

Employment Support Bill

levels of production and employment of the firms receiving those grants.

Before I resume my seat I should like to deal with one argument presented in committee by the minister. It may be he will refer to it again and I will not have a chance to comment; therefore I will do so now. The minister suggested that if we provided all this information in detail it could affect the competitive position of the company concerned. I fail to see why this should be so.

In the amendment we are not asking for the profit picture of the company; we are not asking for pricing policies; we are not asking for a statement as to the amount of money being put into research and development. In short, we are asking a number of questions which, if fully answered and made public, could not affect the firm in terms of its competitive position in Canada and, more particularly, in terms of its competitive position in international markets. That is what we are concerned about here. We are merely asking that the government insist that the names of the companies be listed so the people of Canada will know whether a corporation is receiving public money. We are insisting that these recipient corporations make known to the people of Canada their levels of production and employment. These are the basic facts we want and, I suggest, need if Parliament is to reach any kind of sensible conclusion or estimate of the efficacy of this bill. These facts would not affect the competitive position of the firms and it is for the minister to show us in a serious way how the availability of this information would affect the position. He has not done so.

Instead of raising his normally Socratic questions and *reductio ad absurdum* arguments, as he does so genially and pleasantly—and without logical effectiveness, I might say—I hope he will define the government's position and show how to the slightest degree my amendment may be wrong and unacceptable to the government.

Mr. Speaker: It being six o'clock, I do now leave the Chair.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, my remarks at this time will be extremely short in respect of the amendment of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). I am one of the casualties of redistribution. When I occupied the chair I knew the names of all the constituencies, but as a result of redistribution that was all changed for me. The hon. member presented this amendment in committee and advanced basically the same arguments he has advanced here today. At that time, of course, it was not so much in the way of an amendment but, rather, a suggestion for consideration or what-have-you. We are not as concerned about the difficulties of procedure within the committee system as we are with the essence of the motion before us.

In matters of this kind, personally I want to see what useful purpose might be served by having such a report

[Mr. Broadbent.]

from the government to the public or from an individual to the government. In many instances I find it absolutely ludicrous that governments should require reports from the public. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford), for instance, in respect of the Corporations Act now makes businesses and corporations report on certain matters. He does not have the authority to collate the information and does not know what to do with it even when he has it. This is a complete waste of time.

In the same way, I find it would be a complete waste of time to require government departments to make reports of a nature such as would be required under this amendment because, frankly, I do not know of anyone who could put this information to a useful purpose. Although I do not know, I suppose it might strengthen the hand of some labour union in attempting to negotiate a contract. The hon. member who is proposing this amendment is notorious for proposing this sort of thing. He and his colleagues have used every subterfuge in an effort to obtain this information, not for themselves but for somebody down the line. I do not consider this to be a useful purpose.

In the same way, if the government jumped by 50 per cent its requirements for reporting, I do not think business would be any further ahead—because once the reports are in, no one knows how to use them; it has become a habit. It is just an extra expense to business. Therefore, without any other reason I suggest there has not been proven the value there would be in having these reports provided as requested by the hon. member. I am satisfied that the report should come to Parliament on the basis of once a year and then we could see what had happened. I am prepared to reassess my view in this regard.

I am sorry some of the other amendments were lost, but that is a decision of the House.

Mr. Pepin: That was a good performance.

Mr. Bruce Howard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few comments in respect of one of the points raised by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent): The amendment he proposed has been commented upon by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). He made a valid point and one which I believe should be considered by all members. However, there are some other points which need to be made in connection with the proposed amendment.

In connection with the aspect raised by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby about guaranteeing certain levels of employment, this of course refers back to clauses 11 and 13 of the bill. Clause 11 refers to the likelihood of a significant reduction in employment, and clause 13 outlines conditions under which the board must take into consideration certain aspects of the levels of employment and provides:

—to the extent that in the opinion of the board was possible under the circumstances, the manufacturer has maintained the level of employment throughout the assistance period in accordance with the specifications of the board or at prescribed levels if the board did not specify any levels of employment for that manufacturer.