton because Moncton is doing fine. He has no concern for the 250 people who are going to lose their jobs, their families, their dignity, all of those things associated with being gainfully employed. The fundamental flaw in everything that is done is that this minister and this department have turned the Department of National Defence into a political pork-barrel. I asked the minister to explain why he would go back on his promise and the promise of the previous two ministers, close that base and put those people out of work and then spend the same amount of money in another community and as well go against what is obviously proper military advice from everything that we can determine in analysing the reports and information to the effect that the Moncton base should stay open as it is an integral supply base to the whole military system in Atlantic Canada. This minister has chosen to close that base, disregard military advice and to play pure partisan