

Export Development Act

think of it as the Government's money, and everyone knows that everyone should have a piece of the Government's money. The sooner the Government spends it, the better off we all will be. But the Government has no money. The value of this nation is mortgaged in order to provide these funds for the purposes outlined in this Bill and, Mr. Speaker, neither you nor I nor any Hon. Member who is now alive and in this House will be living at the time that these obligations are paid.

I know that one might enter into a fanciful argument and say that this Crown corporation is distinct from Government, and, indeed, while it might go out and borrow \$20 billion, as it is authorized to do, it could default and never pay off those obligations. Therefore, what we are really looking at is just the capital which is ultimately injected into it. You know, Mr. Speaker, and I know, that whatever this Crown corporation incurs in terms of liability will be paid, not with government money, because there is none, but with the money of the people of this nation. It disturbs me to think that in such a cavalier manner this House can take this piece of legislation and deal with it in the fashion which the Minister responsible for it would have us believe we should.

We know that not long ago this corporation provided the funds necessary for the development of a rather interesting architectural structure in Algeria, and it may well have provided, as it did, a lot of employment for a lot of Canadians who were there. It also provided an opportunity for the export of cement from Canada because a lot of it was made of concrete and reinforcing steel. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that we have not been paid. We may never be paid. And we do not know what the interest on that loan is. The reason I mention that one incident is that it typifies the separation from this place of those who make the rules and authorize the loans, and the people in this place who were elected by the people of Canada have no authority to demand and to obtain the vital information we should have with respect to the operation of our Crown corporations, including this one.

I urge Hon. Members of the House, Mr. Speaker, to examine carefully the proposals which we have offered by way of amendment, and have some regard not to the desire of the bureaucrats to further extend their authority and dominance on the political and financial scene of this nation, but rather to display some concern for our children, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren and future generations of Canadians who will be bound to pay the debts which we permit this corporation to incur if we pass this Bill in its present form.

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I am rising late to speak in respect of the Export Development Corporation Bill, but I would like to mention briefly some experiences which I have had personally with a young, vibrant company bidding for world markets. Just last week I was invited to the first promotion of their deal abroad. This happened to be a company which is in the business of manufacturing paint. The company had sold 43,000 gallons of paint to the Barbados. Over two years ago it applied to the federal Government for some promotional assistance, not just to the Barbados but to other countries, and to further research its

product, which it was already doing with its own money. But it received no Government help whatsoever. Yet we find that of the 62 companies which received financial assistance last year from the Export Development Corporation, 3 received over half of the total funds allocated. This gives me a great deal of concern. Are we helping the right type of people, the people with initiative, the little guy? I think too many of our Government departments, not just the EDC, are looking for the giant who has made his way and is receiving today the lion's share.

● (1550)

I think the Minister is a pretty good fellow, Mr. Speaker. We talk about fishing and about growing potatoes in the Maritimes. While I come from Ontario, we get along very well with the Minister, and I think he really tries. But I honestly think some of his department officials bypass some of these very dedicated entrepreneurs who want to make their own way.

I cannot be critical of the EDC alone because these problems occur with the Department of Industry also. I had a chap come to me not too long ago who wanted to manufacture stick fertilizer for plants. He is struggling along and he was lucky enough to win several contracts here in Canada which had been filled by fertilizer sticks imported from the U.S. He secured a contract from Loblaws, IGA, National Grocers and Canadian Tire. Yet he was totally turned down by the Department. He had created 15 to 20 jobs and would have gone to 45 or 50 jobs, but the Department ignored him. He did not have this, he did not have that. Probably he did not have the right firm present his application. This chap was finally helped by the Government of Barbados in promoting his product abroad. It is a very viable product, so what are we doing wrong? What is the EDC doing for people such as I have described here? The Government of Barbados helped this chap promote this product, yet two years ago the EDC had turned him down.

That, Mr. Speaker, is where I can be very critical, not just of the EDC but of too many of our Government departments. We ignore the entrepreneur who wants to try and who has done a lot for himself. As speakers from this side of the House have pointed out, and apparently we are the only ones talking about this, we have to put some meaning in the Bill for the small businessman. I think it is self-explanatory when three companies received over half of the moneys allotted through the EDC. This is why we are trying to bring in some amendments to the Bill which will have some meaning for the community. We are not going to deny our big entrepreneurs, but we want to think of the smaller people who are striving and working against a market which has been captured by the big financial giants throughout the world. They are getting bigger and bigger all the time. We believe in the small Canadian entrepreneur and we want to promote him also.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I hope that before this Bill passes the House we will have something in it for the individual who wants to help himself, who is out there trying to help himself, fighting big business and big bureaucracy. I hope that when we finish with this Bill we can say we have accomplished