

Government Orders

In a minute or two I want to explore that argument because I think it explains why this country is going down the drain. It explains why Canadian people are losing the sense that this country stands for anything. The federal government is searching through its inventory, looking on every shelf and in every cupboard, for things it can get rid of. Whether by deregulation, whether by turning them over to the provinces, whether by shutting them down, whether by giving them to the Americans, one way or another the federal government seems to be determined to go out of business.

Canadians notice that. In various parts of our country people are starting to see their region as being much more important and much more meaningful than the national government. To a point, regional governments are important and regional issues or regional values mean something. However, if the federal government is going to take the attitude that it should turn over and get out of everything that it can based on some ideology, that philosophy taken to its end is going to cost us our country.

The minister responsible for privatization is in the House. I certainly appreciate that, because very often ministers of this government are not here when their bills are being considered in the House. I want to thank him for coming to listen to this debate. I want him also to reconsider the kind of wholesale approach that the government is taking to operations that can be disposed of.

I want to remind him, for example, that university education could be described as a provincial matter. Research and development could be described as something that the federal government should get out of because other levels of government, when we read the BNA Act, may be able to make a larger claim to do it. Medicare is another example of a program that would never have been implemented if a Conservative government with the philosophy of this government had been around. Why should they take it on, they would say, when provincial governments are doing it already?

Mr. McDermid: Who brought in hospitalization?

Mr. Kaplan: I want to give one final example, an example that I have had considerable experience with, and that is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Here is a national institution, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, not provided for in the BNA Act. Policing is not

listed under one of the federal powers. I am worried that, with the approach that this government is taking toward getting out of everything and getting rid of everything, we can see an institution like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police privatized and turned over—

Mr. McDermid: Who tried to take the “Royal” out of it? Pierre Trudeau.

Mr. Kaplan: There is no evidence of that at all. We would be out of business.

What we need is a government that will recognize that if this country is to be held together it has to be held together by human will, by people wanting to do certain things together, by developing an agenda, and by developing shared values. If those shared values and that shared agenda are just cutting up and disposing, turning over to the Americans or the provinces or the private sector or deregulating, if that is the agenda, then this country is going to evaporate. I would like to warn the government that it is set on that course. While I rise to talk about Harbourfront, one small example, it is part of a pattern that is very disturbing and the fulfilment of which can lead to the end of this country.

• (1820)

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I want to answer because there were some accusations made in the House last Friday and again today on what is happening at Harbourfront in Toronto.

I want to make it very clear that back in the early seventies, when the federal government got involved in cleaning up the Toronto Harbourfront, it made a commitment at that time that it was going to do that and then return the Harbourfront to the citizens of Toronto. That was the commitment that was made at that time.

The Crombie commission has come forward with a very good report. It was very well received by the city and citizens of Toronto. He is also working on a much broader waterfront review on behalf of the provincial government of province of Ontario.

The Harbourfront claims that have been going around of hon. members of the Liberal Party are factually and totally incorrect. The Harbourfront Corporation provides excellent programming for the city of Toronto and will continue to provide that excellent programming. The parks will be returned to the city of Toronto, a