

liamentarians, should we react to an executive that intimidates witnesses before a parliamentary committee? Obviously, such a tree cannot bear good fruit.

Still, my two major concerns are accountability and effective and efficient management. How does the government tackle accountability? It does not; it bypasses it. Instead, the approach recommended involves bureaucratic tangles and processes that only a good public servant can unravel.

That brings me to another point. There is an interesting development in the crown corporations sector and that is the fact that public servants are popping up all over in key positions. The CNR is headed by the former secretary to the Treasury Board; the Export Development Corporation is headed by the former Deputy Minister of Transport; the Federal Business Development Bank is headed by a former Assistant Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce; Petro-Canada; CDIC— we could go on and on. I am sure that these people are all very bright and capable, but that is not my point. My point is that the escalating bureaucratization of crown corporations, as epitomized in Bill C-24, is contrary to one of the reasons for setting up crown corporations in the first place. We should all agree that if crown corporations are to be effective, they must have some independence. They should be exposed to market discipline. Let us set standards of performance and hold them to it; let us clearly specify their mandates and allow experienced managers to get on with the job. I am sure that we all want accountability: Accountability through a minister to Parliament; accountability through corporate plans, so we know where the directions are and if they are appropriate.

The amendments offered by my party redressed some of these problems. I think we are all agreed that effective and efficient management can be greatly assisted by good boards of directors. There is a great deal of talent in the private sector that could serve crown corporations well. However, I do not think we are tapping that resource as thoroughly as we should. I am certain that we are still not laying the groundwork for assigning their responsibility and their mandate as effective members of a board that must direct the activities of a multibillion-dollar enterprise.

At this moment, Bill C-24 hinders many of these things with more bureaucratic intervention. It paves the way for boards still to be short-circuited, ignored and reduced to almost ceremonial bodies. Who would want to serve on that kind of board? I wish that Senator Sinclair or Senator Kolber were here. Certainly, Senator Roblin, I know, would have a quick answer to that question because of his own corporate experience.

There are ways to make crown corporations perform better and to serve their shareholders, the people of Canada, better. I do not think that Bill C-24 demonstrates that the government has yet figured out these ways. There is also the question of how one piece of legislation can effectively regulate such a huge and diverse range of entities. The answer is that it cannot. A number of corporations have already been exempted from Bill C-24. At many points in the bill there are provisions

to exempt other corporations from certain clauses. In addition, there are more than 20 clauses in Bill C-24 that provide extensive regulation-making powers to the government to adapt the requirements of Bill C-24 to the circumstances of each corporation or group of corporations. In essence, Bill C-24 is but a framework, an amalgam of principles and guidelines. The real meat of the legislation is in the regulations, and they can be changed at the whim of the government of the day with little or no scrutiny or control by Parliament. Surely this is not right. Surely it is not feasible to try to lump the Canadian Battlefields Commission, with annual expenditures of \$1.5 million, with a huge multinational such as the CNR. They have been creating crown corporations willy-nilly. Since 1968, on average, there has been one new federal crown corporation created every three months.

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The government should have been more careful in resorting to the crown corporation form. Proliferation certainly has devalued the currency of the crown corporation form, and has largely made omnibus legislation such as Bill C-24 impractical. What needs to be done is to reorganize the crown corporation sector to reduce it to those activities that truly require corporate form for one reason or another. Then, and only then, will legislation such as Bill C-24 have a chance of being effective.

In closing, let me say that this government and the party it represents has got to learn that Canadians want good government not just lots of government. A change at the helm of their organization is not necessarily going to be any more effective in wrestling with the blight that has ravaged this government. The crown corporations sector is only a sample of the devastating effect of that disease. What Canadians deserve, and what this country needs, what the crown corporations demand, is clear, well thought-out policies and direction. If Bill C-24 is the best this government can do after 14 or so years of studying the problem, then the people of Canada, not just me, have a message to relay: Let's get serious about good government.

I am a concerned Canadian who happens to be a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. I have a few suggestions that deserve consideration. We all deserve time and input into the parliamentary system if the process is going to mean anything and if we are going to get things back on track.

One of my colleagues referred to this bill as a "dog's breakfast". Perhaps it is better than nothing. That appears to have been the view of my party when this legislation was being debated in the other place. Better than nothing, perhaps, but not much.

Hon. C. William Doody: Honourable senators, I should like to receive some instructions from my colleagues with respect to this particular piece of legislation. It could very well be the responsibility of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance to study this legislation. I am afraid that at this point in the parliamentary calendar I do not think it would be very complimentary to the committee to refer a bill of this magnitude to it and ask that it be considered and reported back to