

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre) (for Mr. Burton) moved:

That Bill C-219, an act to establish the Canada Development Corporation, be amended by deleting clause 39.

He said: In the absence of the hon. member for Regina East it becomes my pleasure to move this motion No. 10 which asks that clause 39 of Bill C-219 be deleted. Clause 39 of this bill is the one that would permit the sale to the Canada Development Corporation of four corporations already in existence which are government owned. The four are: Polymer Corporation Limited, Eldorado Nuclear Limited, Panarctic Oils Limited and Northern Transportation Company Limited. I referred to the four as being government owned; there is of course the qualification that in the case of Panarctic Oils Limited there is a consortium of which the government is a member.

We feel very strongly that this clause should be omitted from the bill because this very provision brings into focus the thing that we regard as essentially wrong with Bill C-219. Polymer Corporation and Eldorado Nuclear Limited are very successful corporations wholly owned by the people of Canada. They are not run for the purpose of private profit but because of a need for the products they produce. If they were sold to the Canada Development Corporation we would regard it as a regressive step; instead of being publicly owned in their entirety they would be owned in part by the public and in part privately. That would bring them within the general purpose of the Canada Development Corporation which is to make a profit rather than to serve the interests of the people of Canada as a whole. That is why we do not like this provision in Bill C-219. We pointed this out in the debate on second reading and we have pointed it out repeatedly throughout discussions on Bill C-219. As I have already said, we feel that this clause brings into sharp relief the difference between our view of a Canada development corporation and the view that the government has placed before us in this legislation.

I am well aware of the fact that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance has not felt that he had to reply to two or three of the debates that have taken place today on amendments, but I hope he realizes that this one is very important. He has an obligation to demonstrate any reason, if there is one, why clause 39 should remain in the bill. From our point of view it should not be there and that is why this amendment is before the House.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, in some remarks I have made about public corporations in Canada I have noted that the Liberal government seems to harbour a death wish with regard to almost every public corporation it has established. That party is so ideologically bent—twisted perhaps is more appropriate—to the idea of free enterprise that when they operate as a government they operate most inefficiently. It seems almost as if they want the entities they create to fail. After all, their ideology is that only the free enterprise

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system and only the profit motive have merit, so everything government does is bad. It almost seems as if they want this scheme to fail in order that they can say, "See, we told you everything governments do is bad. Whatever governments touch does not work out." Actually, almost everything this government has touched has not worked out for the above reason. I do not say that the government does this consciously, but the effect is the same. They seem to set out to destroy the very things they create in the public sector.

The Liberals have sought, from the beginning, to dismantle certain entities. I am talking about entities like Polymer Corporation, Eldorado, Northern Transportation Company, and so on. This does not hold true so much for Panarctic Oils, which has been a recent development. The Liberals tried to get rid of Polymer, but there was such a public uproar that they abandoned the attempt. Why in the world would you want to get rid of organizations like that which have more than proved the point that public enterprise can be successful and which have more than demonstrated how valuable government intervention in the economy can be. It almost seems as if the existence of such organizations is a condemnation of the particular liberal philosophy the Liberal party espouses. The organizations stand there as symbols of success. They show what government can do, and that is more than the Liberal party can stand.

If the Canada Development Corporation idea is good in itself, why must the government take successful Crown corporations and throw them into the CDC pot? The suspicion inevitably arises that without these public corporations CDC will not be successful and will not be attractive to investors, that the government hopes to induce people to invest in CDC by taking corporations which are now the common property of all Canadians and turning them over to a small group of private investors. That idea, Mr. Speaker, is shameful. There is no evidence to support the notion that Polymer cannot function well and effectively on its own, without the CDC. This is equally true of Eldorado and the Northern Transportation Company. Look at the financial statements of these corporations. You will find that Polymer has consistently returned a profit to the Canadian public, that it has built up a substantial reserve and that it has been of great benefit to everyone in Canada. The corporation now has sufficient money to enable it to acquire other businesses, which it is in the course of doing. There is no evidence that Polymer needs the CDC but there is considerable evidence to indicate that the "nonsense" corporation this government calls the CDC needs Polymer very badly.

I am very interested in Polymer. I admire the company. It has served Canada well. In terms of its relationships with its employees, it has tended to perform better than other corporations in our society. Recently Polymer had to lay off employees and it handled those lay-offs in a way that was infinitely better than the way other corporations handled that problem. There was a genuine attempt to ease the plight of employees. They were provided with severance pay and there were attempts to