

Nordion and Theratronics

I think the Government's rationale for turning these companies over to the private sector can probably be summed up by Nordion's own corporate philosophy statement which reads in part:

1. We are committed to providing all our customers with the best products, technology and service.
2. We are determined to retain our major share of current markets and attain leadership positions in new business areas.
3. We continually review and respond to changing market conditions, believing that a dynamic and flexible management approach serves to strengthen the company's competitive position.
4. We encourage growth and diversification, and seek opportunities for expansion or acquisition in areas compatible with the company's technological and management strengths.
5. We recognize that our success depends upon the drive and ingenuity of all employees.

Surely, such a market driven and aggressive corporate attitude demands the freedom of the private sector so that it can be given a free rein. Privatization will provide both companies with a new impetus for growth and development leading to new successes for them in the future.

In the case of Nordion, the company will be in a better position to pursue fresh opportunities and increase its domination of world markets in its high technology field.

Theratronic, as well, will be free to explore partnerships with companies in related industrial fields of activity which could lead to new markets and product lines for the new company.

In both cases Nordion and Theratronics will have increased operating flexibility, better access to capital markets and enhanced viability as independent commercial undertakings.

The opportunity for growth and expansion within the private sector will also benefit the company's employees.

As has been said many times in this Chamber, the best guarantee of jobs and future prospects for employees is a dynamic and growing company. Strengthening both these companies will also benefit the country as a whole because their export orientation is important to our economy's future development.

• (1750)

Before I get into the details of the legislation, I would like to identify briefly the process that the government will be following in the sale of these two companies. We have taken a different approach for each company because we want to capitalize on their respective strengths.

With Nordion, it is our intention to proceed by way of a third party sale as recommended by our financial advisors. This approach—

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It relates to the fact that at 5.05 p.m., at a time when we were being called into the House for a vote, the environment committee began a hearing. This is contrary to the policy of this House and particularly puts us in an extremely difficult position.

When we are called to vote for our ridings on behalf of the people of Canada and a committee of the House holds hearings concurrently, it is a violation of the longstanding tradition of this House. Furthermore, we in the Liberal caucus, including myself, the Hon. Member for Ottawa West (Mrs. Catterall), and the Hon. Member for Kent (Mr. Crawford), were all absent from the committee due to the fact that we were discharging our responsibilities here in the House of Commons. This is a very bad precedent for this sitting of Parliament. It is something that should be nipped in the bud.

In particular, I am very disappointed with the members of the New Democratic Party. They wanted to have the third vote, which is their full democratic right, but they chose to ignore the longstanding tradition of the House and went to committee at the same time as they required a third vote, which took the attention of all Members of the House. In the meantime, they are expecting us to go to committee and ignore our responsibilities to vote. I consider it a breach of my privileges, and if the Speaker so finds, I would be prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Maybe it is a matter that should be looked into by the procedure committee. By virtue of our Standing Orders, committees do have the right to sit during House hours.

An Hon. Member: During a vote?