

*Trade Policies*

and commerce. The whole operation is led by the President of the Privy Council without any concern for industry, for trade, for commerce. Or at least without any show of concern; if he has any, he certainly hides it well.

I shall now designate the industry, trade and commerce ministers by the term triumvirate to simplify matters. The triumvirate has more or less admitted in committee that they have not had much of a say so far. They have not been allowed to discuss these issues which are nevertheless quite relevant to their responsibilities. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the commercial Crown corporations concerned have been created or salvaged from the private sector precisely in order to promote the industrial and commercial development of Canada. No one is going to make us believe that C. D. Howe was indulging in socialism when he set up Crown corporations. It was because at that time both the means and the will were lacking in the private sector—

**Mr. Knowles:** Why not?

**Mr. Pepin:** Indeed not, C.D. Howe was no disciple of Karl Marx. Not quite. So these corporations were set up for industrial and commercial purposes and therefore, if they are tampered with, if they are to be privatized, one must wonder at once how industrial and commercial development will be affected. Now, the President of the Treasury Board seems to be or is obsessed by two ideas: first, to privatize the public sector, and second, to reduce the number of civil servants. That is his ambition, and every time he can get one he feels good at having contributed to Canada's development, and whether that is good or bad does not matter. How does the President of the Treasury Board deal with this case? He systematically puts the horse before the cart. First of all he announces a list of corporations for sale. Then we will worry about costs, about terms and conditions. An influential member opposite said that everything was up for sale. So why, on what conditions, to whom, what, how, when to sell, what effect will that have on industrial development, on industrial competition? We will see after, we will think about it after. One day the President of the Treasury Board says: "We will not sell to foreigners". Another day, the minister of industry says "Not" to the provinces, "Maybe". Still another day the President of the Treasury Board says, "Even at a loss". And yet another day the minister of state for industry says:

[*English*]

I would not want to see privatization with the development already committed.

He is talking about Canadair.

[*Translation*]

One day the President of the Treasury Board said that the purchaser of Northern Transportation "will have to continue achieving government non-commercial objectives". That is strange. They transfer to the private sector, then they say: the purchaser should behave like the public sector. Quite an interesting concept.

[*Mr. Pepin.*]

When will they privatize; when will all this come about? The President of the Treasury Board says, "As soon as possible." The Minister of State for industry says, "It might take a year". And from his comfortable seat in the Senate, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of State for Economic Development says, "When we are good and ready." So you can freely choose what you want, ladies and gentlemen; this is a free country; make up your own mind.

Mr. Speaker, I am simply trying to say that this procedure does raise certain problems, that it creates some uncertainty and some confusion, and that we should seek to avoid such things whenever possible. But here is the one element of uncertainty which really takes the cake. The other day, on November 19, one of my colleagues asked the President of the Treasury Board, "Is there a second list of corporations going for sale, different from the first which goes back to September 28?" Then the President of the Treasury Board rose, self-assured as usual, and said this, in English:

[*English*]

I indicated that from time to time cabinet may well designate other Crown corporations it feels would be suitable—

Please note that he said "other Crown corporations". In that connection he said:

In fact, one will be referred to later this afternoon after the markets close at 3.30.

The same afternoon he said that the government's holdings in CDC would be reduced below 50 per cent, unless, of course, CDC purchases Crown corporations now for sale, and then it might take more time. Then he announced triumphantly that 10,000 workers will be removed from the "federal payrolls".

In fact, the government's share of CDC created in 1971 was meant to go down to 10 per cent as the record of the company and the willingness of the population to buy improved. So what is new about the 50 per cent, I ask you?

Second, the CDC is not a Crown corporation, which is a rather interesting fact in view of the concentration of the minister on Crown corporations. That is stated in clause 31 of the bill creating it. I do not have time to read it here. It might have been government policy at the time but, in the eyes of the government and in the eyes of the CDC board of directors, it is not an instrument of the government now. Finally, the employees of CDC are not on the "federal payroll", as suggested by the minister. Foul ball! Strike out!

[*Translation*]

whatever you like! Then I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) whether he was aware of those things, whether he was familiar with the dossier. I can still see him completely bewildered when he answered on November 19, and I quote:

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, a committee has been or is going to be set up—

Nobody seems to know

—within Treasury Board to study issues related to privatization,—