

Governor in Council and shall be persons not regularly employed in the Public Service of Canada, either directly or indirectly, or in the public service of any Province of Canada, and so on, we are still saying to the Government that it can appoint certain directors. It does not spell out from where those directors must come. For example, the Government can appoint the Donald Macdonalds of the world. We could have more of the Donald Macdonald's economic commissions. The Government could appoint all kinds of ex-politicians, ex-Liberal politicians—for instance, the Jim Coumts of the world, the Jack Horners of the world, many other former Ministers and former MPs. This could just be another plum for ex-politicians. Once again, the Conservative Party does not spell that out. The Conservative Party leaves this tremendous loophole in this amendment through which you could drive a truck.

I agree with the principle of opening it up and making sure we do not have a chairman of the board and 14 directors who are all public servants because I believe we have to have more democracy and more economic accountability. I think all our Crown Corporations have to reflect the greater sense of reality that exists in this country, and although I agree with those principles, when you open up the appointment of directors but still give the Government a blank cheque to appoint whoever it wants, I am not sure we are solving the problem at all. In fact, we might even be making the problem worse by having a bunch of ex-politicians who cannot get interesting jobs elsewhere running the Export Development Corporation or businessmen who are friends of the Government. I am thinking of the Conrad Blacks of the world—I do not think he would accept the appointment, Mr. Speaker—sitting on the board of directors of the Export Development Corporation.

Mr. Regan: Have you got any more names?

Mr. Nystrom: It might be a way for the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan) to repay some of his political debts for contributions to the Liberal Party. Here we have the Conservative Party opening up another possibility of re-electing the Liberals by allowing them to appoint some of their friends to the board of the Export Development Corporation.

There is something else that surprises me about the Conservative Party. I know that in the Constitution debate Members of the Conservative Party talked loud and for a long time about the Provinces and the right to respect the Provinces. The Provinces are very heavily involved in trade. What the Provinces do in trade is very important in the world. I have already mentioned the importance of commodities and products and big companies, such as Hydro-Québec, that are not private. I am very surprised to see there is nothing spelled out, that not even one or two of these directors should be appointed by the Provinces. What we need in this country is more co-operative federalism, more consensus building and greater reconciliation between the Provinces, the federal Government, the private sector, the working people and farmers. But none of that is spelled out whatsoever. All we are doing is choosing between the Government appointing 15 people from the Public Service

Export Development Act

to run the EDC or the Conservatives saying that three people should come from the Public Service and then the Government can appoint 12 of their friends. I am not sure that is any improvement at all.

I know the Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) would not have drafted a motion like this. I think he would have made sure it was a little more reflective of the reality out there. But the Member from Mississauga South has chosen not to do that. For reasons like that, Mr. Speaker, I have grave doubts about supporting this amendment because I think we might be jumping from the frying pan back into the fire.

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I speak in favour of the amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn). Before doing so, let me speak to the remarks just made by the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) because I think they are relevant. He feels that by giving greater stress to the appointment of people from the private sector, as called for by our amendment, we will be creating plums to give, presumably, to our supporters after the next election. I would respectfully submit that is not the intent of our amendment. We are trying to give stress to people who have online, front line experience with the private sector, hopefully with the export business. They will bring experience from the private sector rather than exclusively from the public sector.

I would remind the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville that he does not understand his own supporters. Recently a Gallup poll was taken. The question asked Canadians across the country whether they would like to see more stress on the private sector, the same balance as at present, or more stress on the Government sector. Astoundingly from that poll fully 40 per cent of the people who indicated they were supporters of the New Democratic Party favoured greater stress on the private sector. The figure for the Liberal Party on the same question was 30 per cent. I would therefore remind the Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville that his Party is now on the free enterprise side of the spectrum and it is the Liberal Party that is more socialist than the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kilgour: As a westerner, that defies all my experience, but I gather that is the case.

Coming to the merits of the amendment, you may well say, Mr. Speaker, that the relevant section as it is worded says nothing about how many people the Government will appoint from the Public Service. I am advised that while the Government has not committed itself on this issue, the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan) has told my colleague the Hon. Member for Mississauga South in a letter that the Government will need at least six people from the Public Service. At the moment, as you know, four out of seven are from the public sector and that is a pretty good indication of what the Government intends to do in this matter.

The problem with having a majority of public servants on a board such as this, in my respectful submission, is that these