

Energy, Mines and Resources

camp far away from their homes and families. There is little social disruption. Renewables and conservation do not impinge on the native rights or lifestyles. There are a lot of attractive sides to the proposition, and we should be moving in that direction.

We cannot shut off the pump, as was done in Quebec yesterday, and say, "We are not going to sell any more gasoline". No one is suggesting that we should get away from the internal combustion engine. We are suggesting, however, that our energy policy is lopsided, if not wrongheaded. It is going in the wrong direction for the twentieth century. The population of the world today is ten times what it was in our grandparents' time.

Earlier today the minister spoke about helping the developing countries. But Mr. Speaker, there are, for instance, 15 million people in Kenya and within 10 years they will run out of fuel. That does not mean oil and gas for their cars, or nuclear power or whatever. They do not have any power grids so they are not concerned with nuclear energy. They are concerned with wood, and their forests will be gone in 10 years.

We do not seem to realize how our energy appetites have changed, Mr. Speaker. The use of non-renewable energy is a relatively new practice. Coal was discovered and began to be used in fair amounts in 1780, only 200 years ago; natural gas in 1820; oil in 1870—and we are nearly out of that source already. Of course we will hunt for more, but everyone knows that it is finite. We did not discover hydro until 1890 and nuclear energy until 1950.

As a nation that is absolutely loaded, absolutely spoiled with resources, we should be giving leadership to other countries on how to turn the energy mix around. I do not think that this bill or any of the bills in the package, is designed to do that. It is designed to carry on our energy gluttony like a drunken sailor. We are continuing to consume vast amounts of energy for reasons we probably cannot defend in a world of over three billion people. I would ask hon. members to think about that.

I do not know whether we convince anybody with our speeches but I do know that if we do not change our ways they will be changed for us. I think we have almost 20 years to do something about this. It would be a mistake to lust after the same kind of energy system that we have had for the past 30 years. We should be doing more in the realm of conservation and alternatives while we have the chance.

We like some of the things in this bill, Mr. Speaker, but we deplore the lack of accountability and the way the minister is proceeding. We like some parts but we do not like others so we are not going to vote for it and we will continue to speak against it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes available to me I should like to make some comments on the bill before the House. I think that the government sometimes becomes unduly complacent about the activities of

Crown corporations and specifically about Crown corporations that seem to become almost sacred cows or pets within the government organization itself.

I need only cite the case of Consolidated Computer Inc. Most members of the government will shudder at that example of mismanagement. Only a few months ago we learned for the first time that the people of Canada would be required to write off a further \$94 million of indebtedness. Until then, there had been no disclosure of that type of liability.

I mention that example because the bill before us tonight would give unbelievable power to the government of the day to create more Crown corporations virtually at will. I think that we must press the government on two points, Mr. Speaker. If it feels that parliament should empower it to create such Crown corporations, then I believe there should be a suitable Crown corporations act which would ensure that in future they are administered properly. The possibility of such legislation has been discussed at length in the House and in committees, and from time to time the government has given lip service to the concept. We have yet to see such a bill, and in fact there is every indication that the idea has at best been stalled or perhaps even killed. There is little likelihood of it being presented in this parliament, apparently.

I suggest that the absence of such a bill warrants every member of the House saying to the minister that he refuses to give the minister authority to bring new Crown corporations into existence until a bill is produced that will ensure better administration and control of them in the future.

Is it not odd that we are being asked to approve legislation which would give the government virtually carte blanche to create Crown corporations when it is not even clear that they would be included in the schedule to the Financial Administration Act as is the normal practice? That is another deficiency in the bill, or at least it is a deficiency in the legislative program offered by the government to the House.

I remember when this party was in power, Mr. Speaker, that I was startled by the answer when I asked how many Crown corporations there were. The public servant I questioned answered with a straight face, "Frankly, we cannot tell you." First of all I thought he was joking and meant that we had better start counting them. But he was not joking; the previous government had literally lost control to the point that it did not know what Crown corporations were being incorporated at will by various departments. Now the government is asking us to pass a bill that will authorize it to continue creating Crown corporations as it was doing, rather quietly and secretly, within its departments.

Let me give you an example of how that was done, Mr. Speaker, connected with Consolidated Computer Inc. In that case the government decided it needed a finance vehicle, so it incorporated the company. The shares were actually given to three hospitals in Toronto, which were never even informed that they were the beneficiaries.