

Energy, Mines and Resources

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-101 concerns new energy corporations. One would think that such an innocuous sounding piece of legislation would quickly find support in the House, perhaps from all sides. However, what is buried in the few meagre pages of this bill is another blow to the already reeling institution of the House. The long fingers of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde), grubbing it seems for additional powers, have left their grimy prints all over this legislation. The stamp of executive power is visible throughout the bill to those few Members of Parliament who will actually take the time to read and honestly address its contents. The minister has obviously convinced his colleagues in the Liberal Party that he requires all the extraordinary powers spelled out, not only in this bill but in its predecessor, Bill C-48. Who knows what the ultimate scheme is? However, it is clear that the Liberals have chosen to put Canada's future in jeopardy by pursuing only oil and gas megaprojects at the cost of alternate energy, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. As you may have surmised by now, Mr. Speaker, almost all of Canada's economy is being thrown to the winds, along with the people who work in industries outside of the petroleum industry.

The drive behind this legislation and Bill C-48, and the bulk of the Liberal policy on energy in this session, is narrowly designed to maximize tax revenues to Ottawa at the cost of the public interest, regions, wildlife and environment. I might remind the minister of what he said to me in the House on third reading of Bill C-48 where I put forward a proposal to have a definition of a "spill". Hopefully we will not have a spill, but if we do, at least there would be some way that those people who lost their livelihood, had their beaches damaged or endangered, could obtain redress in the courts. The minister said that my proposed definition of 100 litres was perhaps too high, that he might want to support ten litres. So the hon. member for Nunatsiak (Mr. Ittinuar) and I promptly informed the minister that we would support ten litres; we thought it was a good idea to go lower. Mr. Speaker, such amendment was not supported by that side and was never put forward by the minister. He shied away from even something as small as that to protect the public interest, all in the name of having the power in the minister's hands and within the bureaucracy.

Mr. Lalonde: Not ten litres—one drop!

Mr. Fulton: The minister would now like to have it down to one drop. That is not in Bill C-48, and that bill is now law.

Mr. Lalonde: It covers everything, including one drop.

Mr. Fulton: Well, the minister has perhaps not read the provision as carefully as I have, but I note that many of the expert witnesses who came before the committee, people who are far more expert than he or I, indicated there was a requirement for a spill definition.

The drive behind this bill, and Bill C-48, is an attempt to move into the jurisdiction, not only of the offshore areas but north of 60. It is both a geographical grab in Bill C-48 and a jurisdictional grab in this legislation now before us. Bill C-102

is based on the concept of a negative resolution procedure, that is, the delivery of power to cabinet where, by order in council and without notification to Members of Parliament, Crown corporations large and small can be spawned. If the process is to be seen as and is to be democratic, it must be reversed. Proposals for new Crown corporations must first come before the House, not after they have been designed and delivered. If the minister wants to have the capacity to create speedily Crown corporations or anything else, the rules of the House need to be changed. I find this institution almost impossible to operate in because it moves so ponderously and slowly.

Mr. Lalonde: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fulton: It is no longer capable of responding to the interests certainly of my constituency, which is the same size as France. I have to serve 100,000 Canadians in 350,000 square miles, and I know what their interests are and I know how to put it together in legislation. I know the government cannot deliver there; the vote at the polls demonstrates that where they now get less than 20 per cent of the vote. So what the minister is opting for, obviously supported by the Liberal Party, is to make this end run around Parliament, bring in the guillotine and have the right to pass legislation against the will of every Member of Parliament. I think we have to look at it very carefully, Mr. Speaker, and I know the House has to vote against Bill C-102. Anyone who votes for Bill C-102 is voting against democracy in Canada.

Mr. Riis: And for tyranny.

• (1610)

Mr. Fulton: The paranoia of the Liberal Party becomes highly visible with the inclusion of closure or the guillotine in Section 7, subsection (4), making a debate of three hours on a corporation which might well be financed to the tune of billions, as we saw with Petro-Canada yesterday, increased financing of \$6.5 billion. It could be in a very vast field, Mr. Speaker. We have no way of knowing that the Crown corporation set up under the Canada Business Corporations Act under any of these sections, whether it is to explore, develop, produce, gather or refine, process, purchase, sell, import, export, distribute, store, transport, or otherwise deal in all sorts of fuel and energy, or to produce, distribute, market, and so on. And so it goes on.

One thing that we all know is that once a Crown corporation is set up under the Canada Business Corporations Act, even if it is done under Bill C-102, once it is in operation, it may operate for one minute in the energy field, as the minister tells the House it will. But then it could go into any purview that it desires. So what this really is, and it must be seen for what it is, is a cornerstone, a tip, a toe, allowing the government to set up, against the interests of the House, against the interests of the nation, Crown corporations in any field that are financed solely by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources making a phone call to the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen). That is what it is, and it is completely unacceptable.