

*Appointments to Crown Corporations*

they need updating, through which Parliament can check spending. Rather, I looked upon this hopefully as a very useful opportunity to provide the benefit of what might be called a rather more sensitive antenna, if I may use that expression, of boards and commissions. Let me give an example. When the B and B Commission was issuing questionnaires, without wanting in any way to be boastful I felt it would have been useful had they consulted the Member of Parliament concerned—namely myself—before asking high school students in the largest community in my riding to find out, among other things, how their parents voted at the last general election.

Research was undertaken without any consultation with the sitting member and the commission itself was embarrassed about this. Nothing partisan was involved, but had they had the courtesy to seek advice from the incumbent member, a little more groundwork could have been done, a little more educating or preparing, if that is a better word, in the community for the type of research questionnaire that was distributed, as I say, without notice. The riding of Fundy-Royal survived this questionnaire but I think it would have been far more productive had this opportunity been afforded.

Another committee that I think would have served this Parliament immeasurably better is the committee dealing with drugs. I say this without detracting one bit from the quality of people who served on the Le Dane Committee on Drugs. However, Members of Parliament could have been provided with a great opportunity to travel across the country seeking information on what is a major social problem facing us today in this particular field. I get carried away and regard certain things as major problems, and I presume others would pick different aspects of social malaise as being more pressing than the drug problem. However, I happen to think that the drug problem is a matter of very grave concern.

When a committee or commission was set up in the United Kingdom to study this matter, a couple of Members of Parliament were appointed to it. I do not know whether they were government members, but I do not think that matters. What is important is to have an avenue of communication, to be in touch with parliamentary thinking, and to have some degree of liaison as such bodies move around the country. To carry this to its logical conclusion, I think that in many cases commissions made up of members, or com-

mittees made up of parliamentarians, could serve the public just as usefully as the well-established technique of a royal commission.

• (5:40 p.m.)

Another problem faced by the federal administration is that of centralism of decision-making. This, again, is not to criticize what I believe to be the finest public service serving any government in the western world. I believe, because of the huge area of this country and the regional problems, in too many instances decisions are made in the central capital without sufficient sensitivity to conditions in what I might call the edges, if you like—certainly the economic edges of the country.

Last December the Film Board made a stupid decision about user fees for films. There was no way, it seemed to me, that ordinary Members of Parliament could get across to the Film Board that it might be fine to make that decision for Montreal or Toronto, but that the imposition of user fees in the province of New Brunswick would be disastrous. I might say this decision has been rescinded, and I think that is the proper course for the government to have taken. There was no way we could get this point across to the board itself. It seemed quite insensitive to the fact that in provinces other than Quebec and Ontario, in many instances the National Film Board is the only way for the public and for school children, and so on, to obtain any cultural experience whatsoever.

Had that decision not been rescinded, I am told by the provincial department of education it would have meant the end of audiovisual education in New Brunswick for this year. I am satisfied that had the Film Board had a Member of Parliament or two on its board, no such insensitive decision would have been made. This is not a matter of a policy measure; it is one of people really understanding the prime, or core issue. So I am glad to have been importuned to take part in this debate.

I congratulate the hon. member for having introduced this motion. I am a little disturbed by one phrase in his Notice of Motion, that is, "control of the legislative power over the executive power." I am not going to quibble about semantics in this regard, but I do not think we are legislators any more. We could have lots of speeches on this matter, but I think the way for control by Parliament over the cabinet would be by a greatly beefed-up committees system with very much more