

● (1730)

Those who assert that federal expenditures are out of control should quote the record of the past seven years.

The record, as he points out, shows that Government spending as a percentage of GNP has fallen from 20.5 per cent in 1975 to 16.2 per cent in 1981-82. The only reason he could get away with misusing figures this way is that he does not count the Crown corporations. He does not count the enormous growth outside the public accounts in Crown corporations. It goes out over the airways to Canadians to pass on the impression that somehow Government is restraining its expenditures.

It is a blatant falsehood. This is a way of avoiding fundamental checks and balances. Over the years procedures have been built up in Government to try to check the manner in which public funds are being spent. The whole Treasury Board bureaucracy was built up to do that. The private sector has its own mechanisms. What happens to Crown corporations? Neither of those.

As the Auditor General points out, he has been unable to find, and doubts the existence of any fundamental economic evaluation of the Petrofina purchase prior to its being made. In other words, there was no evaluation. They spent a whopping pile of money with none of the rudimentary analyses that would be required if that was a direct part of Government operating through normal Government bureaucracies, or none of the rudimentary requirements that would be necessary if that was a private corporation which had to seek private funding for that kind of purchase. Because they satisfy neither requirement, they get away with totally inaccurate and wasteful procedures.

What happened? Petrofina shares were trading about \$50, \$55 a share. They shot up to about \$85 a share while the rest of the market stayed flat. There was no reason for that escalation in share prices. There was no fundamental difference in Fina in terms of having made any discoveries or its income statement suddenly getting out of line. The reason was that there was inside information. It is very clear. Some friends of Fina, Petro-Canada or the Liberal Party, the three possible sources, knew about this proposed purchase and takeover. They bought those shares between \$55 and \$80 and eventually sold them to Petro-Canada for about \$120.

Vast illicit fortunes were made by either friends of Petrofina, Petro-Canada or the Liberal Party. It is beyond dispute that vast fortunes were made. The infamous Maurice Strong collected a \$1 million brokerage fee for that deal, the man we are now rewarding by making chairman of the new Corporation. We do not know how much we are paying him to do that. We are not allowed to find out. We are merely the elected representatives of the people. That does not give us any right to information about Maurice Strong's salary from the Canadian Development Investment Corporation. We do know that his salary as Chairman of the Board of AZL Corporation was \$20,000 a year, plus a consulting fee of \$100,000 a year. The reason we know that is because in the United States that has to be made public. In Canada we pay him with taxpayers' money and we cannot find out that information.

### Supply

We were told that the total for the Petrofina purchase was \$1,450 million. That is what Petro-Canada told us in its press release. The Auditor General points out it is actually \$1,700 million. They failed to disclose \$250 million of additional costs. A private company that publicly traded shares would have its wrists slapped. It would face penalties under the Security Commission and stock exchanges for that kind of misinforming. Our Corporation, Petro-Canada, faces none of that because we do not have rules.

I could go on and on. Even a socialist has to admit that those kinds of abuses are improper. What we are asking, indeed demanding, is that Crown corporations must have their books exposed to the elected representatives of the people. If this is a democracy, and we insist that it become a democracy, we must have the right to examine their books to see what they are spending. We must have the right to say yes or no to the creation of new Crown corporations. If we do not demand that right as Members of Parliament, we are failing in our responsibility, and we have no right to continue to remain here and pretend that somehow we are representing the citizens of this country.

**Mr. Douglas Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in this debate and to say right off that I believe Crown corporations are a very proud extension of Canadian Government policy. I am personally pleased to rise now and offer a defence in the face of some of the scurrilous attacks we have heard from across the aisle. I believe that Crown corporations in general give us a flexible way to attack problems in this country, ways that the private sector cannot on its own find or follow. In addition, I believe we have seen an excellent pattern developing where we have been able to use Crown corporations to extend Canadian ownership over our own economy. I approve of that extended ownership and I am pleased to stand up today in support of it.

I think that Crown corporations provide a competitive force, a chance for the people of Canada to look at a vital part of our economy through the eyes of a publicly-owned, Government-controlled institution and to have some confidence that the industry as a whole is operating in a competitive and beneficial fashion. I do not think that those positive characteristics of Crown corporations have been brought out today by Members of the Conservative Party. Those Members should have started talking about these characteristics of Crown corporations.

I wish to quote from two columns that have appeared in *The Globe and Mail* recently. These are summaries of a recent speech given by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) in Calgary. Mr. Michael Valpy, a columnist with *The Globe and Mail*, has had a couple of reactions to that speech. I quote from yesterday's column:

In its sum and rhetoric, it implies that Mr. Clark leads a party, no longer of traditional Canadian conservatives, but of nineteenth century liberals with a philosophy updated and imported en bloc from the Reaganomics across the line.

Today Mr. Valpy continued his analysis of that speech. He had some additional thoughts:

—it made no mention of the finest traditional thought and action of Canadian conservatism . . . He—