

tee of that Special Committee together with the Hon. Member for Rosemont (Mr. Lachance), and they brought in a report which would in a very comprehensive and meaningful way go a long way toward restoring parliamentary control and Government accountability. That report is before the House and it makes very important recommendations which complement the work the Committee did and submitted to the House in its fifth and sixth reports.

That report, Sir, recommended among other things the establishment of a Government corporation and agencies committee. I listened to the Hon. Member for Capilano and obviously modesty prevented him from quoting his own recommendations in his own subcommittee report, but I think they are worth putting on the record:

Your committee believes that the proposed financial accountability structure would not be complete without a committee devoted to scrutinizing the activities of agencies which are Crown-owned or Crown-controlled or in which the Government has an interest. Collectively these represent one of the most important, expanding and least understood sectors of Government operations. It is essential that there be improved parliamentary oversight of the complex machinery governing such bodies, the number and variety of which is bewildering even to experts in public finance.

They go on to say this if further evidence of the serious gap in accountability to Parliament which must be addressed.

In 1962, Mr. Speaker, there were 28 Crown corporations in Canada controlling \$8.4 billion in assets. Today in 1983 there are over 300 Crown corporations employing 263,000 people with assets at the end of the last fiscal period of \$74 billion and liabilities of \$63 billion.

Mr. Huntington: We do not know the contingent liabilities.

Mr. McGrath: As my hon. friend suggests, we do not know the contingent liabilities and we will not know them until these Crown corporations are made accountable and answerable to Parliament through a special parliamentary committee.

The Auditor General of Canada has referred to this as a subgovernment. I say it is a parallel government and it is being used as the device to circumvent Parliament because of Parliament's preoccupation, and rightly so, with the expanding deficit and the expanding debt. For hon. gentlemen to suggest that in some way by presenting arguments to support a return of accountability to this House we are in fact criticizing the work of the Export Development Corporation is to read something into the speeches from this side of the House which in fact is not fair. Member after Member who has stood in his place in this House has talked about accountability and the need to hold this Government, of all Governments in our history, accountable. Because if there was ever a Government which is out of control, if there was ever a Government which has brought Parliament to a point where it is virtually on its knees and helpless to control spending, it is this Government and it stands indicted for what it has done to this Parliament.

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to participate in this debate on the amendments to Bill C-110. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), spoke passionately about what the function

Export Development Act

of Parliament is. I must say, Mr. Speaker, to try with the ten-minute rule we are confronted with at this stage of the debate to explain the implications of Bill C-110 is almost as Herculean a task as explaining Einstein's theory of relativity to a grade school student. It is really very, very difficult to do. But surely in the debate which has gone on there must be a couple of thoughts which have sunk into those on the Government side. There is a fundamental concern in the country, certainly in this House, over this question of accountability and amending the Act so that in the new structure of the Export Development Corporation there is no provision whatsoever for the private sector to participate.

We can get carried away, Mr. Speaker, here on the floor with rhetoric. Sometimes we get politically passionate and throw epithets across the floor. But as sure as the birds fly south in the winter and come back north in the summer, if my colleagues on the Government benches were sitting where we are, if they could muster their forces and/or get their rhetorical skills going which have laid mute and dormant so long as they have sat on Government benches, they would raise their voices against an amendment to this Act which, among other things, is going to increase the amount of high-risk transactions and bad business risks that the Cabinet, not Parliament, can approve from a \$3.5 billion limit to a \$10 billion limit. Or to have Cabinet approve loans and guarantees from a \$2.5 billion limit, which is pretty high in anyone's language, to a \$10 billion limit.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that \$10 billion is just about the figure in the present Prime Minister's first budget in 1968. I think the records will show that the total budget of the Government in 1968 was something like \$10.5 billion. We know that inflation and the escalation of prices have devalued the dollar by over 50 per cent, so a dollar in 1968 is certainly less than 50 cents today, perhaps closer to 30 cents or 40 cents; those statistics are there somewhere.

As my friend the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) said earlier, no one is criticizing the sincere and good work, in large measure, of the EDC because Canada is a trading nation. What we are criticizing is giving an additional blank cheque to a Government which by its proven record, let alone the commentaries of experts, has lost control. We are complaining about the Government, not really the EDC.

The Government is floating this Bill and we are right to condemn it because it not only increases those limits I mentioned, but it will allow the EDC to double its borrowing capability from \$10 billion to \$20 billion, and in effect double its capability for insuring risks from \$10 billion to again \$20 billion. These are Gargantuan figures even in light of this Government's profligate spending. As I said, the Prime Minister's first budget in 1968 comprised a total of \$10.5 billion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you can hear the rhetoric about how figures confound and how can any of us appreciate billions of dollars? It is almost incomprehensible. But the interesting thing about this debate is that you do not have to take the word of the members of the Opposition, no matter how reasoned, rational and logical they are. You can ask the