

sidered to be some substantial advantage in having it? On the face of it, at any rate, it does not seem to be very tidy to have a company incorporated with a whole lot of powers which are wholly improper for it to use.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: I do not know if I can answer your question very specifically. I have never had any personal responsibility for the incorporation of a crown company under the Dominion Companies Act which was used during the war. Perhaps it was done as a matter of convenience, I do not know. The only one I have ever had to administer is the Commodity Prices Stabilization Corporation which was a purely wartime corporation set up under the Dominion Companies Act.

It is true that a corporation created in that way has very wide powers. I think its powers go considerably beyond those which are set out in section 14. In the Bonanza Creek case letters patent companies are deemed to have, with certain limitations, the powers of a natural person and so on. But I think that is a legal theory we do not need to go into. I do not know how the practice arose, but it is a matter certainly of some importance and it has been raised in parliament and the question discussed there. I think it is a matter for parliament to decide and finally pass on. I suppose it is a question which I do not believe anyone would suggest should be dealt with in a bill of this kind, which is to provide for the check, direction and control of the financial operations of these crown corporations, and not the particular manner in which they are incorporated or the powers which they possess as corporations.

Mr. MACDONNELL: They take them as they are.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: Yes, they take them as they are and they manage their own business affairs and their moneys are correctly accounted for.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Another question is this: I have asked for a list of the directors of all the crown companies and I have got it. But it seems to me that beyond a certain point as to which are merely pure agencies doing ministerial jobs for a department, I think the directors of such companies are not exercising any discretion and will not be called on to do so, and it seems to me perfectly proper that the directors of such companies should be civil servants. But in other cases—and I need not say that this is not meant in disrespect to civil servants, at any rate any of the senior ones that one meets—I do question whether in the case of corporations where the directors have to make decisions comparable to what they do in non-government companies, that it is not desirable that those directors be civil servants, and for two reasons: first, either the people outside in ordinary business are utterly incompetent, or the fact that they are carrying on ordinary business ought to make them available to make some contribution to the affairs of crown companies. Secondly, I do not think it is fair, where decisions outside the scope of ordinary departmental decisions are to be made, to expect that civil servants are going to take a stand against their ministers. Unless they are supermen with independent incomes, how can they be expected to do it? The minister might not want to make any comment on that question at all, but I thought that as I intended to comment on it in the House I would like to raise it here in case it was a matter which interested other people too.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT: I do not know whether I care to comment on it. It would be hard to say where the line should be drawn as between directors of a corporation which is entirely a public corporation, one whose moneys are entirely public moneys, as to what independent judgment and discretion they should exercise as directors, and the overruling powers the minister should