

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

tion. The function of the House in financial matters being restricted to the approval or the reduction of the expenditure under consideration or an increase in the stringency in the terms and the conditions of the charge thereby created, amendments are restricted to these objects.

So, in substance the suggestion by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre that we are interfering in any way with the financial initiative of the Crown falls to the ground in the light of these citations. The amendment which my hon. friend from Hamilton West puts forward does not seek to expand the terms of the resolution; it does not seek to extend the authority requested by the government under the bill. Rather, it seeks to limit; it seeks to reduce. In bills with an appropriation aspect, such as this one, it has always been in order for hon. members to introduce amendments which seek to limit or reduce expenditure.

I agree readily with the argument that no amendment can be accepted which seeks to extend or expand expenditure. But this is not what is being done here. In these circumstances, I submit that none of the earlier arguments which have been placed before Your Honour in this discussion either by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre or others, have any merit. I strongly submit on the basis of the citations I have put forward that Your Honour should find these amendments in order.

**Mr. MacEachen:** It is likely that none of us arguing the case against the hon. member who has just resumed his seat would qualify on the grounds of merit or substance in any of the arguments we might put forward. But we are arguing, hopefully, with an eye to the Chair rather than with an eye to the reaction of the hon. member and his friends. I found it difficult, really, to disentangle the politics from the procedure in the comments which have been made from the other side of the House. Hon. members can complain as loudly as they like about the fact that the ceiling is to be removed by the bill. They can argue that this is bad policy, and they are entitled to do so. They did so in the committee, and they failed to convince members of the committee that it was bad policy. Now, they have come back to the House, and in the guise of a procedural argument they have restated the same policy arguments against the proposal contained in the bill.

I believe that in some cases when a point of order is being argued in the House there can really be strong differences of opinion. But in this case it seems to me the inadmissibility of the amendment is crystal clear, not least on the ground that the royal recommendation is entirely explicit in stating that the bill is to remove the ceiling. Surely, when an hon. member comes forward with an amendment saying that the ceiling shall not exceed a particular figure of \$900 million, the gist of the Royal recommendation is being very seriously challenged. This appears to me to be a conclusive argument against the amendment.

We are now engaged upon the report stage of the bill, a relatively new stage for this House of Commons, a new procedure. And we must bear in mind that what has passed earlier has a bearing on what can be done in the House at the present time. In a sense, the report stage, inasmuch as it enables members to deal with amendments to clauses of a bill with the Speaker in the chair, is an

[Mr. Nielsen.]

assimilation of the Committee of the Whole. This is probably only an argument by assimilation, but, certainly, whatever happens on the report stage must take into account the approval in principle which was given to the bill on second reading. It was clear at that time that the main principle of the bill was that the ceiling be removed. If there were any principle in the bill, if one could find a major conclusion, it certainly was that the ceiling on advances to the unemployment insurance fund be removed.

I refer to Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice which is constructive and helpful on this point. It states at page 550 in the discussion of admissible amendments—admittedly in committee but there is nevertheless similarity to our situation here, because in both cases the second reading stage has been concluded:

An amendment which is equivalent to a negative of the bill or which would reverse the principle of the bill as agreed to on second reading is not admissible. Where the scope of a bill is very restricted it is not always easy to grasp the full effect of this rule.

I make no aspersions in the direction of hon. members opposite. Two examples are given of the application of this rule. The first is as follows:

The scope of the Parliamentary Elections Bill, 1880, being restricted to the repeal of a section in a statute, an amendment which proposed the continuance and extension of that section was ruled out of order. The Chairman stated that, though the committee had full power to amend, even to the extent of nullifying the provisions of a bill, they could not insert a clause reversing the principles which the bill, as read a second time, sought to affirm.

Surely, what the second reading confirmed was that a ceiling of any kind was eliminated or removed. Any attempt, in my humble submission, to restore the existence of the ceiling would certainly reverse the principle adopted by the House on second reading. This same argument, if I might say so, would apply even more directly to the amendment in the name of the hon. member for the Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). The final amendment, proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) is really a total rejection of that very clause that he seeks to amend. He is asking us to regard the vote as an appropriation, though the bill asks us to regard it as an advance, and instead of voting against the clause which he dislikes so much, he bothers the House by this kind of silly amendment.

**Mr. Baldwin:** The trouble is you are afraid to vote on the amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank hon. members for their very interesting comments. As I indicated earlier this afternoon, I have given very serious thought to these several amendments. They have caused me a good deal of concern. I reviewed them, looked at May and Beauchesne and Bourinot and, of course, Standing Orders, hoping that I could see a ray of light which would make it possible for the Chair to allow them and hoping, also, that hon. members could convince me that these amendments were acceptable and would be a vehicle for discussion of this important legislation under Standing Order 55.

In spite of the arguments which have been advanced this afternoon, I find it very difficult to accept that these amendments are in order. I want to insist on the fact that I have gone out of my way to study the arguments that have