

Federal Business Development Bank Act

personnel. Yet, strangely, with respect to a company which is answerable to the public, namely, a Crown corporation, there is no such provision.

If there had been frank disclosure in committee, motion No. 4 would not have been necessary. As it is, we see no alternative but to propose motion No. 4, to ensure that the salary ranges of top officials working for the Federal Business Development Bank will be made public knowledge.

It was suggested in committee that motion No. 4 is not necessary, and that what we seek can be accomplished by an amendment to the Financial Administration Act. Mr. Speaker, it is not within the power of the opposition to amend the Financial Administration Act; therefore we have no alternative but to propose motion No. 4.

Let me add something else. Any member of this House may phone Washington and ask what is the salary of the senior officers of any state-owned corporation in the United States. That information will be given to you over the telephone. Such information is regarded as public knowledge. I have done this myself. I telephoned and asked what is the salary of the chairman of the Export Import Bank, and the public relations person I was speaking to said that it is \$40,000. I then asked for the breakdown of the salaries of the next four senior officers of the Export Import Bank, a state corporation comparable to a Crown corporation in Canada, and was told that they each earn \$38,000, and that there is no expense allowance. Mr. Kissinger's salary was given to me. You can ask for the salary of any government official in the United States. I was told such information is available as a matter of right to anyone who wants it. Yet, in Canada a secretive, arrogant, ruthless government denies such knowledge to members of the opposition and to the people of Canada. So we are forced to draw this matter to the attention of the public.

I ask all hon. members to support motion No. 4, so that we may be certain that this type of knowledge will not be kept secret in future. Why should it be secret? Public service salaries are public knowledge. We are not asking what the actual salaries of the officers of the bank are to be; we are asking, on behalf of the Canadian people, what is to be the salary range of the five senior executives of the proposed bank. Why should there not be this type of open disclosure? I will be dismayed if the government does not support this amendment.

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I must endorse as strongly as I can what the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) has just said. We wasted three one-and-a-half-hour sittings of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs in trying to obtain the sort of information which must be divulged by private companies under the Canada Corporation Act. Our requests were refused, even though such information must be provided by the private sector. Yet here we are dealing with a Crown corporation and I, and other members of that committee, cannot understand why this information was refused.

We merely asked for the salary ranges of the five most senior officers. That information could have been provided; the exact dollars and cents figures may not have

[Mr. Stevens.]

been necessary. I say that the government's refusal in this area, its attempt to keep certain information secret, indicates that it is out of touch with what the public of Canada expects.

Something happened in the committee which has not been made generally known. After we finished dealing with Bill C-14, we considered Bill C-9, the Export Development Act. An official of the Crown corporation concerned volunteered to make the sort of disclosure for which we are asking at present. When asked why, he said, "It is just good accounting practice; private corporations must do it, and I believe we should be required to do it as well."

That was an honest statement made by the President of the Export Development Bank, and he showed the direction in which we should go. I think it was a good statement and I can only hope the minister will support the amendment, or make some arrangement for disclosure each year in the annual report. This is the direction in which society should be going, and the bill before us should at least reflect what is being done by the Export Development Bank.

● (2120)

Mr. Beatty: If the minister would like to make a comment I would be delighted to let him speak first.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): I should like to clarify a number of points. First, the amendment does recognize the relevance and jurisdiction of the Financial Administration Act. The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) made that clear. He said that the statement the corporation was required to include in its annual report under the Financial Administration Act should disclose the higher salaries of remuneration ranges, and so on. Clearly he drew attention to the relevance and jurisdiction of the Financial Administration Act in connection with this measure.

The second point I wish to make is that the Financial Administration Act does not require disclosure. If parliament wishes to amend the Financial Administration Act with respect to questions of disclosure, that is a separate matter and one which should be dealt with on its own merits, particularly since I think all members would be concerned that disclosure provisions should apply uniformly. That is beyond our scope at the present time in dealing with this bill.

The suggestion is made from time to time that information as to salary ranges should be furnished under the Financial Administration Act with respect to the operations of the Industrial Development Bank or the FBDB in much the same way as information regarding ranges of salaries in the public service is available. But as was pointed out in evidence by the general manager before the committee, the administration of that Crown corporation is not arranged in the same way as it is in the public service, so it is not possible to classify income by salary ranges.

The last speaker was dealing with the practice of the Export Development Corporation in providing information about the aggregate salaries paid to its officers. This information is appended in a note to the financial state-