

*Employment Support Bill*

employment and industry in the province was persuaded and encouraged to bring into the Halifax area a company which was producing television receivers. That company has lost probably \$10 million or more and it looks as though it will never be in a competitive position. Again, I suggest, not that they should not have gone ahead but that had the government of Nova Scotia and had the federal government been required to give the kind of public accounting in detail and frequency which is suggested in this amendment with reference to this special legislation you would not have had the losses which have taken place.

In my own province we have a fiasco which has been criticized, not just by people in my party, not just by socialists but by as respectable a business publication as the *Financial Post*. We have Churchill Forest Industries. That has now cost the people of Manitoba and the people of Canada \$100 million, and the promoters probably made several tens of millions of dollars simply because there was no requirement on the part of the government of Manitoba and no requirement on the part of the federal government that sensible, honest and open accounting practices be followed.

In the province of Saskatchewan the former Liberal government was promoting a pulp and paper mill at Meadow Lake. It may be the minister will say the federal government is not responsible for the promotion of industries in a single province, that that is done by the provincial government. The fact is that had that plant gone ahead, the federal government would have invested by way of outright grants somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$15 million or \$20 million because that plant would have been in a depressed area.

Aside from the fact that our experience of government involvement with pulp and paper plant has been bad, as I have already demonstrated in the Churchill Forest example, here is an industry which is now plagued with overcapacity to produce. Here is an industry where workers in long-established plants in Ontario and Quebec are being laid off. Yet the federal government was willing to make grants to a new plant which would probably have taken away sales from existing plants and led to further unemployment in existing plants. And that plant probably was not viable in the first place. If we had the kind of legislation which required regular complete disclosure of financial details from companies which are given grants or loans from governments, the kind of thing I have talked about would not have taken place.

Let me for a few minutes talk about the situation in Newfoundland. Here you have two very energetic and very smart promoters operating. You have the Doyle interests and the Sheehan interests. You have proposals for the building of an oil port at Come-By-Chance which would cost tens of millions of dollars—money which would come almost entirely from federal or provincial government sources, which means money which would be paid out by the people of Canada through the federal government and by the people of Newfoundland through the provincial government. The profits of those operations would go entirely to the promoters, who would put no money in at all. This oil complex, if it comes to pass, will be in competition with existing oil facilities which have been built up by companies which have paid the

[Mr. Orlikow.]

existing corporate taxes, albeit they have received generous tax concessions and write-offs.

It seems to me this is another illustration of the necessity for the kind of disclosure we call for in this amendment. It seems to me that what is involved here should not divide us on principle. I do not see that it should be rejected simply because it is a proposal made by a member of a party that has some reservations about the way the so-called free enterprise system works.

• (9:00 p.m.)

Let me say this to the minister in closing: Surely the few examples that I have given, examples that could be doubled and quadrupled if one were to take the time to document all of the enterprises in which federal and provincial governments have become involved, enterprises which have to a large extent been a failure except to the promoters, enterprises which to a large extent have been of little value to the public, should lead the minister to welcome this amendment rather than to oppose it.

**Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words in support of the amendment put before the House by the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent). One of the points the minister made a while ago is a clear indication of the thinking of members on the other side of the House. He said that he would be prepared to go halfway on some of the measures contained in the hon. member's amendment. However, we know that halfway is not good enough in cases where public disclosure is needed, as it is here. It is like talking about being half-pregnant when you talk of disclosing halfway a matter which, to say the least, should be public property.

This motion makes reference to preparing a report on the levels of employment and production at the beginning and end of the assistance period. I suggest that those who are displaced from employment by the surtax imposition of the United States would like to know just where their tax dollars are going. It just is not good enough for members opposite to say that public disclosure might harm competition. We must remember that people walking the streets are being given no job opportunity even though they have put their money into the treasury through income tax deductions.

We in this party have said many times that public disclosure is the best thing that can happen in a democratic society. This evening we have heard members on the other side of the House, and the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert), suggesting that public disclosure is not in the interest of the public, that it is the concern of the treasuries of the various companies given assistance under this bill.

If the security of the nation is at stake we do not hesitate to prohibit public disclosure of certain matters. In this case it happens to be taxpayers' dollars that are going to companies in need of assistance, and this is why everyone in Canada should be entitled to know whether it is in the best interest of Canadians, particularly those affected directly by the surtax, to give this money to these companies.

I cannot understand the argument of the minister and his parliamentary secretary that public disclosure would