

*Export Development Act*

people are not able to be truly independent, as lawyers in the House will realize, as boards of directors should be or should try to be. We get things like the CDC—I use the word catastrophe in that instance—where we had the Government trying to get Maurice Strong to replace Mr. Sellers as chairman. It was only because of the courage of the other directors that we managed to get Mr. Sellers from Winnipeg, who I believe is doing an excellent job with the CDC.

The case has been well stated by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South and the Hon. Member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens). I would urge all Members in the House to consider supporting this Motion.

In conclusion, I must point out that Arthur Donner, the economist, points out in yesterday's *Toronto Star*:

—Canada's percentage of the world export market declined as the OPEC share rose. In 1970, Canada accounted for 5.9 per cent of world exports declining to 4.3 per cent by 1982.

We have to increase Canada's exports if we are to get our young people back to work. We have to create jobs, jobs, jobs, which is our new leader's fundamental issue. I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, and I do not think this is overstating it, that by putting people on the board of the EDC from the private sector who have experienced with exports, we are more likely to get the EDC to perform better than it has performed to date than by adopting the always leviathan, larger Government role.

**Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I have a few remarks with regard to the amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn). Might I start with a couple of comments to the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) through you, Mr. Speaker. Just before the Minister leaves, the Member should be reluctant in future to be so cavalier in naming names of potential Liberal hacks for appointment because I notice the Minister was writing down all those names.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Bosley:** The other part of that statement is that I do not think Conrad Black would appreciate being accused of being a Liberal hack. I do not think he regards that as his political preference, but the appointment of Conrad Black with his business experience to the board of the Export Development Corporation would certainly serve it well.

● (1150)

The other part of what the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville had to say suggested that he had not read either the amendment or the main motion. The main motion suggests that the Minister shall have complete freedom to appoint whoever he wants from within or without the Public Service, and there has been a practice of appointing some from both.

The purpose of the amendment of the Hon. Member for Mississauga South is remarkably simple. It narrows and limits the number of people who may be appointed from the Public Service to the board of the Export Development Corporation.

The logic of that is extremely simple. If we believe that it is wise and reasonable—and of course we should believe that it is wise and reasonable—to try to regenerate the Canadian economy through exports, then we should try to make the EDC as responsive as possible to the needs of private sector exporters. Who knows those needs better than those people in the export community?

The argument the Government will presumably advance in order to retain unfettered freedom as to whom to appoint is that it needs to appoint some substantial number of public servants to the board. Presumably the Government will make that argument or it would not be opposed to our amendment. In the case of this particular corporation, independence is perhaps more essential than in the case of any other Crown corporation. I make that statement because elsewhere in the Act there is provision which allows the Government on its own account, of its own volition, at its own expense but using the EDC as its agency, to fund a project of export which the EDC board does not believe makes strict economic sense. In that sense the EDC is in an agency role for national purposes of the Government of Canada.

If it is designed to take a position where the board believes it appropriate that a project is not properly financeable by the EDC, then it ought to follow logically that the single best way to get the EDC to render appropriate judgments as to whether or not something ought to be financed is to separate it as far as possible at the level of the board of directors from the working officials of the government department who do not work for the private sector but are ultimately responsible to the Minister.

The best way for the Minister to obtain the best advice about whether or not a project makes economic sense is for him to recognize that because he already has the authority to require or order that a project be funded where it is deemed not appropriate by the agency, or the best way for him to establish that he takes that responsibility seriously, is for him to separate as far as he can the Ministry and the Minister from any appearance—and I say this without insinuation—of the power to manipulate the board of the EDC. The Minister responsible, a former premier of a province, knows the importance of the difference between appearances and reality in developing public policy, boards and authorities.

What should recommend this amendment to the Government is that the EDC has a very large budget and is extremely important to the Canadian export community. The primary role of that corporation is to serve Canadian exports, not the wishes and the needs of the Minister. The best way to do that in symbolic, real and practical terms is to take the best minds of the export community and put them on the board. To refuse that amendment would be to suggest that the Minister is not interested in the best minds being on the board and presumably is interested in having the appearance of control of the authority by the Public Service of Canada. If that is not his view—and I presume it is not—then I respectfully suggest that he should make that clear to us and the export community by accepting this amendment.