

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

and the merger with the Saskatchewan mining corporation for six months. The reason for raising that now is extremely relevant because suddenly the whole privatization policy of the Government is up for grabs as a result of the announcement made today.

Up until now we have been assured that the Government was going to privatize a bit of this, a bit of that and a bit of the other thing, and that the subsidiaries of the Canada Development Investment Corporation, of which Eldorado is one, would be hived off to the private sector, but that the large corporations which were assets in the Government's portfolio would in fact not be sold off.

Regardless of the qualifications which the Prime Minister tries to put upon it, there is no question that Canadians understood that his pledge after meetings in Montreal in 1985 was that Air Canada would not be privatized.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I very much appreciated your comments about relevancy. It is a time-honoured tradition in the House that a motion to postpone consideration for six months is really a filibuster type of motion. It will not postpone the privatization of the corporation, as the Hon. Member has said, but postpones Parliament's consideration of the wisdom of the legislation brought forward to the House by the Cabinet.

We have immediately seen the Member ignoring the comments which you made about relevance. He has gone on to make a quite inaccurate statement on government policy. The government policy has been clear and consistent prior to the last election and subsequent to the last election.

We have the filibuster amendment before the House. Surely that is enough of a parliamentary tactic for the Opposition. The least we can expect is that they will stay relevant to the motion to postpone consideration of the Bill rather than going off on these wild goose chases.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The point has been made to the House and I do expect that Hon. Members will be careful.

Mr. Cassidy: Madam Speaker, I assure you that I am always careful. Regardless of the niceties which the Member from Calgary is suggesting, the impact of a motion for a six-month hoist is that you do not carry out a measure now but rather in six months' time. One purpose of waiting for six months is to get clarification of what the Government intends to do with respect to privatization. Is everything on the block or not? It looks to me increasingly as though everything is on the block.

I think that is relevant and important. I think Canadians should know exactly what the Government intends to do because Canadians have indicated overwhelmingly that they do not want major Crown corporations to be privatized. They have questions about the privatization of smaller Crown corporations such as Eldorado, which happens to be before us

now. We have not had an opportunity in this House to have a profound discussion on the principles which were put forward by the former Minister of State for Privatization, which were quoted by the Hon. Member for Sarnia—Lambton (Mr. James).

If that is the Government's policy, then let the Government bring back policy to the House of Commons and let the House of Commons reach a judgment as to whether or not those principles are valid. Having done so, let us look at any proposals the Government may have with respect to privatization in the light of those principles.

The Minister of State would have been a lot more helpful if she had talked about principles on public involvement and public intervention, not only with a view to getting things out the door but also to getting things in, because there are many instances in which it is entirely appropriate for there to be social ownership and for there to be public participation. I was commenting on some of those cases yesterday. However, Madam Speaker, we have not had that debate.

It was argued by the Minister of State in her speech that if the environment changes maybe you should privatize. I am not sure how that applies to Eldorado, and even if there are changes in the economic environment I am not sure that there are not other approaches which should have been examined and canvassed rather than the one chosen by the Government.

If I may say so, certainly the same question arises with respect to the issue of the day which, I am sure you will agree, one cannot help but refer to a bit, that is, the announcement with respect to Air Canada. With regard to the question of whether other options are available, the other options were not examined in the case of Eldorado and there is no indication that they were examined with respect to Air Canada either.

With regard to the question of effectiveness, it was suggested by the Minister of State responsible for Crown corporations—although it turns out she is responsible for getting rid of them—that Crown corporations are less effective than those in the private sector. Again, I am not sure how that conclusion is reached with respect to Eldorado and certainly the statement made today by the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) was fulsome in its praise of the effectiveness of the way in which Air Canada had operated in competition with airline companies in the private sector.

There is the question of public funds. I am not sure what public funds were required for Eldorado to remain in the public sector. We have not received that kind of information and, regrettably, it is not the practice to table that kind of information in the House of Commons. I say very seriously that the Members of Parliament who make the ultimate decisions on such issues as this should be much better informed than we are. The information provided to Cabinet and officials making decisions such as the Eldorado decision or the Air Canada decision should be made available to Members of Parliament, the opposition Parties, and the public in order that we can judge whether we are getting a good deal or a bad deal.