

Government Orders

were vital to the life of the community, and were monopolistic in character, ought to be publicly owned.

The Tories said Tommy was removing freedoms when he set up a Crown corporation in Saskatchewan, but Tommy said the only freedom that he was taking away was the freedom to exploit somebody else. Since then Saskatchewan has run successful telephone and power companies, extended transportation services across the province, and reduced taxes in that province by generating revenues from resources.

The present Leader of the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan, Mr. Roy Romanow, has a good story that he tells about Tommy. Flying over Saskatchewan one night, Roy Romanow and Tommy Douglas were talking. Roy said to Tommy: "What is your greatest achievement?" Roy thought that Tommy Douglas was going to answer hospitalization. But instead, Tommy looked out the window of that airplane into the night sky over the Prairies and he said: "Look down there, Roy. Do you see those lights across every piece of rural Saskatchewan? That is the greatest achievement that I think that I brought to Saskatchewan." Rural electrification—Saskatchewan Power Corp. working in the province of Saskatchewan, a Crown corporation serving the interests of the Canadian people.

A big part of this debate today centres around the value of the public sector and, in particular, the value of the public corporation in the energy sector. The essence of the debate should concentrate on what is in the best long-term interest of Canadians rather than what seems to be the short-term interests of the members of the government opposite.

Public sector activity is an exercise in the management of government. It is using the tools available to achieve positive and necessary objectives. When a government determines that something is in the country's best interest, it has to act to ensure that best interest is served.

For years in this country, public corporations have been created with this in mind. We in Canada have never had a strong ideological bent in favour of public ownership. Rather, Crown corporations were created one by one to address real policy needs when it was felt that the private sector could not, or would not, do the job. For the most part, these Crown corporations have served Canadians well. But, this government would have us believe that Crown corporations are despicable, horned monsters destroying our economy and increasing the national

debt. In actual fact, the Crown corporations often represent an income source or a national goal which would be lost without these corporations in place.

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This government does not believe that governments should be in business. It believes that business can manage the economy better than government. What examples does it use to justify those statements? Since Crown corporations represent the government's ability to manage, if a Crown corporation fails, it is attributable to the management abilities of the government, just as when a business fails it is because of the management abilities of that business.

There are many success stories in the Crown corporation sector, and Petro-Canada could be one of them. Certainly, if a government thinks it can be successful as a private enterprise, then why, with the right management and the right direction, can it not be successful as a Crown corporation? Certainly, the people of Canada benefit to a larger extent if it is a successful Crown corporation rather than if it is a successful private corporation.

The other side of the coin is the success of the private sector. What's with the myth of the private sector being the perfect manager? There are hundreds of business failures in Canada and the United States every year. If Petro-Canada, a company that should be run for Canadian interest, is privatized, there is no guarantee that it will not end up like CN Route, the Campeau Corporation, Dun and Bradstreet or Peter Pocklington's operation.

I just happened to pick up a copy of the May 1990 issue of *Report on Business* magazine, published by *The Financial Post*. In there it talks about a number of businesses serving the great Canadian private sector and public interests. The Campeau Corporation, outlined in that magazine, in August 1987: "Stock prices reached an all-time high of \$30.38 on the Toronto Stock Exchange. By September 1989 the stock fell to \$13.50 and then by March 1990 the stock traded for less than \$2.00 a share". Investors lost millions in this marvellous example of the marketplace at work.

In that same issue of *The Globe and Mail* "Report on Business" section, there is an article about Dun and Bradstreet, 150 years of trustworthiness that were gutted by bilking and sleazy tactics of their sales force, customers being taken for thousands of dollars by sales people who were motivated by management and commission