

So now we are going to study it. We have announced the whole thing and now we are going to study it. He went on to say:

—and I think that the President of the Treasury Board is now considering the names of those non-government people who could take part in such a group.

[Translation]

Now it was my turn to be bewildered, and I asked him—

[English]

Mr. Speaker, does the right hon. Prime Minister not consider it odd to start implementing a policy without having the basic elements?

[Translation]

Shortly after, the President of the Treasury Board, in reply to a very intelligent question put by one of my colleagues, said, and I quote:

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I would certainly assure the hon. member that it—

That is the advisory group.

—will be operational by Christmas of this year.

That is a heck of a long time to create a committee. He ends up by saying that this group—

—will be called together to make decisions and not just to discuss in the abstract the whole question of privatization.

So they will be called in and confronted with the facts. They will be told, "This is what we have decided; tell us it is all right". I am sure they will find someone to sit on that committee, but I would not and I know many people who would not—

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! I regret to inform the hon. member that his time has expired. He may go on with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Pepin: I thank my colleagues very much. I want to say that as far as the privatization of Crown corporations is concerned, it is a matter of deciding which ones are still useful either as business concerns or as instruments of the central government. It is a matter of fact. It is incumbent upon the government itself to ascertain that fact. It has nothing to do with philosophy. It is not a matter of knowing whether and not the private sector is morally superior to the public sector, but of knowing what is best for such and such a sector at a given time in our economic and industrial development.

The debate on the privatization of Crown corporations is making a very bad start and causing extreme confusion and uncertainty. In my opinion, it will result in a mess which will harm the Canadian economy, the viability of the corporations themselves and the stability of employment. It is therefore important that the Prime Minister himself look into and deal with this issue, because the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is unable to do so. And as suggested to him by Mr.

Trade Policies

Alfred Rouleau, president of the Sociétés coopératives Desjardins, he should set forth as soon as possible a comprehensive policy of public enterprise, so that we may know where he stands.

I should have liked to deal also with the government's export policy on Candu reactors, but I realize I may have to do so some other time. I shall certainly have the opportunity to deal with the matter elsewhere. I repeat that what I wanted to show is that these gentlemen who appeared to be so sure of themselves, are like ballet dancers doing the splits. They do not really know what they want. They are divided between two objectives. The first is to develop an industrial and commercial strategy—they say "economic"—which calls for planning of course, for government action or presence in the decision-making process. At the same time they would like to extend considerably and extraordinarily the role played by the private sector in the development of those policies. It is not easy to reconcile.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues and other Canadians that they have not succeeded. The synthesis of effort by the public and private sector has not been made precisely because they take philosophical and psychological positions about the private sector and so they cannot reconcile them. Reconciliation is so easy—all members on this side have already done it, because there is a place in industry, in commercial development for the private and public sectors. It is as simple as that. I hope members of the government will get the idea one of these days.

● (1250)

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, before getting into my remarks, I should like to repeat the motion moved by the hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin). It reads as follows:

That this House regrets the inability of the government to conduct and develop effective Canadian industrial and international trade policies.

I am not sure in my own mind to which government the hon. member is referring, because I think we have seen tremendous progress over the past few months in achieving some rationale, some cohesion, some sense of direction and support on the part of this government toward the trade efforts of the country. Over time, that will produce a tremendous amount of benefit to the economic development of this country and to our balance of payments.

I welcome the opportunity to speak on the activities which we have followed. My colleague, the Minister of State for Small Businesses and Industry (Mr. Huntington), will comment upon our industrial policies, but before getting into that, I should like to say quite frankly that I was disappointed with what the member opposite had to say. As we all know, he was a former minister of industry, trade and commerce. I expected something of substance and something of depth in the remarks he made on our trade policy. Since he has been out of the picture for some while, I thought possibly he might have some