

Employment—British Columbia statistics. (b) Railway upgrading—Benefits for British Columbia; the Hon. Member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Corbett)—Fisheries—Atlantic salmon stock—Prevention of poaching.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Ouellet (for Mr. Gray) that Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Financial Administration Act in relation to Crown corporations and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates; and on the amendment of Mr. Crosbie (p. 3688).

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak again to this Bill, particularly with respect to the motion moved by the Hon. Member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). The point that we are trying to make is that we are not satisfied with this Bill. If the Government were given six months it could possibly make some improvements and return with the legislation that is required to get control of Crown corporations. I suggest the Government should consider this proposal seriously as a result of the complaints it has heard about this Bill, even from some people in the better Crown corporations who have said that it is inadequate.

This Bill should be set aside for Government reconsideration. I believe this whole matter should be discussed in the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs because we deal with many such issues in this committee. We have dealt with the problems of many Crown corporations. I would suggest that perhaps the committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs is more aware of how Crown corporations can fail the citizens of this country. A six-month hoist would allow the Government to consider amendments that would strengthen the proposals in this Bill, and allow it to enact legislation that would keep these Crown corporations under control.

That lack of control is most evident in the recent example of de Havilland. de Havilland is having an extremely difficult time, yet during this period when it lost hundreds of millions of dollars the senior executives have received bonuses. I do not believe that any member of the House would consider that a sound move by the directors of de Havilland. It is absurd that a corporation which should be making money, but is losing money because of bad management, should pay its executive a bonus.

Financial Administration Act

There should be measures within this Bill dealing with management of Crown corporations. We have reviewed many cases where it has been shown that there has been total incompetence by management as well as interference by civil servants. These civil servants are the associate deputy minister, an assistant deputy minister and the deputy minister. They become involved in the affairs of something about which they know nothing. They are civil servants who have never worked in the real world. This Bill should take that fact into account. It does not.

Let me suggest some other changes that are required in this legislation. Every Crown corporation should be subject to a comprehensive audit, an audit that cannot be modified by the Minister in charge of a corporation. A cabinet Minister, no matter what Party is in power, should not be permitted to change a comprehensive audit.

Unfortunately, this Bill does nothing to require subsidiaries of Crown corporations to be accountable to the House of Commons. Consequently, there will be a proliferation of new small Crown corporations. We will see mini Petro-Canada's, and mini de Havilland's breeding throughout the country, resulting in a total loss of control or understanding of these corporations.

I believe some of these Crown corporations could be run successfully. It would be ideal if they could be run properly and then sold to the public of this country as positive and strong investments. We have not addressed the structural problem of Crown corporations and their operations. We have not dealt with the fact that they are immune from any Combines investigation. I do not believe Crown corporations should be treated differently from those in the private sector; whatever is good for the goose is good for the gander.

This Bill should make it clear that there is no room for public servants on the board. The committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs has discovered that this has created chaos in several instances. The Bill should allow for parliamentary scrutiny and total in depth review of the three to five-year programs and budgets of Crown corporations. These Crown corporations always come before Parliament after they have lost hundreds of millions of dollars. We are never forewarned about the dangers into which these corporations may be falling.

The CDIC was created by the Government but never approved by the House. The legislation respecting that corporation is sitting on the Order Paper today as Bill C-25. Parliament was never consulted or given an opportunity to consider this Crown corporation in the House or in committee. We only learned of CDIC when we were advised at a hearing into Canadair and de Havilland that it would be representing those two companies. Furthermore, the officers of CDIC had no knowledge of what had transpired in those corporations. Yet the Government was there to bail out those companies.

One change in particular that is required in this legislation concerns the 30-day restriction on a committee to debate any new Crown corporation. I sit on committees and know that 30 days can be divided in many ways. It could be an hour and a