The President of Treasury Board, in his previous incarnation, discovered a convenient way of end-running Parliament. The Government will ask us to give it the money it needs to assist industry. It will set up funds of this sort. When we ask what companies will receive the assistance, it will reply that nobody will know until we see who requests it. When we ask about this in the Estimates, the response will be: "How should we know? This is a fund set up to assist industry and we will not know who is going to ask for funds until later. We have to set the fund up now; then we will see who asks for money and make the decision." Increasingly, Mr. Speaker, those requests will be used by Crown corporations as a means to avoid coming back to Parliament to ask for funds.

Before I leave the Minister's responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, I think we should not forget his record as related to Consolidated Computers. Over $100 million of taxpayers' money was lost. In the House yesterday the President of Treasury Board had the unmitigated gall to state with a straight face, as reported at page 21390 of *Hansard*, the following:

> Once again, Madam Speaker, I want the House and the public to note the endorsement of the official spokesman of the Conservative Party for the steps we took to end our involvement in Consolidated Computer and have it involved with the Nabu company.

Where has the Minister been? At the very same time as his predecessor in that portfolio wrote to him saying that Ministers had been kept in the dark about the state of affairs regarding Consolidated Computer, he wrote back on more than one occasion—and we have the letters—saying that what was necessary was not to pull the plug on Consolidated Computer but to put more tax dollars in to build it up. Yet he had the unmitigated gall yesterday to talk about "the steps we took to end our involvement in Consolidated Computer". If he had not been overruled by his predecessor at Treasury Board we would still be pouring good tax dollars after bad into Consolidated Computer.

Mr. Gray: It was my initiative.

Mr. Beatty: Now the Minister is entrusted with the responsibility of coming up with a comprehensive package for the accountability and control of Crown corporations. A few minutes ago he told us that he is currently reviewing the recommendations of the Auditor General to see which he can accept. What else could we expect?

Mr. Wilson: Would you trust him?

Mr. Beatty: My colleague asks if we would trust him. If we had $100, we just have to look at the treasury benches and ask ourselves which Member of Cabinet—the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts), the President of Treasury Board, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), the Minister of State for Multiculturalism (Mr. Fleming), the Minister of State for Mines (Mrs. Erola) or the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy)—would we trust to invest it wisely?

Mr. Clark: Roberts would give it to Buchanan!

• (1650)

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, to which one would you give your money? I think I know what the answer would be. Yet we are being asked to give to these Ministers a blank cheque written on the account of the people of Canada to continue to spend, to continue to intrude in the marketplace, and to continue to destroy the viability of the private enterprise system in Canada. We are telling them to spend literally billions of tax dollars every year in their involvement in Government corporations, without limit. As corporations which are agents of Her Majesty continue to run up debts, those debts are automatically charges upon the revenues of the taxpayers of Canada.

The Government has found another way of getting money to its corporations without the fuss and bother of asking Parliament first. Clause 29 of Bill C-42, which created the Canada Post Corporation, allows the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) to forward any money he chooses to the Corporation to cover its bills. The Corporation is expected to pay back as much as it can, but any shortfall will be covered by an item in the Estimates. When Parliament comes into the picture, the money will have been long since spent. Parliamentary control will be no more than an illusion because Parliament will have no ability to control money which is already gone.

The Auditor General has looked at what the Government has been doing to control Crown corporations. He took the Government at its word when it said that it wanted improved accountability. He said that he found its plans to be inadequate. The President of the Treasury Board alluded to that, but perhaps he did not go into the depth he might have. On page 58 of the Auditor General's Report, he made a comparison of the 1977 Blue Book, the Conservative legislation, Bill C-27, and the legislation before the House now, Bill C-123. There were 33 separate points of comparison. In seven of the points his concerns were fully met by the Government's Bill; in two other points portions of his concerns were met. By contrast, Bill C-27 fully met some 25 of the Auditor General's concerns and partially met one of them. Yet the Minister has the nerve to talk about Bill C-123.

I would go well beyond the Auditor General's observations. I do not believe the Liberals have the slightest intention of improving parliamentary control over Crown corporations. Their activities prove that they intend to do just the opposite. Looked at in that context, Bill C-123 is not simply a weak and ineffectual attempt to make improvements; it is a highly dangerous Bill designed to provide a fig leaf of respectability for a measure which is an attack on Parliament itself.

Bill C-123 should not be amended as the Minister suggested. It should be scrapped and replaced with a whole new Bill which genuinely attempts to correct the problems pointed out by every study of Crown corporations that has been conducted. There must be no more Crown corporations created without Parliament's consent. Crown corporations must obey the same laws as their private sector competitors when it comes to false