

*Financial Administration Act*

tance of monetary policy. I do not believe it is wise to have so much control resting solely with the Minister of Finance. I believe the provinces should have the right to appoint people as directors of the Bank of Canada so that there is some input from the provinces. Provinces have a tremendous impact on monetary and fiscal policy. The actions of Hydro-Québec are very important in terms of our monetary and fiscal policy. The actions of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Saskatchewan Potash Corporation or some of the bigger corporations in Ontario and British Columbia are very important in terms of monetary and fiscal policy.

We must democratize Crown corporations, making sure the provinces have some input into who sits on the boards of directors. The time has come when producers, farmers and fishermen must have more say about who becomes a member of the boards of directors of such Crown corporations as Canagrex. They must have more say about the management of our Crown corporations. In the economic sense we must democratize these institutions and make them truly national and truly Canadian institutions.

One of the problems in the country today is that we are much too centralized. There is too much power in and too many decisions being imposed from Ottawa. We must recognize regional differences and try to build a national partnership. If we did this I believe we would be much better off. For example, Mr. Speaker, we are the only democratic federation in the world that I know of in which the most populous regions dominate both Houses of Parliament. The two central provinces dominate the House of Commons because of representation by population. The two central provinces also dominate the Senate. I do not know of any other democratic federation in the world where the most populous regions will dominate those Houses. We do not have a balance between population and regionalism in the country. I believe that is one of the problems with some of our national institutions as well. They do not reflect the country as a whole.

When the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mr. Pepin) was the co-chairman of the task force on the Constitution with the late John Robarts, he and his colleague tried to address some of the problems of regionalism and how more national, representative institutions could be created in the country. They suggested some changes and amendments which could be made.

I believe that the 300-odd federal Crown corporations could be more reflective of the country if we had more parliamentary accountability and more input from the provinces. Many of these Crown corporations operate in areas which are co-jurisdictional, such as agriculture. We should have workers on the boards of directors. They should be more involved in the management decisions. We should have ordinary citizens elected as directors as well.

These are just some of the things I believe we should be doing. The Bill before the House gives us that opportunity. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I hope this debate does not degenerate into a debate about Crown corporations being negative, bad and the bogeyman of our society. I hope that in

this debate we will try to improve the role of Crown corporations, try to integrate them more carefully with the nation as a whole and try to make them more accountable to Parliament and the people of the land. If that is done I believe this will be a much better country for each and every citizen.

● (1450)

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words in this debate on Bill C-24, the Crown corporation Bill, and amendments to the Financial Administration Act. This Bill is essentially a response to a great deal of concern that has been expressed by the Auditor General and the relevant committee of the House of Commons. As well, it draws on the Lambert Commission report on financial management and accountability and indeed in many ways goes further than that report.

The Bill also takes into account information received by the Government in its 1977 Privy Council Office white paper on Crown corporations. It is also based on reports of the Public Accounts Committee going back to the Polysar report of 1977. We particularly studied the recent Public Accounts report on control and accountability of Crown corporations. We believe that we have addressed many of the principal concerns while also taking into account the comments we have heard from business and professional associations.

In trying to strike a delicate balance, we feel that it just makes no sense to overly restrict these Crown corporations. By doing so we would unnecessarily put at risk their financial viability in the marketplace and jeopardize the considerable investment which the taxpayers have made in these Crown corporations.

This morning, the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) talked about these Crown corporations losing \$4 billion per year. I suggest that he is using a certain amount of licence to say that these Crown corporations lost \$4 billion a year because many Crown corporations are those which will be included in Schedule I of the Act when it is adopted by Parliament. These include agencies like Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation which receives \$1.5 billion to assist in providing Canadians housing and shelter; the CBC which receives approximately \$744 million a year; groups like the Canadian Wheat Board which receives \$118 million a year; the Federal Business Development Bank which receives \$118 million a year; the Farm Credit Corporation, and VIA Rail. They are all Crown corporations but they are agencies that really provide a way of delivering a government service to the people. I believe the Hon. Member is inadequately explaining the real situation when he says that these Crown corporations lose \$4 billion a year.

I have the impression that the Hon. Member is very opposed to Crown corporations. It is his right to be so. I recall when I was working with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources a few years ago that his Party was very opposed to the Bill establishing Petro-Canada. That is a free choice for his Party to make. Our Party supported the establishment of