

Financial Administration Act

questions on the record. The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) has indicated to me that if she is not back in the House in time, she would be more than happy to respond in writing to the questions of the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I have two points to make. The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands mentioned that much would be done by regulations and she pointed out that the regulations had not been tabled with the Bill. Of course, that is true because regulations are seldom tabled. However, at second reading debate the Minister indicated that at the committee stage the regulations drawn to the Bill would be made available to committee members. I think that is a good procedure to follow so that the members will know exactly what the regulations provide for. Certainly the Government is prepared to co-operate in every way in that regard.

● (1510)

The Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands also suggested that the Bill really does not provide proper parliamentary accountability. I would like to point out that this Bill does provide for a great deal of parliamentary accountability. The Minister has to table the corporate plan, including the details of not only the parent Crown corporation but subsidiary Crown corporations. There is a great deal of information there. The operating budgets of the parent corporation and the subsidiaries have to be tabled in the House and stand automatically referred to the appropriate standing committee. Directives that are made by a Minister of the Government to Crown corporations would have to be tabled in the House. I would be interested in knowing in the debate that is going on whether the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands favours the position of the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), who thinks that those directives which relate to the CBC and the Canadian Film Development Corporation should not relate to programming, whereas other Members on the opposite side seem to suggest that there should be a wide discretion to make directives relating to programming.

The annual report of the Crown corporation and subsidiaries would have to be tabled in the House. Of course the auditor's report, and a new feature, the annual summary of all Crown corporations, would be tabled by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray). These, of course, would be referred to the appropriate standing committee.

The Hon. Member also mentioned amendments. It is important to note that the Government is fully prepared at committee stage to consider constructive and positive amendments from Hon. Members opposite. We are, of course, anxious to move to committee stage so that we can hear those suggestions.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not here when the Hon. Member began his comments. He will understand that I had to meet with a school class from Kingston and the Islands for a few minutes just outside the Chamber. I therefore missed a bit of what he had to say.

Very briefly, the first question that he asked this morning was about the numbers that I used when I was quoting figures with regard to Crown corporations. I want to tell him that those figures came from a document entitled *Crown Corporations and other Canadian Government Corporate Interests*, issued by Treasury Board in December, 1982. He used some other figures, and I know they are broken down into categories, but the information that I took from that document totals the figure of 315, which I used. It may be that that figure has changed since December, 1982.

With regard to the question of accountability, which is really the major one that we are discussing here, I would say in response to the Hon. Member that nothing shows me the need for greater accountability, accountability that I think is still lacking in this Bill, than the questions that I raised during Question Period and the responses from the Minister who was speaking on behalf of the granddaddy of all Crown corporations—the Canadian Development Investment Corporation. He not only did not seem to comprehend what the questions were all about, but he rather shrugged them off.

We were talking about bonuses paid to executive officers of Crown corporations at a time when they are cutting back on their staff and causing lay-offs. This seems to me just incredible from the point of view of any kind of accountability. How does the Parliament of Canada get legitimate responses for a situation like that? This Bill still would not provide for the Members of this House to get legitimate answers to a situation such as that. That is the difficulty that I have with this Bill.

Earlier the Hon. Member asked whether or not I would agree with joint ventures and how I would bring those under a Bill, since I had indicated that I would favour moving into more control than is exerted now where both public and private funds were involved. I would say to him that as long as public funds—the taxpayers' money, not the money of the Government, not the money of the Members of Parliament and not the money of this Chamber, but the taxpayers' money—are involved, I feel there must be a much stricter means of holding companies, Crown corporations and individuals who work for them, accountable, much more than appears to be the case in this Bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): That is the end of the ten-minute period for questions and comments. For continuing debate, the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada (Mr. Evans).

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question which was just raised about the number of Crown corporations, I think there is still a bit of confusion. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary's question related to whether or not the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) believed that the same rules for accountability as outlined in Bill C-24 should apply in cases of partial interest or joint venture where the Crown does not own a 100 per cent interest in a corporation. For example, in the case where Petro-Canada—I think the Hon. Member used that exam-