

Energy, Mines and Resources

of legislation saying that the rights both of the government and of the House of Commons itself can be overturned by giving the Senate a second kick at the cat.

Members of the Senate who have held directorships for years in financial institutions and in energy corporations—they are rather famous for that and have been for years—are given the right to veto what both the government and the House of Commons in their wisdom have decided to let go through. It is wrong in the broader view of their normal role in the parliamentary process, and it is doubly wrong for us to include the right to veto specifically in legislation of this sort. It is not done in other laws we have passed and it is a gross mistake to do so in this instance.

We also have problems here with respect to the general matter of social responsibility and public accountability of all Crown corporations. We do not like bureaucracy and regulations any more than anyone else. The amendment introduced a few moments ago by my colleague from Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) was one attempt to introduce some guarantee that accountability and social responsibility would be built into some of the corporations that the Canadian government from time to time may wish to institute. If we do not introduce that guarantee of accountability and responsibility into the management structures and into the review structures of those corporations, we will become bound up more and more in red tape of a kind that will cause untold problems both to our constituents and to ourselves as representatives.

A former leader of the Conservative Party, which forms the official opposition, had some interesting words to say on that matter at the recent policy conference of that party. He said:

The free market "is a wonderful mechanism. But the motivation is making a buck, and a miner or a manufacturer doesn't make money by improving the environment. He doesn't make a buck worrying about the socially disadvantaged, or tiding over employees in times of unemployment . . . Any civilized society has concepts of order and ideals that aren't the business of the marketplace."

Those Conservatives who come within that historic definition of conservatism share the emphasis on the public interest and the public philosophy. Even though socialists and Conservatives historically may have a different view from time to time as to what the legitimate public interest is, we share that philosophy and we share that degree of responsibility in public accountability.

My colleagues and I are sometimes more than a little puzzled why people who do not show any willingness whatever to accept that traditional concept of conservatism continually rise and speak on behalf of that party in the House. I am glad that at least the former leader, and also some of the members over there, still hold to the views and the philosophy that are the basis of that party.

There is an appropriate place for public interest, for an expanded sense of public responsibility and accountability. To our great regret, the government has not seen fit to incorporate into this legislation the kind of mechanism that is necessary when setting up institutions to serve the people. There is no chance such as there is in Norway within StatOil, where there

is an annual report to parliament which is debated in parliament. The corporate plans of that corporation in the energy sphere and the status and performance of that corporation are analysed on a regular basis by the parliament of Norway. We do not have that kind of mechanism here. If it is in the government's mind to set up some corporations in this area—and if it is not, why the legislation?—why has it not taken this opportunity to show it believes in the democratic process, that it believes in public responsibility and in public accountability? We can only assume that it does not believe in these things or we would have heard more from the government directly or we would have had some more appropriate response at least to the suggestions made by ourselves and by the official opposition during the debate of the last few hours.

• (1740)

I do not want to take much more time at this juncture. Many hon. members would like to bring this matter to a resolution. Our party certainly does not want to hold it up, but I urge the government in the weeks and months ahead to take another total look at the structuring, especially of public corporations but also of some major private associations and corporations across Canada, to see if we cannot begin to reintroduce some of the sense of social responsibility and community responsibility which, once upon a time, existed in areas of the private sector and may one day exist in the public sector. If we do that, we will have fulfilled our purposes as a people's Parliament. If we do not do it, I think we will all have given democracy a bad, bad name.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak briefly at third reading of Bill C-102.

I think the key question is why this bill is needed and why it is before the House. No one has given us any real reasons why this bill is needed, but I would like to state why I believe it is needed by going back to an act passed by this House called the Canada Oil and Gas Act. When it was before this House, it was Bill C-48, and I would like to quote Section 31 as follows:

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, prior to the authorization of a system for producing oil or gas from any Canada lands, may direct that

- (a) the Crown share in any relevant interest be transferred to a designated Crown corporation; or
- (b) any designated Crown corporation to which a Crown share in any relevant interest has been transferred under this section transfer the Crown share to any other designated Crown corporation.

When we dealt with Bill C-48, some of us made a very strong case—and I was one—that we did not want to see a 25 per cent Crown share transferred to Petro-Canada in areas like Hibernia, the Grand Banks, in the Beaufort, on the Arctic Islands, in the Mackenzie Valley and the west coast offshore. I simply did not want to see this Crown corporation called Petro-Canada have such vast holdings in relation to Canada lands with respect to oil and gas production. I felt, as several of us did when we discussed that bill, that it was necessary to have holding corporations in their simplest form which have very few employees and boards of directors holding a 25 per cent share on behalf of the Crown and, as a result, having