

Government Orders

just so *Hansard* gets it right. I would like to look at the six corporations very quickly.

The first corporation that the bill refers to is Canada Harbour Place Corporation. We are basically talking about the Vancouver Canada Place lands. The bill calls for the sale or disposition on such terms as the Governor in Council approves, but it also permits and authorizes Canada Harbour Place Corporation to sell its own assets in the way that the Governor in Council approves. I want to come back to this particular Crown corporation in a few moments.

The second one is Canada Museums Construction Corporation. The provisions of this bill call for the transfer of the share now held by the Minister of Public Works to Canada Lands Company Ltd. I do not think any of us are going to have a major problem with that. That truly is housekeeping, subject to—and this is a subject which will have to be looked at in committee—the need to scrutinize very carefully, from a legal perspective, the completion of contracts on the museums which have been constructed at great cost and also from a perspective of compliance with the warranty provisions in each of those contracts.

These provisions all relate to more extensive and complex contracts. We want to be very sure that the transfer in ownership or control here does not prejudice the position of the taxpayer in those two regards.

The third entity affected by the bill is the Canada Livestock Feed Board. This is basically a dissolution and a rollover of the assets and working agency into the Ministry of Agriculture. There is some speculation that this initiative could save the taxpayer several hundred thousand dollars. How can we argue with that. The fourth corporation affected is the Canada Patents and Development Limited. This involves a dissolution and transfer of the capital assets. I think it can be characterized as a rollover as well. The government believes this will ensure more effective prosecution of the development and sale of patents and the patent rights.

• (1030)

The fifth one is Harbourfront Corporation. This involves a sale of assets and a closing out or winding up of all of the activity, I think much in the way that the Vancouver initiative is planned.

We are dealing with some major real estate assets here. We have a book value of approximately \$31 million. We have real estate leases, short-term and long-term, and extensive and complex property rights, something only the overheated real estate market of Toronto could develop. But they are there, they are complex. I want to come back to Harbourfront Corporation in a few moments.

Lastly, Mingan Associates is accepted to be a house-keeping initiative.

I want to come back to two of these entities which are being “privatized”. I suggest that this is not just house-keeping, that this is in fact privatization. I wonder out loud why we might not have wanted to deal with each of these privatizations each one on its own merits.

Why am I being cautious? Why do we have to be cautious about this? Well, there are a few reasons. I want to make reference to some of the other privatizations we have seen over the last three or four years. I am not going to go into detail, but the mere mention of the name ought to be enough to make the minister take note and want to be cautious.

In the de Havilland sale, we sold a large viable entity in which Canadians had invested heavily and which we did plan to reap heavily. We sold it into the private sector, which is not of itself a bad thing at all, but we sold it for about \$90 million. A short time later we settled a lawsuit with the purchaser for almost the same amount of money. With the return to Canadians, I think we basically sold it for nothing or less than nothing. That does not look like much of a deal. I think it should embarrass some of the people who were involved in that.

I can mention the privatization of TeleGlobe. All I have to do is mention it and mention the prospect of the potential down side of too much insider activity which may or may not have occurred in relation to that privatization. I know it embarrassed some.

I want to mention Route Canada. With Route Canada, I know that one of our committees here may want to take a closer look at it. The government sold an asset that had a book value of approximately \$75 million for about \$29 million. Now, I know that looks bad. I am sure there is an explanation out there somewhere, but what a perfect opportunity for an asset strip.