

Teleglobe Canada

The far more important question is what could have justified this. I have thought long and hard about the Government's commitment to privatization. We understand that the three pillars of Tory Government policy are free trade, deregulation, and privatization. I previously said that if you take these three pillars together they represent Americanization. Of course, it is true that many Americans who have commented on what they expect to achieve through free trade have pointed out, among other things, that they want the Canadian economy to mimic the fundamentals of the American economy. There is considerable objection to the mere existence of Crown corporations. They consider it a condition of reasonable trade and economic relationships with Canada that privatization of Crown corporations be accomplished as soon as possible. I am sure that is of considerable importance to the Government as it so wantonly searches for a free trade arrangement with the Americans.

Beyond that, one must consider that perhaps there are, within the Government's mind, certain purposes to be accomplished by privatization. It may occur to one that the Government might want to sell those Crown corporations which are losing money. As I indicated previously, Teleglobe is certainly not a money-losing Crown corporation so that obviously cannot be the reason for selling it. One may be interested in enhancing the level of competition within the communications industry. However, it is obvious, given the conditions of the sale which provide a protective monopoly situation with certain aspects of regulation, that that is not the intention. Nor is there a likelihood that competition will be enhanced by the sale of Teleglobe.

One can examine this very thoroughly, but one is left with only one conclusion, that is, that it is just empty-headed ideology which commits the Government to such a course of action. This does not create new jobs. Of course, the Government has never said that privatization was for the purpose of creating new jobs. As a matter of fact, there are no assurances that the level of employment presently existing with Teleglobe will be enhanced. We do not even have a commitment to maintain the level of employment which Teleglobe presently provides.

Canada, as well as most of the other industrialized nations, with the exception of the United States, are signatories to an international arrangement with respect to Intelsat. That arrangement was to provide, through cross-subsidization, equivalent rates for the use of international telecommunication means. The new privatized Teleglobe may find itself in a conflict of interest in seeking to find the lowest rates. Will it be inclined to compromise Canada's commitment to an arrangement which will benefit the third world?

It is impossible to find any logical, reasonable basis for the legislation before us. It requires further examination. A three-month hoist will do, but if the legislation were forgotten about altogether it would benefit all of Canada.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, we are into the 10 minute question session so one will have to keep one's remarks extremely limited. I must reflect on some of the points made by my hon. colleague, the Member for Windsor—Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy). He asked the general question which I suspect most Canadians are now asking, that is, at a time when unemployment in seven provinces has risen from the level which it was at in 1981—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are now on 10 minute speeches. I am sorry to interrupt the Member, but I thought he was asking a question of the Hon. Member for Windsor—Walkerville.

Mr. Riis: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My mistake.

Mr. Riis: It was probably not your mistake, Mr. Speaker. It was probably the way in which I began my speech. I accept full responsibility for that confusion.

● (1550)

Compared to 1981, unemployment has increased in seven provinces. The situation in most of Canada is not any better after the last two years as a result of the new Government. Rather than consider the privatization of Teleglobe, the Government should address these questions and how to encourage economic development in regions of Canada such as northern Ontario and Quebec in order to get the million or more Canadians back to work in meaningful jobs.

On I travelling throughout my constituency of Kamloops—Shuswap, or when making speeches in various cities and towns in Canada, I have not met one citizen who asked me if there was any possibility that the House of Commons could privatize Teleglobe as quickly as possible because that person lays awake at night worrying about the privatization of this Crown corporation. No one has ever mentioned the need to privatize selected Crown corporations. I regret that we are spending so much time, not only in the House now, but that we will spend days in the committee to debate this question before it comes back to the House for further debate. What will it accomplish other than to satisfy a few back-benchers on the government side who feel, for some burning reason, that this issue should take up valuable time in the House of Commons? I find it extremely frustrating to spend time debating an issue about which no one is concerned, other than a handful of Conservative back-benchers.

Mr. Jepson: Then sit down.

Mr. Riis: I hope that is not one of the back-benchers to whom I referred asking why I do not sit down and not say anything. I will not sit down and be muzzled in this debate, because when I see the facts it is clear that the sale of Teleglobe is an absolute give away to a firm called Memotec which is getting one of the best deals ever. Teleglobe is an extremely profitable Crown corporation, with profits in excess of \$53 million in 1985. This Crown corporation has become more