

Government Orders

power of the private and unregulated marketplace, in free market forces to produce beneficial results, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

It is fine to have a philosophy; it is fine to have a principle to operate from but if it blinds you to the actual result of specific policies, that is simply blind dogma and doctrine which can lead down a path to our entire destruction as a nation. This country was built in spite of market forces and in spite of the marketplace. Nobody looking at a map and knowing the demographics of Canada could believe that this country was ever created because it made economic sense; it never has; it was an act of political will for social, political and philosophical reasons. A number of people from sea to sea decided that they wanted to build a nation in this half of the North American continent that was somewhat different in its priorities and principles from its neighbour to the south. It was built in spite of those market forces that tend to pull all the links north and south. If we give up yet another instrument that allows us to develop our own resources for our own use and profit as a people, then we are led to believe that this doctrine and this dogma are leading us down the path of disintegration and the government ought to know better.

There are three amendments currently before us. One is that the chairperson and members of the board of directors of the corporation must be Canadian residents. Surely, in this day and age, that is not too much to ask. It does not guarantee anything but at least it is a beginning.

Motion No. 14A would change the limit of foreign ownership from 25 per cent to 1 per cent of all shares. Now members opposite may say: "Well, that is unrealistic, given their purpose", but what is their purpose? Should the Canadian energy industry, or at least a significant part of it, serve the interests of Canadians or not? There is the principle of its development at stake.

Motion No. 19 prohibits foreign governments or their agencies from owning Petro-Canada shares. We have seen a number of examples, over the period of just the last few weeks of how other corporations which have been sold off by this government, now have applications for ownership or, in fact, have been sold to agencies of the German government, the French government, almost any government, except the Canadian government.

That has happened in the research and development area, airline industries, and a number of other areas.

Why do we have a country? What is next? Is it telephones tomorrow? We know about the hearings that are going to take place in a few short months, apparently having to do with introducing competition into the area of telephone services across the country. Where does that lead us? It will likely mean that rural Canada, once more, is going to pay the price for this government's dogma and doctrine.

As a social democrat, I have always believed that if it works, do it; if it could work better, change it, and if it does not work, scrap it. That is the nature of my philosophy as long as it is consistent with responsible government, belief in a democracy. It is not the kind of blind faith, blind doctrine and blind dogma that we see from the other side of the House. The most dangerous kind of politician is the one who believes in his own b.s. Those guys tend to do it; they are a danger to Canada. It is ending with this kind of legislation that we have before us and sooner or later somebody has to put a stop to them.

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening for a few hours now to members of the opposition and I got a big charge out of the last speaker. His philosophy is: if it ain't workin' scrap it. If that were the case, they would have got rid of the post office a long time ago.

• (1530)

What has happened is this government came to power and put in people to run it. It is running much better now. Its efficiency rate has grown dramatically. The number of outlets in Canada has grown dramatically. Service is far better and it is making a profit.

I know members of the NDP hate that. It is a swear word to them. They plug their ears. Every time they hear the word profit, they say: "Oh, horrors". In any event, had we adopted the hon. member's philosophy of if it ain't working scrap it, I am afraid we would not have a national postal system today.

I have listened to the ideologues on the other side talking about Petro-Canada, our national oil company, and how important it is in the over-all scheme of things. I remind the House of a few facts. Petro-Canada is one of between 2,500 and 3,000 energy companies in Canada. I want that to be very clearly understood. It is not a monopoly on the industry. I know members of the NDP