

Government Orders

this money to put a competitor across the street. Why is the government doing this?"

An hon. member: Same thing with me!

Mr. Vincent: I had no answer for him, because there was none. I would say: "You are out of luck, they could have nationalized donuts but, no, they nationalized service stations." This is what the people in the riding of Trois-Rivières have to say. They are happy, as I said earlier, that 18 companies could be privatized, bringing in \$3 billion on top of everything. That means that there were \$3 billion laying about in Canada, in companies which had the mandate to compete with Canadian tax-paying companies. This is illogical.

No need to own a company to know what is happening in the oil industry in Canada and around the world. There are federal civil servants paid to do that in Ottawa. The provincial Energy departments are dealing with that at the provincial level, and at the national and international levels because of the ramifications. One does not need to set up an office in my riding to know if it is a good idea to invest there. Surely you do not need anything specific to know if such and such company in your riding is a good investment.

It is the same thing with regard to energy. There is a government with a minister and a department to deal with that subject. If what the members opposite 524 were true, then, the Minister of Health and Welfare would need to have his own hospital competing with other hospitals in order to be able to make decisions regarding his department. The Minister of Transport would have to own a truck, car, and plane manufacturing company as well as an asphalt company in order to decide if the asphalt to be used on a national road is adequate. You see how absurd it is to argue that you need to own a company in order to administer the country in a certain field. I could go on with all forty departments, Mr. Speaker.

If the hon. member opposite wants to comment, I suggest he wait his turn.

Furthermore, if we take a look at the energy sector, the situation has changed in Canada since 1975. I see the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel, who knows that constitutionally, the situation has changed since 1975, and the same has happened in the energy sector.

The situation has changed and policies have changed. The energy sector as such as changed as well.

Mr. Saint-Julien: The government has changed too.

Mr. Vincent: As the hon. member from Abitibi said, the government has changed as well since 1975. So there is no reason for maintaining a corporation in that sector. We have more Crown corporations to sell off, and my dearest wish is to make them sufficiently viable so we can sell them. The problem is that in 1984, we inherited 400 Crown corporations that didn't have a chance to be profitable.

At the time, taxpayers' money was invested in unprofitable companies that then competed with private companies owned by Canadians who were paying taxes, and those companies were profitable. Try and explain that to the people in my riding! They do not understand, they do not agree and they are right.

That is what we have been doing, gradually, since 1984, and that is why Petro-Canada should be privatized as soon as possible, so that Canadians who have confidence in the energy sector and want to invest in the industry will receive dividends, for a change.

• (1820)

Because for fifteen years they have not received dividends from PetroCan. Canadians who want to invest will be able to do so and to buy shares and if they are not satisfied with them on January 2nd, they will only have to resell them on January 3rd, while today they can do nothing if they are not satisfied with PetroCan. That is the main difference between privatization and government ownership and between the opposition parties and that government that makes decisions and administers the economy of a huge country that has inequalities but must reflect anyhow the policies that are put in place and the economy of the whole country.

The other point one must consider in matters of nationalization and privatization is where the money comes from and what it is used for. When I talk about privatization, I say to Canadians in general, as we did in the case of Air Canada and all the others: you take money out of your pockets, if you want, and you buy shares from a company. Here is its bottom line and we think it is profitable; if you are interested, you buy shares. That is privatization.