

few years, and particularly within the last two years, that a great climate of uncertainty has been created, first by the failure to reform the tax laws and build in incentives, secondly by the invasion of previously held provincial jurisdictions by the federal government through its export tax, and finally by the continuing conflict over jurisdiction and energy related matters between governments. It is that, as much as anything, that raises some questions as to the capacity of the private sector to carry on in this field.

We also now have the personification of an interventionist philosophy in the Petro-Canada bill. This is one more piece of evidence causing fear and uncertainty in the private sector, one that causes people and companies that have spent a great deal of time and money developing Canada's energy potential to look elsewhere. In addition to that, whenever a Crown corporation in this country is established the prospect of unfair competition is raised, and this must be considered and gauged by the private sector.

The minister also indicated that this new Crown corporation was necessary in order to purchase from abroad. As several members on this side of the House and elsewhere have pointed out, the government does not need this Crown corporation, this fraud of an act, to achieve that capacity because it already has it in the Department of Supply and Services, that great department that is so expert at buying expensive oil and recruiting Koreans. It might not be very intelligently applied, but nevertheless that capacity is there. It is simply unnecessary duplication to use this requirement of capacity as an attempt to justify this fraud of an act.

Then the minister said this:

The national petroleum company may also be able to play an important role in regional development.

I suppose that means that in future Petro-Can will be drilling by the DREE principle. In other words, perhaps it will abandon geological considerations in determining where to drill, and will go into areas of high unemployment or where there are a lot of Liberals. The fear that most of us have when we look at the prospect of drilling by the DREE principle is that most of the activity will be in Montreal or Rosedale.

Another of the major justifications that the minister offered for Canada having a national petroleum company, and for passing this bill, is this: the minister said, as reported at page 4038 of *Hansard*:

It is a striking fact—

It appears that even the facts in this country are striking, Mr. Speaker.

—that every one of the dozen countries from which we import significant quantities of crude oil has its own state oil company and is progressively increasing the role of that company in relation to international transactions.

Many of those other countries also have vast expanses of sand or tropical forest. Is that any reason for Canada suddenly to create a Crown corporation to become engaged in the creation of vast expanses of sand, or in any way to duplicate corporations in other countries? It is simply a silly proposition for the minister to suggest that Canada has to have a state petroleum corporation because

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other countries have one. That is the height of silliness, yet it is clearly one of the justifications offered by the minister in his opening remarks.

A final justification offered by the minister, as well as by some of his colleagues, is that we have a mixed economy. We have a tradition of public and private corporations, and public and private participation. Of course we have. That is a tradition of which I am personally proud, and which distinguishes this country. But I do not believe that the reason we have a mixed economy now is any justification to mix it up some more simply for the limited purpose of mixing it up.

We need a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, a state corporation. The justification for the creation of the CBC was not that we had a mixed economy situation; the justification was that we needed a state broadcasting agency. There is no such need here. It is fatuous for the minister and his supporters to suggest that simply because the state has acted in areas where it is necessary for it to be active, it also has to be active in fields where there is no requirement at all for it to be active—a field such as this.

In all of his justifications—and perhaps we will hear some more tonight—the minister has been unable to explain the basic question that is posed about this bill, which is: why do we need it? Why do we need Petro-Can? Either he cannot explain it or he will not explain it.

In my view, the real reason for this bill being put before us is the same as the reason for the raid on Alberta's jurisdiction regarding energy matters. It is the same reason that the minister's colleague is holding up the development of cable communications across this country. Quite simply, the reason is that the government wants power. If the government sees something moving in the country, it wants to get into the act, not as a mediator, not as a regulator or in the traditional way that the federal government and governments as a whole have operated, but as a controller. It wants power. It is prepared to extend its influence and its activities by intruding upon the jurisdiction of the provinces, by moving into the private sector whatever the consequences. It is preoccupied with extending its own power and influence whatever the cost. That is the real reason why we have this piece of legislation before us tonight.

In reviewing the powers that are set out for Petro-Canada in this legislation it occurred to me that the people of Canada surely do not realize how extensive a *carte blanche* they are giving this Crown corporation in the bill before the House. It is a fact that most Canadians do not read clause by clause the majority of the bills that are put before the House. In introducing the bill the minister said it was quite straightforward and simple, that the language was not particularly technical. That is true. But as well as being straightforward it is horrendously alarming in view of the kind of power being vested in this particular Crown corporation. It is a corporation that is not simply answerable to the cabinet; it is more complicated than that. The fact that it is to be told by the cabinet from time to time what to do makes it even more dangerous than its not having to report back to or be controlled by this House.