

*Employment Support Bill*

product come within the scope of this bill or does it not? There is so much vagueness in the bill that, during the first or second night of debate, the minister had to say that agricultural products such as those which are processed could come within the measure if administratively they could be computed and assessed. He said that in respect of other goods there might be a more difficult administrative impact, for example in respect of raw materials, and the Farm Stabilization Act would have to apply.

In view of the fact the wording of the act does not define "industry" but defines the word "manufacturer" in loose and expansive language to include a wider range of products, I submit all my amendment does is remove the uncertainty and spell out with clarity the products to be included. The measure as it is now could apply to primary products if they come within the guidelines established by the act or the terms set out by the board. It will be up to the board to make a determination as to whether assistance should be given in respect of those products.

In looking at the measure we find three key words, industry, employment and surtax. There is certainly a disruptive effect on agricultural products and fish products as a result of the surtax. Everyone will admit this, yet there is nothing being done at the moment in a statutory way to cover these items. The minister admits this bill covers such products of agriculture as are being processed. As I remember what the minister said, there was a suggestion that because of a certainty in the administration, these items would fall within the scope of the bill. I submit there is no new principle involved.

If processed agricultural products come within this bill, why should the bill not also include basic products subject to surtax? We are not debating a bill through which this government is trying to create employment in certain industries. The prime purpose of this bill before the House is to offset the surtax imposed by the United States by assisting certain industries. That is the essential purpose of this bill. That is the guideline and the basic reason for its existence.

Because the word "industry" is not defined and the word "manufacturer" is left wide open, I submit my amendment would in fact define "manufacturer" with certainty. It would extend the scope of the word without running afoul of any rules outlined in Beauchesne's or May's Parliamentary Rules. This would result by extending the provisions of this bill to cover something which perhaps might not be covered through a liberal interpretation.

Let me submit in conclusion that what my amendment will accomplish is covered at this time by the interpretation placed on the measure by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson). He refers to processed agricultural products as being covered. Are frozen blueberries processed and are they covered? They are certainly subject to the surtax. Could apples be considered as being covered? There might be some question in respect of apples in the raw form, but are processed apples covered? How can we ascertain what is a high burden agricultural product? All my amendment does is remove the uncertainty of interpretation in this bill by including the words, primary products of agriculture, fishing and, I suppose, the forest industry.

Because this amendment does not run afoul of the rules, and there is no rule to restrict it, I submit there will be no tampering with the \$80 million. I could discuss the fact that the bill is discriminatory as between one industry to be covered and another which is given no protection, but that would be touching upon the subject matter or the principle. At this stage all I am attempting to do is remove that vagueness in respect of the word "manufacturer". This vagueness causes a great deal of consternation not only to the Chair but as well to businessmen, farmers and fishermen across the country. It depends on what type of fishing or farming they do whether they come within this bill. If they happen to be fishermen or farmers who do not process these goods they may be left out in the cold. I am attempting to remove that uncertainty by extending the definition of "agricultural products" and leaving it to the board to define rules and procedures and to develop criteria by which an industry shall qualify. This is being left to the board for final determination.

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the main contention of the hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan). I feel that matters he placed before you have been of some assistance. Perhaps I should disagree with my colleague in only one small way. In providing us with this definition he has not really extended the scope of the bill, but has in fact clarified and restricted it. It would be very difficult for Your Honour to say immediately in respect of this bill that any number of amendments could in any way go beyond the scope of its intent. There is a great deal left undefined. Indeed, it is a piece of legislation that could well be regarded as a blank cheque for the minister and his officials to do with as they please, in spite of what the minister and others have said to the contrary. This bill is very open-ended legislation similar to legislation we have been getting more often over the years. In some ways this has restricted the legislative function of Parliament because it has meant in most cases that the real legislative provisions are included in government regulations rather than in any bills considered in this chamber.

The hon. member has pointed out to Your Honour one of the difficulties by suggesting there is no definition of the word "industry". We find in clause 3 that the purpose of this act is to provide a means to support levels of employment when other countries impose certain things. Considering that as the core of this bill, if you like, and this is the government's enunciation of its purpose, many difficulties have been created for Your Honour and other members of this House in attempting to determine the impact and the effect of this legislation. For various reasons the government has not made clear, we are provided with very open-ended legislation in which the key word "industry" has not been defined. It does not appear in the table of interpretation. When we look to the key paragraphs which give us assistance we become further confused as to the exact nature and intent of the bill. The measure suggests that:

"manufacturer" means a person, firm or corporation operating an activity in Canada whereby any goods, products, commodities or wares—

In those terms I am sure we would have to include almost every commercial enterprise in which there is an