

Financial Administration Act

corporations are supposed to be controlling \$67 billion in assets.

The problem we have with Crown corporations is the lack of precise figures. Interpretation is an integral part of the problem. Assets change hands, responsibilities shift and lines of accountability are often difficult to trace.

I should like to refer to the decentralization policy of the Government. It wants to move Crown corporations out of Ottawa. The way some officials of Government are talking, Ottawa will become a ghost town. I will deal with that shortly in more detail.

Many corporations are subsidiaries of other Crown corporations with more than 50 per cent of them federally owned or associates with 50 per cent or less federal ownership. They do not report directly to a government Department or a Minister of the Crown, let alone to Parliament. Employment in Crown corporations totals about 263,000 people. Federal Government Departments, by comparison, employ 239,000, not counting the 84,000 members of the Armed Forces. What is causing a lot of confusion in Ottawa with Crown corporations is the Government's decentralization policy. It wants to move Crown corporations and government Departments out of Ottawa. Some of the candidates for the leadership of the Liberal Party have stated that they will disband certain government Departments or Crown corporations. We do not know which ones. That is also causing much concern in the Public Service in the Ottawa area. It is making it most difficult for Crown corporations and others to function properly when they do not know whether they will be disbanded or moved.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) is a very strong supporter of decentralization. He is prepared to move many Departments and Crown corporations out of Ottawa. The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) has said that he will do away with three government Departments. We do not know how many public servants will be losing their jobs with the decentralization plan, how many will have to move or how many will be able to move. There is no end to the concern in the Ottawa area. I hope we will receive some clarification or some clear-cut statements on how many public servants will lose their jobs, how many will have to move and how many will have to look for jobs in other Departments and so forth, because they are protected under the Public Service Act and do not have to move.

The householder which was distributed in Ottawa Centre by its author, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Evans), is also causing much confusion. He has clouded the issue considerably in this his latest householder. I picked one of them out of a trash can in the lobby of my apartment block. Perhaps after people read this document, it goes into the trash can. The Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre pointed out in this document the serious problem in the economy in the Ottawa area. He indicated how the Sparks Street Mall would be affected if Crown corporations are moved out of this city. I am sure Crown corporations are in a state of confusion right now. Many of them do not know what

to do with their employees. It is difficult to make any long-range plans.

Members of Cabinet and John Turner, who stated that he will cut \$15 billion and do away with a lot of government Departments and public servants, should indicate which Crown corporations will be moved and which ones will be disbanded. That would help us in dealing with Bill C-24. Certainly it would be a great help to the Crown corporations. They rent space. They have contracts with local contractors and consultants. These vague and wild statements about emptying Ottawa and moving out government Departments and Crown corporations should be clarified.

It is very strange that the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre has not explained John Turner's position in this document, as he is involved in his campaign. I hope there will be a clarification of the decentralization policy of the Government to the citizens of Ottawa Centre. They should know what will happen to them, which ones will be moved, how many will lose their jobs, and how many will be transferred. They cannot operate properly with these vague and wild statements of candidates going across the country trying to bribe voters. They say, "Vote for me and I will give you a Crown corporation", "We will move one to Winnipeg", "How would you like one in Newfoundland?", and "We will move everything out of Ottawa across the country and you will feel more at home in Canada". I hope the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre will clarify that for his constituents, the majority of whom are public servants.

Mr. Evans: The majority are not public servants; that is how much you know.

An Hon. Member: He knows much more than John Turner.

Mr. McKenzie: Of course, with regard to Mr. Turner, I cannot comment. Time will not allow me to cover all his positions. I simply do not have the time to deal with all his positions.

I see Mr. Speaker is giving me a signal. I hope the Hon. Member will clarify this for his constituents and correct the statements in his little booklet, which I picked out of a trash can. I hope the Government and the whole House will support a six-month hoist on this Bill.

Hon. John M. Reid (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, we have now had 78 speakers on this Bill. Bill C-24 is designed to try to deal with some of the problems of Crown corporations and to try to provide an accounting system for the House of Commons to get some control over them. What fascinates me in terms of this Bill, for which the Opposition has called, is the Opposition's determined opposition to the House of Commons getting control over Crown corporations.

I certainly understand the ambivalence of members of Her Majesty's Official Opposition. It is because when they were in power they were in power they were one of the most enthusiastic developers of the concept of Crown corporations. In point of fact, if we look back in history at people who put together