

*Adjournment Motion*

Treasury Board would allow that clause to creep into the legislation. The limitation on the length of debate on this legislation that may be permitted in this House has been written into this legislation. That is absolutely deplorable. There is a period of 30 sitting days, seven hours debate and all that sort of thing.

I want to draw one further matter to your attention, Mr. Speaker, in the half minute I have left. Clause 15 of the Bill requires the parent corporation to report to the appropriate Minister the creation of subsidiaries, not to Parliament but to the Minister. Depending on how much goodwill he has, the Minister may report the existence of a subsidiary to the House of Commons.

Those are some of the criticisms I would level at the Bill. I urgently suggest that the Minister withdraw it and produce a better Bill more closely related to Crown corporations and less to the Financial Administration Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert):** There follows a ten-minute period for questions and comments. If there is no one rising to put a question, to continue the debate, I recognize the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

● (1620)

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, I found it fascinating when listening to my friends from the Official Opposition—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member before he has started but I have a little job to perform right now.

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*Translation*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 45, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the Hon. Member for Athabasca (Mr. Shields)—Crown Corporations—Northern Transportation Company Limited (a) Date of decision to sell (b) Disposal of Athabasca assets; the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn)—Canadian National Railways (a) Request that subsidiary operations be privatized (b) Government policy; the Hon. Member for Kindersley-Lloydminster (Mr. McKnight)—Railways (a) Level of investment by railroads (b) Size of investment to move grain.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Ouellet that Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Financial Administration Act in relation to Crown corporations and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West):** Mr. Speaker, I found it interesting and a little bit amusing to hear my good friends from the Government side and from the official opposition side speaking about Crown corporations, because they are all somewhat schizophrenic about Crown corporations. They believe in Crown corporations if necessary but not necessarily in Crown corporations.

In the history of the western industrial world, Crown corporations have been inaugurated when Governments of all political stripes have taken over or provided the services of the private sector. There is nothing new about that. The question to be asked is why Crown corporations exist. If the free enterprise capitalist system is so good and if it works so well, there would be no need for Crown corporations. However, even the free enterprisers and the capitalists have admitted that the weaknesses in their own system have necessitated the inauguration of Crown corporations. When private enterprise Governments have asked themselves why they have inaugurated Crown corporations, invariably the answer has been because the private sector could not or would not occupy that area of economic or social endeavour in the economy.

There is another reason for the existence of Crown corporations which was endemic in the early years of Crown corporations in Canada. A federal Liberal Government or a federal Tory Government would start a Crown corporation, not because it believed in it; not because it served a necessary public good, need or demand; not because the private sector would not fulfil the role, but because the private sector could not fulfil the role. The histories of Canadian National Railways and Trans-Canada Air Lines—Air Canada are classic examples of this. Canadian National Railways was made a Crown corporation not because the Government of the day thought there was a need for a publicly-owned national railway system but because the Government wanted to bail out five bankrupt railway companies. The Crown corporation started off with a debt of something in the order of \$1.5 billion, which in 1922 or 1923 was a sizeable sum in today's terms. It was done for that reason only. The bondholders and the banks got their money and the taxpayers have paid ever since.

During the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1950s and the early 1960s, we heard the hue and cry how Canadian National was losing money and Parliament would have to vote to give it \$200 million or \$800 million. Since I came to the House, every