

Jack Horner as he was then called, retiree Chairman of the CN, do I know what he got? Do I know what Joel Bell gets as President of CDIC?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, since you have given me the finger salute made famous by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in Salmon Arm, although you did it just to give me a warning, I would like to read into the record a report from the *Ottawa Citizen* dated November 21, 1983, referring to about 40 senior executives of Crown corporations and other cabinet appointees who can be paid a maximum of \$227,900 a year. That is almost as much as the Prime Minister receives, almost four times as much as an MP. It says:

The figure, released publicly for what appears to be the first time, is much higher than previously thought and surprised the chairman of the Commons public accounts committee, charged with monitoring government spending—

This was a 264-page report dated June 30 and tabled quietly in the House of Commons. It refers to "non-classified positions". I have named some of them, such as Joel Bell, President of CDIC, Claude Taylor, President of Air Canada, Bill Hopper, Chairman of Petro-Canada, Pierre Juneau, President of the CBC, and Michael Warren, President of Canada Post. There are many others. The article goes on:

Others in the special category include CBC executive vice-president W. T. Armstrong, Canadian Egg Marketing Agency chairman Harold Crossman, Canada Museums Construction Corp. chairman Jean Sutherland Boggs and president Hector McIntyre.

All of these people can get between \$63,000 and \$227,900 a year when we thought they were in the \$100,000 to \$125,000 range. Yet not one of them has to answer a question when they appear before a Commons committee. Until we start getting into those basics, let alone the fundamentals of the Bill, then I say Members of Parliament should talk for many moons before this Bill passes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order, please. I think it will be just as well if I put on the record, in view of the remark of the last speaker, that the Chair is trying to be helpful to Members in indicating how much time remains in their speeches.

Mr. Thomas Siddon (Richmond-South Delta): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate that we have to consume the valuable time of this House to debate a motion the Government has introduced to prevent further debate on a much more important item of business. That is, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-24, the Government's half-hearted and dim-witted attempt to deal with the problem which has caused irreparable damage to our country over at least the past decade. That problem arises from this Government's use of Crown corporations as an excuse for its inability to deal with the affairs of the day in an open and straightforward way in the forum of the House of Commons where all the people of Canada can be witness.

Look back to the time when VIA Rail was created, Mr. Speaker. This was done through a \$1 vote in this House. It was an estimate provision and therefore we could not debate all of the elements of the proposed new passenger rail service. VIA Rail resulted from an amalgamation of equipment owned by

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CN and CP and other regional railways. It was to create a national passenger rail system and it has lost money every year since. This was not necessarily because VIA Rail was a bad idea, but because there was no opportunity for us to determine the extent to which VIA Rail would be free to raise money in the financial markets or the degree of public subsidy it could expect in the interest of providing services designated as a public convenience and necessity. Instead, the Government arbitrarily decided to create a passenger rail corporation without five minutes' worth of reference to the duly elected representatives of the people in this House of Commons. There was no undertaking to ensure that top level expertise would be placed on the board of that corporation, people with experience which would make them proficient in the management and conduct of this rail system.

When we look at the record of many of our other Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, we see a similar kind of history. People have been brought in for political and other reasons as chairman of a board of directors. In the private sector a board of directors is a group of people who are accountable to their shareholders. But under the Liberals a board of directors is merely a place to retire worn-out Liberals who in many cases could never get themselves elected to any office, and some who were elected but defeated and had to have a place of rest. They were put in charge of pulling the levers of power of corporations managing millions of taxpayers' dollars without reference to this Parliament.

When do we have an opportunity to debate the necessity of an annual subsidy to the CBC or other major Crown corporations? For example, Canada Post receives a subsidy which may never ever be recovered. When do Members of Parliament have an opportunity to debate the distinction between Crown corporations which serves some national purpose, some political need, as opposed to those which are competing openly with the private sector with the benefit of government financial support and no accountability to Parliament or the laws which govern their private sector counterparts? Why is it that Crown corporations are immune from the obligation to pay property taxes, for example? Why is it that Crown corporations are immune from the requirement to pay income taxes, as do the companies with which they compete?

• (1230)

All of these questions, Mr. Speaker, ought to be thoroughly examined in the House of Commons. I, for one, find it reprehensible, as do my colleagues, that the Government would bring in a motion to suspend debate at the second reading stage with the expectation that the Government also intends to foreclose the appearance and presentation of different perspectives at the committee stage while limiting the amount of time that the standing committee will be allowed to review this Bill.

I would like to remind Hon. Members of 1980 when the Government introduced and passed the new Canada Post Corporation Act. This was an exceptional case where a new Crown corporation was created with a reasonable amount of