

Private Bills

McOUAT INVESTMENTS LIMITED

Mr. J. A. Jerome (for Mr. Major) moved that Bill S-15, respecting McOuatt Investments Limited, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Jerome (for Mr. Major) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I did not want to speak on this bill because I think it is a very sad business. The reason I am rising to speak is that we have another bill on the Order Paper respecting the Brunner Corporation which I presume fits into the same category. The problem with these bills is that, over the years, we have passed several pieces of legislation demanding that companies make certain information available to the government. Some of these demands were enforced and some were not.

Certain limited reports have been demanded from these companies. The companies are asked for simple things like the names of the executive officers of the company, the address of the company and the directors of the company. That is about the extent of the information they are asked for under the Corporations Act. Because this information was not provided, the company lost its charter. The government went through all the rigamarole of asking this company to provide the information. They even used the machinery of the courts, but at no time did they make a telephone call and state, if you do not get in your report with the changes in directors, you are going to lose your charter. My guess is that this failure to comply has cost this company \$5,000, and that is all it has done.

According to the officials who attended the committee hearings, the indication is that the address and list of officials given seven or eight years ago is still the actual address and list of the board of directors. Through some stupid arrangement, we have forced this and a number of other companies to be in this position.

I damn well think that the officials in that department should be highly chastized for that operation. It has been indicated that 3,000 companies are involved. If all we are doing is costing these companies \$5,000 or \$6,000 to get their charters back, we are wasting our time and the officials are mis-spending their time. I am surprised they did not

[Mr. Jerome.]

even bother to extend the courtesy of a telephone call, although some of the officials seemed to have personal knowledge of the people who were the original directors of the company and, in fact, are still the directors.

In this particular case, it was pointed out that the officials, through some inefficiency in their office set-up, were not aware of the problem. I do not see much sense in this operation, Mr. Speaker. If there had been a justifiable reason for this type of action, which has a punitive effect on the company, such as a refusal to do something which was of prime importance, I think we could probably approve of this type of action. However, I think this was a useless exercise because of the limited type of the information requested.

This was not a financial statement that was not filed or was filed some place else. The only failure was to file the address of the head office of the company and the names of the board of directors, with their current addresses. This seems to be a pretty silly exercise for us to be going through. We have two companies in identical circumstances, and we now have another one on the Order Paper. Representatives of the minister should have at least phoned, visited or somehow got in touch with these people to ascertain whether the company was still in operation and asked if there was legitimate reason why the limited information could not be provided.

It is this kind of exercise that burns up every small businessman in the country. They have to fill in forms and documents that do not seem to serve any useful purpose. If they do not, then this kind of action can be taken against them. I give warning to the corporations branch that I, personally, am not very interested in the processing of a number of these bills in the future if the reason for them is similar to this one. When the officials come before the committee, they better have good reason why they are forcing a company to go through an operation that will cost \$5,000 to provide the corporations branch with the address of the company and the names of the directors. If this is the only reason, they better have a good explanation or they will receive a great deal of criticism at the committee hearings. Common sense must be used by the department, such as getting in touch with these people and asking why they are dropping their charter and informing them of the results if they do not make this type of return. If they do not make that kind of