

*Government Organization Act, 1983*

the Senate. For example, within the past few days I, among others, have raised questions about whether the Auditor General would be permitted to audit the books of CDIC. It is clearly appropriate that the Auditor General, who is Parliament's auditor, should be the one given access to the books of CDIC which will be the largest holding company in Canada, will have the authority to spend vast amounts of tax dollars and will be largely unaccountable to Parliament. It is clearly appropriate that the Auditor General be given access to those books and be responsible for alerting Parliament if tax dollars are not being well and prudently spent.

In the past few days we have also gone through an experience with Canadair and de Havilland. In the case of Canadair we found that that Crown corporation ran up the largest corporate loss in the history of Canada of \$1.4 billion. The response of the Government, both in committee and to Hon. Members in the House, has been to claim that it was simply unaware of what was happening, that somehow it was the fault of management, and that the Government did not have any responsibility. Canadair and de Havilland will now be subsidiaries of CDIC which will have the responsibility of ensuring proper management, notwithstanding the fact that the management of CDIC has had very little, if any, experience in the private sector and is being asked to run the largest holding company in the history of Canada. Also, the Minister responsible for CDIC is in the Senate instead of being in the House of Commons. That Minister has a responsibility which dwarfs the responsibilities of many Ministers who are in the House of Commons.

That sort of situation leads to a position of impotence on the part of Members of Parliament in doing their job in holding the Government to account, in examining the Government's activities and in making suggestions on a day-to-day basis on how improvements could be made. We find as well a sense of frustration among the people of Canada when they find that they have a Government which has grown remote and a Parliament that is incapable of doing the job for which Members of Parliament were elected. With this Bill the Government would just remove that much further from the House of Commons, the elected representatives, the ability to obtain answers and to hold the Government to account. This is why, more than any other reason, I feel this provision of the Bill is one that is not healthy and should be struck out.

If the Government is to proceed with other elements, let it go ahead, and we will consider them on their own merits. But certainly it would be completely wrong for the Government to go ahead with proposals to put Parliamentary Secretaries in the Senate and to have them totally unaccountable to Members of the House of Commons.

I have cited one case, the case of CDIC, where there is clear irresponsibility at the present time, but there are others as well. What we have found as Members of Parliament—and no doubt, Mr. Speaker, you have found it during your tenure in office—is a growing tendency on the part of Government to remove itself from Parliament's scrutiny and to allow decisions, which should properly be made by Parliament itself, to be made by administrative boards and tribunals. Nowhere is

that more apparent than in the case of the CRTC. The Government has given the CRTC vast grants of power to determine what Canadians will be able to watch on their televisions and will be able to listen to on their radios. That Commission, which is largely unaccountable to Parliament, does not find its estimates rigorously challenged by Parliament. It has in the Broadcasting Act a tremendous grant of authority to do whatever it wants. It has taken unto itself a tremendous amount of authority to make decisions about what Canadians will see and hear, to determine the shape of Canadian culture for the future, to determine the future of a multi-million dollar industry and to affect in some cases international relations, all without guidance from Parliament and all without the proper input of elected Members of Parliament as to what should be the policy.

It is just another example of how Government has grown remote and how it has been removed by one further degree from the elected representatives of the people. If the Government goes ahead with the proposal it is making in the Bill before us now, Government will become that much more remote.

Any of us could cite other examples of where Government has grown distant from Members of Parliament and where this Bill would simply complicate that particular problem. Another example could be found by returning to the question of Crown corporations. The Bill which the Government has before the House at the present time gives authority to create a limited number of new Crown corporations. Throughout the span of your tenure in office, Mr. Speaker, and the time that I have been here, the vast majority of major Crown corporations have been statutory corporations. Legislation has been introduced in Parliament which has been debated here. We have had the opportunity to discuss the elements of the Bills and to discuss what was good about them, propose amendments and suggest ways in which improvements could be made. This has been healthy.

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In the case of Petro-Canada, for example, we had a long and very spirited debate in Parliament in which Members of Parliament were able to express their view and the views of Canadians at large as to what the proper course of action would be. However, we find new provisions and new legislation which would provide that the Government could incorporate an unlimited number of new Crown corporations without ever going to Parliament, as long as they were subsidiaries of existing Crown corporations. That particularly would be the situation in the case of the Canada Development Investment Corporation which could buy or sell any company in Canada without a bye-your-leave from Parliament, without a moment's debate here in the House of Commons. Surely that sort of irresponsibility, that use of tax dollars, that intrusion by the Government in the marketplace without proper accountability in Parliament and without the ability of the elected representatives of the people to do their job and to hold the Government to account could only cause concern for ordinary Canadians