

*Government Orders*

On the other hand, it is presented as primarily a technical and housekeeping bill. I cannot express the concern with which I have just heard some of the minister's statements.

Less than a month ago, the minister and officials of the government made a commitment that there would be no legislative implementation of the directions of Public Service 2000 until there had been full consultation with employees and with their unions, and further consultation with the public.

The comments I have heard today have made it clear that the government is consulting with a very limited segment of Canadian society. The names one sees on the consultations throughout the process of PS 2000 make it evident that primarily large corporations are directing the tendency of this government and the ways it intends to practise. The commitments it made to its employees just a short month ago do not count at all. I must express to the minister my very bitter disappointment that he has chosen to take that approach today in speaking to this bill.

One thing that concerns me deeply is that there is a tremendous need for revitalization in the Public Service. There is a tremendous need for reform, for renewal of morale, commitment and excellence in the Public Service, one which the employees are willing and eager to co-operate with. In proceeding with the implementation of a plan that they have not been part of developing and in that they have not been part of identifying solutions and problems, the government is undermining any hope for realistic and lasting reform and revitalization in the Public Service.

The government may have heard the views of a certain segment of Canadian society that we should be operating more like the private sector. In my view that has not been appropriately or sufficiently balanced by the recognition that this is not the private sector. Our bottom line is not profit, but people.

I want to talk to some particular aspects of the bill. The minister mentioned that people would be consulted on various things that are being done with this bill. Yet today his very commitments to consultation with his own employees have not been kept.

We are seeing some major fundamental changes here in a number of ways. We are certainly seeing progress along the path of privatization and depublishing the public sector that perhaps a limited circle of those with

whom the minister and the government can consult are entirely in favour of but with which I think the majority of Canadians are not.

I want to address some of the changes made to Crown corporations. Nobody disagrees that there should be more accountability and that the ways in which that can be achieved should be achieved.

However, I also want to point out the tendency in this bill to look at profits rather than public policy as the major objective of Crown corporations. We have seen the devastating results in a number of areas from the government's basic approach of not believing in a public role for Crown corporations, of believing that when they become profitable they immediately no longer become a public sector operation. This bill paves the way for even more of that approach.

• (1550)

I want to remind the House of some of the areas in which the government seems to have forgotten the public policy role of Crown corporations.

I would mention VIA Rail. If this is an example of the government's concept of how a Crown corporation should operate in a more customer oriented way and in a more responsible way to deliver good service, I can assure members of the government sitting opposite that that is not what is happening.

It is now impossible, if one wants to travel by rail, to do it conveniently, to arrange to have a ticket conveniently, or to change one's travel plans conveniently. I can walk into any airport in this country and at the last minute decide that I am not taking one flight, that I am taking another, and switch my ticket. I cannot do that on VIA Rail. In fact I cannot even walk into VIA Rail, pick up my ticket on the basis of my Visa card, and get on a train. Students who come home for the weekend to visit their families, mostly because they want a nice hot meal on Sunday evening, cannot leave Ottawa and go back to Toronto, Montreal, or Kingston after six o'clock.

I would mention Air Canada and the approach of the government on privatization. I well remember a program just before Air Canada was privatized or put on the road to privatization. I would like to replay it in this Chamber today. I remember Mr. Claude Taylor saying how wonderfully he could manage Air Canada if only he were not hampered by the rules and regulations imposed on him by government. My private thoughts were: if he can manage