

*Employment Support Bill*

case of a "do something situation". Businessmen will not buy this plan for those reasons. It is too vague. They do not understand it and they do not know where it is going. They do not know how to qualify or how it will affect their business. Further, there is a tremendous resentment building up among businessmen. After all, there are other problems with the economy in addition to the 10 per cent American surtax. There have been other examples of protectionism by the United States.

Businessmen will ask why they were not compensated previously. They will want to know why one fellow is entitled to compensation while others are not. The farmers and fishermen are not covered. Small business does not know to what extent it will be covered. All the consequences that will flow are unknown. This measure will not meet with the approval of the very businessmen it seems designed to please. The workers are worried and suspicious of a government that says it will help them by giving money to the firm for which they work. This results from the fact that in the past such measures have not redounded to the workers' benefit. There is not an automatic sequence. There may be some benefit in some cases, but in many cases there is not. The tax benefits, grants and hand-outs to industry have not resulted in better conditions or wages for workers.

Any way we look at it, this bill seems grossly inadequate and enormously misleading. If I had any reason to believe that this bill would help us, my colleagues and I would be willing to sit here continuously until it is passed, but there is no reason to believe that is the case. Therefore, I think that this measure should be examined far more closely and enormously modified before anything more is done with it. It is a gigantic put-on. If I may, I move:

That Bill C-262 be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, so that consideration can be given by that committee to the position of agriculture, fisheries and small business under the proposed legislation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Before putting the proposed amendment to the House, I must advise hon. members that I have reservations about the procedural aspects of this amendment. Hon. members might feel that this is an unusual form of amendment. There is a better and established form of amendment which is the referral of the subject matter of the bill to a committee. I assume that this is what the hon. member wants to do and there would be no difficulty with the amendment if this were the only thing proposed. However, the hon. member has departed from the established form of amendment, he altered the recognized form and now proposes an alternative mode of action. I think that we should look at this type of amendment very closely before allowing it in our forms of procedure, but I am not ruling on the matter immediately.

I would be very grateful to hon. members who might enlighten and guide the Chair as to whether we should accept this kind of amendment as part of our procedure. I may be wrong in this regard and I would certainly be very objectively guided by the advice of hon. members on the point.

[Mr. Saltsman.]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your giving the opportunity for comments to be made before you rule on the procedural admissibility of this amendment. As Your Honour has pointed out, it is a standard practice to move that a bill be not now read, but that its subject matter be referred to a commission or standing committee. The only question that Your Honour raised is in connection with the latter part of my colleague's motion as to whether it is permissible to add anything to that simple reference of the subject matter.

There are some citations in this general area on pages 278 and 279 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, citations 386, 387 and one or two more that deal with the matter. For the moment I may seem to be taking Your Honour's side of the argument, but in those citations it is made quite clear that one cannot at the same time refer the subject matter of a bill and some of its provisions to a committee. In other words, one cannot by this method try to propose amendments in a devious way. That is why the amendment submitted by my colleague does not suggest any amendment to the bill. It simply states that the subject matter of the bill be studied by the committee and in that study the committee consider among other things the position of agriculture, fisheries and small business under the proposed legislation.

I fully recognize the difficulty Your Honour feels there is with regard to this, but it seems that because we have avoided any reference of specific clauses of the bill to the committee and because we have avoided making or suggesting any amendments to the bill, all we are doing in the latter part of the amendment is adding some words to ensure that when the committee considers the subject matter of the bill it will not overlook the position of agriculture, fisheries and small business under the proposed legislation. They are, in effect, illustrations of the kind of discussions that might be held in committee.

Before getting to my feet, I had a three second consultation with my colleague, the mover of this motion. He agreed that if the difficulty Your Honour posed is one that you feel you cannot surmount, we would be willing for Your Honour to put a period after the words "Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs" and let the motion simply stand as a reference of the subject matter. In other words, by this motion and the speeches that have been made, we have made it clear that we want the committee to consider this whole phase of the matter. I hope I have not given away the possibility of the entire amendment being allowed by suggesting this truncation. Knowing how fair Your Honour is, I am persuaded I am not doing anything of that sort. I hope Your Honour will see fit to allow the amendment as a whole. If not Your Honour might be willing to exercise a prerogative of the Chair by suggesting that the motion stop with a period after the words "Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs".

● (3:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Edmonton West appears moved to join in the argument, but I wonder whether that is necessary. I know he would refer me also to citation 386 at page 278 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edi-