

Government Orders

The Financial Times has some advice for Bob Rae, as well as John McLeod. It is saying, "Listen, Mr. Bob Rae, listen Mr. New Democratic Party and Mrs. New Democratic Party, you will have to find a better way to preserve domestic control of strategic companies and sectors." There must be a better way. It has nothing to do with shareholdings. It has nothing to do with ownership. It has to do with legislative control. You can control corporations, as Bob Rae now knows, by legislation. You can make corporations do what is in the public interest by legislation. You do not have to worry about ownership.

We found out with Petro-Canada that it does not make a bit of difference. Petro-Canada explores where Petro-Canada wants to explore. Petro-Canada sells what Petro-Canada wants to sell. Petro-Canada charges what Petro-Canada wants to charge. It did not do us any good in the Parliament of Canada or across Canada to have this window in the industry. We might as well recognize it and let the commercial forces take control as they have in the past.

I hope the New Democratic members have learned a lesson from their friend, Bob Rae. I hope they will be practical. Ideology is nice, but let us face facts.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. member for Comox—Alberni, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk—Supply Management; the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby—Status of Women; the hon. member for Saint-Henri—Westmount—Health.

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I suppose I feel very much like the previous New Democratic speaker and the member for Winnipeg—Transcona did in speaking on this privatization bill. Having seen what the Conservative government has done to the country and to its fundamental institutions over the last several years, a lot of people in the country have serious and grave doubts as to whether the country is going to continue to exist for much longer after the systematic attack that has been taken on the fundamental institutions of Canada.

Before I get into the actual detail of the amendments and the bill itself, I would like to talk a bit about the comments that have been made about ideology by the last few speakers on the Conservative side. It might be

worth-while to recall to those speakers that the New Democratic Party has not nationalized a single corporation or set up a single corporation federally in the country.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, as the Tories admitted in the debate yesterday and in previous days, was set up by the R. B. Bennett Tory government back in the 1920s and 1930s. Canadian National Railways, back in 1923, was set up, I believe, by a Liberal government of the day. Air Canada was set up as one of the projects of C. D. Howe, a Liberal cabinet minister.

In looking at the provincial story, Mr. Speaker, you will recall as a member from Alberta, that the Pacific Western Airlines was at one time nationalized by Peter Lougheed, one of the great free enterprisers of Canada.

In my recollection of British Columbia history, B.C. Electric, which is an offshoot of the Power Corporation of Canada, was nationalized by W. A. C. Bennett and his Social Credit Party, the so-called free enterprise party of British Columbia, which was formed back in the early 1950s when the Liberals and the Tories jumped into bed with each other and nationalized the power company.

The simple fact is that Crown corporations are not set up on the basis of ideology. The vast majority of Crown corporations in Canada were set up because the government of the day, regardless of political stripe, recognized a need that was not being fulfilled by the private sector. It said that in the absence of investment by the private sector, the government has to take action in order to develop the country, move the country ahead, and achieve the kind of progress that we are looking for. As a result, those governments of those days—whether Conservative, Liberal, Social Credit, or even New Democrat—got involved in the nationalization or the establishment of Crown corporations.

• (1610)

We did the same thing in British Columbia when we were in government. We set up an insurance corporation. That insurance corporation in fact brought a financial centre to Vancouver based on hundreds of millions of dollars of premiums that in the past went to Zurich, New York, or Hartford, Connecticut. We repatriated that money to the benefit of British Columbians and it was the basis of a financial centre in Vancouver that has grown and thrived to this present day. It was done strictly on a pragmatic basis. It has nothing to do with ideology.