

*Employment Support Bill*

rather well—was that we should be aware of to whom these grants are going so that we can make decisions based on this information. I do not think that at any point in his remarks to the House has he said that one group of companies or another should be excluded from receiving grants. He did make a very strong case for disclosure and for knowledge on the part of the Canadian public and members of the House so that we could make decisions based on that knowledge.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order with respect to whether or not the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) could answer the minister's question. Clarification is needed by the House. Certainly in this case clarification is needed from the minister. It is quite permissible for the hon. member to explain his position.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. The Chair does not want to enter into a discussion with the hon. member, but it was up to the minister to decide whether or not he wanted the floor. The hon. member did not have the floor at that time.

**Mr. Pepin:** We could drop it at that. I had heard that particular point being made, but having been rudely misquoted this afternoon I would not like to do it to anyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. The Chair would like to know which hon. member wishes to participate in the debate at this time.

**Mr. Pepin:** We will forget that point and take it up some other day.

**Mr. Saltsman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and to clarify my position in this debate, as a result of my intervention as an interpreter I wonder if you would apprise me of my position. Should I continue the remarks I have commenced as part of my intervention in this debate, or can I have the floor following the minister's intervention?

• (8:20 p.m.)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** The hon. member has a few minutes left and may use all of them, but once he sits down he automatically loses his right to participate in the debate.

**Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) by placing this amendment before us has made an excellent suggestion. I know that the minister followed my colleague's remarks with a great deal of interest and could see the wisdom in them. I was hoping that when the minister had the floor he would endorse those remarks and indicate his acceptance of the motion, but on listening to his parliamentary secretary I lost hope that this course of action would be adopted.

Through this amendment we are really asking the government to learn something from experience. There has been a great deal of experience with similar kinds of programs and it has shown that eventually the dissemination of information assists the government in reaching a proper conclusion and serves as a policy guide. On the other hand we have had programs that have been disastrous simply because of secrecy attempted on the part of

[Mr. Saltsman.]

the government. As a result, it took us years to learn that we were wasting time, energy and money when we should have been moving in more worthwhile directions.

The minister does not need any further reminder of this than the latest report of the Economic Council which discussed the manpower policies of the government. It points out that through lack of statistical and other information, even to this date, after spending close to \$2 billion, we do not know whether the program has been as effective as we originally hoped it would be. Surely that should be a lesson to this minister. I would also like to direct the minister's attention to our experience with the regional development program. The government started off with the same kind of nebulous approach to regional development, with criteria which did not hang together, and said, "We will change the criteria as we go along."

All we ask is that the minister give us some indication from month to month of which industries are getting the money. We do not believe this will be a danger to the competitiveness and confidentiality of the industries involved. The government's arguments in this respect are complete nonsense. Why should we have to wait for a whole year to find out whether the legislation is a disaster or not?

I listened to the speech of the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). As you know, Mr. Speaker, I was very much in agreement with him on a previous amendment. There is one notable trait which that hon. member has: he is consistent. For as long as I have had the pleasure of listening to him both in the House and in committee, he has always opposed any attempt at disclosure. He opposed it on the Bank Act when we were drafting amendments to the Corporations Act and during discussion of consumers' programs. He always asks, "What do we need information for? Who is the information for?" I hesitate to say that the hon. member for Edmonton West has been proven wrong in his contention that the competitive position of industry will be hurt by disclosure. He does not object to having information placed before this House and, Mr. Speaker, when information comes before this House it is immediately available to the public. There is no evidence to show that in those areas where we have pushed for more disclosure of information, such disclosure has hurt anyone. But if anyone has been hurt as a result of the disclosure it is because he deserved to be hurt, because he was hiding something that should not have been hidden.

If the minister adopts this amendment it will go a long way to improving a bill that does not have very much to commend itself. In fact, the incorporation of this amendment might prove to be the best thing in the whole of the bill. What makes the adoption of the amendment more important is the minister's statement that this action is really a permanent feature of government, that it is not a six months' deal or something like that. All the indications are that Bill C-262, when enacted, will be around for a long time.

At the moment the intention is to use this legislation to counteract some of the effects of the American 10 per cent surtax. But the implication is clear that it will be an on-going instrument of government. We are talking about legislation that calls for an initial expenditure of \$80 million but which may end up with an expenditure involving