

Government Orders

ment side believe in that kind of socialism. They believe that all taxpayers in Canada ought to fund the corporate sector somehow.

If you look at the government's tax policies, it certainly does that. If you look at this particular bill, it seems to follow in the same vein. The government feels that somehow the people of Canada had an obligation to set up an oil company; to bear all of the costs, trials and tribulations it would take to get that set up, then at the point where that company might make some money, it ought to be sold off to the private sector. I do not understand that.

Petro-Canada seems to be a corporation that has developed a role for itself. It is certainly not the role that I would want it to play. I have a much higher set of expectations for it than the government does.

It seems to me that during the committee proceedings members from all three parties and people from Petro-Canada accepted the notion that we could do some very good things with this oil company, that this would give us an opportunity to develop things that are environmentally sound, to make our people more conscious of their energy use. It would make sure that we had a constant supply of energy. We certainly have gone to great pains all across the country to see that there is a network in place to do something for this corporation and for this country; that it would ensure our constant energy supply.

I do not know why the government would reject amendments such as these. It seems to me that they are minimal at best. It seems to me they simply address that this is a company which the people of Canada put a lot of money into. I do not think anyone has an accurate total of what the total taxpayer investment is in Petro-Canada, but it has to be huge.

It does seem that there is a vendetta here; that this current government still is chasing Pierre Elliott Trudeau around. It might gather up some sympathy from me on that, but it does seem to me that it has not used common sense. Here is an opportunity to retain a corporation with great potential that is beginning to do something useful, and it ought to try to retain it. I am not sure that it is their ideology. I am not sure that that is the right word. This is certainly Tories of a different stripe at work than the ones that I am used to.

The amendments that are before us are amendments that ought to be supported by all members. They are certainly minimal. They are amendments which attempt to keep some Canadian connection in Petro-Canada. It seems to me that this government, even in privatizing it, wants to do that.

I read the proceedings of the committee and I looked for the arguments that said why the government would not accept these amendments. To tell you the truth, I did not find them. Perhaps they are here. Perhaps during the remainder of this debate, one of the things the minister might do for us is instead of standing in his place and giving us a little diatribe about ideology, he could address the amendments that are before us and provide the House with some rationale as to why the government is not prepared to accept the amendments that are currently before the House.

Mr. McDermid: I did.

Mr. Breaugh: The minister is yelling across the House that he did. I followed the proceedings in committee and the debate in the Chamber this afternoon, and I have not heard that. There is at least an obligation on the part of the minister at some time during the course of the proceeding to intervene and provide us with a logical, rational explanation of what the government is up to. I do not believe we have heard that so far and I would appreciate it if the minister would do that before we finish up this particular part of the debate.

I want to conclude on this note. I have never been much of a fan of Petro-Canada, to tell you the truth. It has never done the things that I wanted it to do in my community. It has not exactly been a great asset. What it has been is an oil company, like any other oil company, charging the same amount of money, putting small operators out of business, tearing down service stations and putting up self-service gas stations. That is not exactly my version of what Petro-Canada should have done.

There were good arguments made during the course of the committee proceedings and good arguments here on these amendments which indicate to me that we ought to retain this. We ought at the very least to accept the amendments that are before us and see if we could take something, even if the government feels in its own heart of hearts that it does not belong there. They have it. It is