

Employment Support Bill

oppose the principle enunciated. I just read the title of the bill now before us. With regard to the second concern, the Chair invites hon. members to assist on this. It is that the proposed amendment may be beyond the scope of the bill we now have before us for consideration because it seems that this is a very broad and general amendment. I will read it for hon. members who will be assisting me shortly with argument:

That Bill C-262 be not now read a second time, but that it be resolved that in the opinion of this House the Government should give consideration to the introduction of measures to stimulate the Canadian economy and to free it from its dependence on that of the United States, to obtain additional markets for Canada's exports, and to protect Canadian jobs from the consequences of the policies announced by the President of the United States.

Without making any final decision, it seems that the proposed amendment is somewhat beyond the four corners of the bill now before the House for consideration. I invite hon. members to assist the Chair in this regard.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre) Mr. Speaker, in response to your invitation, I should like to do my best to help you come to the realization that this is the kind of reasoned amendment that the Chair ought to allow. This is an area of procedure that we have been over a good many times in this House. It is, of course, one that takes us to citation 382 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition and from that citation to a certain reference in May's 17th Edition. Citation 382 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition reads as follows:

It is also competent—

This, of course, is at the second reading stage.

—to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a Bill, to move as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill, or expressing opinions as to any circumstances connected with its introduction, or prosecution; or otherwise opposed to its progress; or seeking further information in relation to the Bill by Committees, Commissioners, the production of papers or other evidence or the opinion of Judges.

● (5:00 p.m.)

For the purpose of completeness I have read the entire text of citation 382 although, it will be obvious it is only the first half of it which applies in this case. Accordingly, if one turns to May's 17th Edition he will find the same ideas that are copied in Beauchesne spelled out on pages 526, 527 and 528. I do not have a copy of May's 17th Edition in my hand at the moment, but I read those pages earlier this afternoon and a number of us are quite familiar with them. On those pages, May makes it clear that the use of reasoned amendments in connection with the latter part of citation 382 has pretty well died out but that it is still appropriate for a member to rely on the early part of 382; in other words, to present an amendment implying opposition to the bill and asking the House to state by resolution some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principle or the policy placed before the House in the bill itself.

May goes on to point out that there are certain things one must avoid in an amendment of this kind. I believe

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

we have avoided the pitfalls. We are told that a reasoned amendment must be relevant to the subject matter of the bill. May makes it clear that this means we must not deal with other bills which are on the order paper. I maintain we are staying within the four corners of the purpose of this bill as cited in its title which Your Honour read out a few moments ago, namely, a measure to support employment in Canada by mitigating certain disruptive effects. It is our contention that the bill does not do what it aims to do at all and that the House has, therefore, the right to consider a resolution asking that the government turn its attention to measures which would accomplish in some detail the very things the government said it was proposing to accomplish. In any case, I submit we are obeying the instruction in May to make our amendment relevant to the subject matter of the bill. I say it is relevant in that it does relate to the crisis which has been presented to us. This is what the bill is about, but it is our contention, in opposing second reading, that the bill does not do what it says it will do.

Another caution in May is that a reasoned amendment must not propose changes which could be made to the bill when the bill is in the committee of the whole or in the hands of a standing committee. I think we have avoided doing that. The things we ask the government to consider could not be moved as amendments of detail to the bill before us. For one thing, such amendments would involve the expenditure of money and could not, therefore, be moved by a private member. I point out that although private members cannot, of course, move motions which involve the direct expenditure of money it is well established that a private member can move a motion asking that the government give consideration to a proposal which might cost money.

Another restriction mentioned in May's 17th Edition is that a reasoned amendment must not amount merely to an indirect negative. In other words, if all we want is to say no to the bill, we can do that by our vote on second reading and one does not need a reasoned amendment for that purpose. But our whole object in supporting the procedural propriety of this amendment arises from our belief that the House has a right to say at this time, if a majority agrees, that although the government did the correct thing in bringing this subject before us, it failed Parliament by not bringing in a measure or measures to cope with the essence of the problem. What we are asking is that the House say "No" to the second reading of this inadequate bill but express itself at the same time as in favour of the proposition that the government should reconsider the whole matter and give thought to bringing in a measure or measures which would, in fact, do the things spelled out in the proposed amendment, an amendment which would represent effective ways of doing what is envisaged in the title, namely, assisting employment in Canada and mitigating the disruptive effects upon Canadian industry of certain acts which have taken place outside the country.

As I say, I feel we have, in drafting this amendment, avoided the pitfalls which May says we must avoid. Moreover, I feel the amendment is in line with the right which May confirms, namely, the right to be opposed to a