

Teleglobe Canada

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member for his comments.

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, it never fails to surprise me that an Hon. Member would rise to emphasize—

Mr. Gauthier: Quality.

Mr. Skelly: He says quality. Things that are of quality are generally self-evident and, as good as he is, we do not need the Hon. Member to call it to the attention of the House.

Mr. Gauthier: We'll get up after your speech too.

Mr. Skelly: Of course, the Hon. Member's willingness to rise after my speech to point out its jewels could be forgone as well.

The amendment before the House is one that makes good common sense and should be supported by every Member of the House. It calls on the company to recognize established pension benefits that have been earned to date by its employees in a satisfactory pension program. Certainly that makes common sense and is worth support in every quarter of the House.

In a letter to the Minister, the Canadian Overseas Telecommunications Union drew the Minister's attention to the fact that during recent telecommunications privatization processes in the United Kingdom, France and Malaysia, employee concerns were satisfactorily resolved before any bids were entertained and the union sees no reason why this just and equitable method cannot be the norm in this country. I believe we really should put in place in this legislation a guarantee that would protect the employees. Although this did not occur in advance of the bids, there is certainly still time to do the honourable thing and to ensure that pension protection provisions are developed in a negotiated way by the employees and the company. We can ensure that this happens by prohibiting completion of the transaction in advance of those negotiations.

The question of the privatization of Teleglobe is an interesting one. It is my understanding that Teleglobe, operating as a Crown corporation, handled international telecommunications. It was almost a public utility which guaranteed that Canadians controlled their communications linkages. In the present Government's rather undignified haste to fulfil its right-wing philosophical point of view, it would appear to be casting off an extremely important Crown corporation. It is placing into private hands a virtual public utility. The main customers of this organization will now have an option to use Teleglobe's Canadian operations or simply to bypass them. It would appear that down the road, those companies in Canada that depend upon that communications linkage can use the United States or other places in order to bypass that linkage. It does not seem to be very desirable to remove this control Canadians have over their communications linkages.

In the mood of privatization, we are anticipating down the road the Petro-Canada and the Air Canada manoeuvres. I understand that an announcement will be made on April 10. I wonder if the Minister might enlighten us as to some of her plans so that initial discussions with Canadians about these two very important Crown corporations can take place.

The precursors of this Government's actions have already occurred in British Columbia. No common sense was used in the disposing of government assets; there was simply a philosophy that the Government cannot own assets in the private good, and the B.C. Government wanted to dump as many as it could. It certainly did. The BCRIC experience harmed employees, caused unemployment and caused economic dislocation. All those people Bill Bennett was going to treat to a lesson on how the free enterprise system worked bought shares at \$6 and then experienced a disaster. Now Bill Bennett's successor will take privatization a step further. He is attempting to privatize the B.C. ferry system and is talking about selling it off piecemeal.

Mr. Andre: Gorbachev and all kinds of people are doing it.

Mr. Skelly: The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Andre), in his usual helpful manner, has diverted the entire discussion into outer space where he generally spends most of his time. In any event, the British Columbia precursors to this Government's endeavours have been complete disasters. I would predict, as have many others in the House, that the same kind of disasters will be experienced by the federal Government on a national basis.

There has been talk of privatizing Petro-Canada. There was a massive inquiry into the petroleum industry done by the competition branch. The upshot of that was that Canadians should have a window into the industry, an effective control over the development and direction of that industry. It would appear that the Government opposes that. The Government would just as soon turn control back to the seven major oil companies, the seven sisters.

Mrs. Sparrow: Back to industry.

Mr. Skelly: Back to industry, the industry that controlled this country and shafted it beyond anything that could ever be considered reasonable. We see where the Government is in the polls. Somehow there is a lapse in the Government's logic. It does not seem to see that its philosophy and actions have created in the minds of Canadians a reputation so low that we must ask if the Government still has the right to govern this country. When the Government is at 20 per cent and change in the polls, can it make decisions that have such fundamental negative impacts on Canada? The privatization activities, the failure to consider employee pension plans and the failure to consider long-term economic impacts on Canada have led the Government into a position in the polls which indicates that it no longer enjoys the confidence of the majority of Canadians. The Conservatives are the fourth Party in Canada. From having had a massive public endorsement and from having