

ment. I find this is a useful practice. I do not quarrel with the hon. member's suggestion in any way. I will simply say that I, for one, as the minister through whom the new bank would report to parliament, would hope and expect that the new board of directors would adopt the practice which the Export Development Corporation has adopted with regard to the disclosure of aggregate salaries. I do not think I would be satisfied with the top five; it might make a lot more sense and be a lot more helpful if it were to include the top ten salaries. I hope this expression of opinion might meet the point raised by hon. members opposite, and if this were considered a reasonable way of dealing with the question we might move on to the next item.

**Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo):** May I say, Mr. Speaker, that I personally am not satisfied to accept a simple assurance from the minister that he intends to encourage the new corporation to act in this way. Ministers come and go, but the principle here is one which I feel should extend beyond the term of office of a particular minister. If the minister were willing to give an assurance to the House that the government would make appropriate amendments to the Financial Administration Act, I would be inclined not to support the motion. I am disposed to accept the minister's contention that if the principle involved here is to be asserted, this should be done on a global scale. However, in the absence of an undertaking to enforce this principle generally in law I believe a precedent should be set here. The House is entitled to know what use is to be made of public funds.

The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) has suggested this is yet another example of the government setting a double standard in its procedures—one for private corporations and another for public corporations. As a citizen and as a taxpayer I am less concerned about the behaviour of private corporations than I am about the behaviour of public corporations.

If an example of behaviour is to be set, the standard governing the public sector should be the higher one—we should make sure that those in the public sector go the second half mile. There is no secrecy about this information in the United States. Citizens of that country are allowed access to this kind of information if they are interested in it.

I have no compelling passion to learn the salaries of the top five officials in the Business Development Bank. What is of greater interest to me is the principle of openness, the right of the people to know how their money is being spent. The onus is upon the government, upon those who would argue that the policy of openness should not be followed, to defend its actions. I urge hon. members to support the motion proposed by my hon. friend from York-Simcoe.

● (2130)

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Halton-Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on motion No. 4. I must say I found it rather difficult to follow the minister's comments on this amendment. I do not know whether he had prepared anything or whether he made up his speech on the spur of the moment but, as I say, I found him difficult to follow. As I understood him he was saying that

#### *Federal Business Development Bank Act*

he would like to see this sort of disclosure even by the top ten officials of the Federal Business Development Bank.

I find some sympathy for the position that the exact amount should be disclosed, since there is no such thing as a range of salaries. I think a good argument can be made for saying that this disclosure might be prejudicial when you are endeavouring to secure top level officials with entrepreneurial experience for this bank, but on balance I think the aggregate of the salaries paid would suffice.

After all, Mr. Speaker, if a firm tries to secure a loan from the Industrial Development Bank, one of the requirements of the IDB is that the aggregate salaries of the top officials must be disclosed by the auditor in the financial statement of the company. Many times they restrict the top limit to a certain figure, and the auditor is required to set it out in the statement.

With regard to the minister's remarks about the Financial Administration Act, if the minister gave us a commitment that he would recommend to his colleagues—he is the only one who can do this, we cannot—that the act be amended to provide for this kind of disclosure, then it would find a good deal of sympathy and support among the members on this side of the House.

We are not in any way trying to make things difficult for this new venture. Obviously we want to see it get the best calibre of person available in the country today. But by the same token we think the minister has a particular responsibility for seeing to it that the operations of the bank are open and above reproach.

In view of other remarks made today about disclosure and conflict of interest, which I will not repeat, I think it is incumbent upon the minister to see that the relevant information is made available in the annual report of the new bank. I do not think it is enough for him to say that he would hope that the directors, in their wisdom, would include this sort of information in the annual report; there must be some section of a statute requiring that this must be done, so that as ministers and directors change, and as government goes on, this reporting process is not lost.

I hope that the minister will respond to these remarks and will clarify what he said earlier, because he did leave a little confusion in my mind, and I think in the minds of many other members of the House as well.

**Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the remarks of the minister because I was hoping he would indicate to the House some reasons, based either on principle or on practicality, in his experience as the responsible minister for this bank, why we should not adopt the motion proposed by my colleague from York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens). It is an amendment that is founded upon the principle of doing public business and spending public money in a way that the public can see; it is founded on the principle of openness.

I was a little surprised by the minister's suggestion that he would prefer disclosure of the salaries of the ten top officials, and as a result of preferring this disclosure by the ten top officials, he would be prepared to vote against disclosure by the top five. That seems to me to involve some rather roundabout logic.