

Energy, Mines and Resources

Air Canada and the CNR to go to the committee. I believe that the committee has spent some time during the last month questioning the appropriate officers from Air Canada and the CNR, thereby setting a true example of scrutiny and parliamentary accountability.

Of course, I would have moved that this go to a special committee, such as the Standing Committee on Energy Legislation, but I believe it would not be proper to specify that directly in terms of House procedure. My amendment is general and simply moves that the activities be referred to the appropriate standing committee. A House order could then be entered as to which committee would consider it.

I would like to make it clear that the first part of the amendment is to establish ongoing legislative accountability, both in meeting public policy commitments as well as being financially responsible for Crown corporations. The second part of my amendment calls for the establishment of a joint management-employee-consumer review committee. This committee would keep an ongoing brief. It would not be paid because of the obvious problems it would present. It could serve on a voluntary basis and act like a watchdog over the committee.

This amendment goes farther still. It involves an area about which Canadians should start thinking. It is called economic democracy. This term is not only used by Tom Haydon, Jane Fonda's husband, but is also used by social democratic parties in Europe. Economic democracy is a very big issue there and has been debated by my party's counterparts in Europe, the socialist party in France and the social democratic party in West Germany, which are the governments in those countries, incidentally.

As I understand it, the parties want to move to make Crown corporations more accountable. The reason for that is simple. People want to have some control over the institutions that control their lives.

One of the first successful cases I had when I was a young lawyer in Vancouver was against British Columbia Hydro, which was a rather monolithic corporation. I challenged that corporation to pay security deposits back to poor people because I thought it was illegally keeping the security deposits. The Supreme Court of British Columbia subsequently held that this was true and it ordered \$400,000 in security deposits returned to those people.

At that time people asked me what I was doing by trying to take on a big Crown corporation like B.C. Hydro. I remember saying that I did not have any qualms about doing that since by taking on a large Crown corporation it seemed to me we were trying to make it more accountable. B.C. Hydro is a good example of a Crown corporation that is very unaccountable to the British Columbia legislature and to the people of British Columbia.

My amendment begins to deal with this problem. It deals with economic democracy. I believe it is the beginning of a movement to put some of the workers and some of the people who consume the services of a Crown corporation on the boards of directors. The board of directors of Petro-Canada

should be made up of an environmentalist, someone from the small oil industry and the large oil industry, and some Inuit or Dene native people since Petro-Canada operates in the North. It should not only be comprised of deputy ministers from Ottawa and political patronage appointments. Since I cannot yet change the manner in which appointments are made to the board of directors of Petro-Canada, the problem which confronts me is to open up the process for these appointments.

One way of opening it up is to propose this amendment. This is not a complicated amendment. The government believes in accountability, economic democracy and people being able to have some control over their lives. As well, if the government believes in making Members of Parliament more active in scrutinizing these corporations, why not accept this amendment? It simply allows a reference to a standing committee in order to enable that committee to examine these Crown corporations. For example, assume that Dome Petroleum is made a Crown corporation and a special corporation is made for the Beaufort Sea. A year from now an appropriate committee could review what those corporations have been doing and how they were managing their finances. The hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe could ask many probing questions on behalf of the taxpayers to find out what was happening in those corporations.

The second part of my amendment would provide for a voluntary review committee to be appointed by a parliamentary committee. It would be a broad-based committee comprised of consumers and employees of the Crown corporation. Although it is a novel idea, it is a small step toward greater economic democracy. Therefore, I would urge the House to accept the amendment.

In relation to this matter, I did have the opportunity to review the problem of accountability of Crown corporations in terms of "agent of Her Majesty". This relates to some of the amendments introduced the other day by the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe. The law is confusing because it applies both ways. It may be argued that even if you do not stipulate "agent of Her Majesty", Crown corporations are still agents of Her Majesty because, if you read the rest of the act, the government has a type of direction in the Crown corporation. These facts are probably only understood by lawyers. In any event, it may not matter one way or the other whether you stipulate an agent of Her Majesty or not. The Air Canada Act specifically states that Crown corporations are not agents of Her Majesty. Does that make all other Crown corporations agents of Her Majesty? That could be argued. I believe the better argument is that we must review the whole scope of how Crown corporations are set up.

That brings us back to Members of Parliament because we are the ones who are literally creating the law on these energy corporations. While this is a serious matter which sounds technical, it is really quite a simple issue. It is to give the people control over their lives and over some of the instruments that affect their lives. I believe there is great support in the