

Time Allocation

services at all for the people of Canada. They certainly do not answer for the Crown corporations for which they are responsible.

Let me give a most recent illustration of this. On May 3, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie) directed a question to the Minister allegedly responsible for Canada Post. He drew to his attention comments made by the Auditor General, in particular those with respect to the storing without sorting of some 54 trailer loads of mail to which that Crown corporation had not attended. As reported on page 3376 of *Hansard*, the allegedly responsible Minister said:

As for the question asked by the Hon. Member, I shall refer it to the President of Canada Post Corporation.

Given the way in which Government Members would prefer to respond to issues, I can well imagine that they will be most satisfied when they are in a position where they can avoid any responsibility for any departmental function which they perform by creating Crown corporations out of those departments. Where they cannot or, where they can intrude into the private sector, into the free enterprise system which has produced the wealth that is sucked away by the Government to fund the folly of corporate activities, they are best served by their own manoeuvres.

Mr. De Bané: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is the Hon. Member aware that the new corporation, the Canada Post Corporation, is no longer a burden upon the taxpayers of the country and that it has a balanced budget—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Order, please. I suggest that the Hon. Minister should speak to the Chair concerning his point of order, if he has one to raise.

● (1620)

Mr. Gamble: I commented earlier with respect to the last Liberal Member who spoke. I will respond in a similar fashion with respect to the Minister, who seems to be similarly unfamiliar with the rules of this House. I hope that my time will be extended as a consequence of these improper interruptions. If the Minister believes, when the people of Canada are paying an exorbitant cost for this mailing service, that they are not being overtaxed, the Minister should wake up, be it morning or afternoon, and recognize the serious burden that is placed on the taxpayers of this country by the Crown corporation of which I spoke.

One issue which surely must concern us as we examine this Bill is whether accountability is really brought to bear upon the activities of Crown corporations. One thing might have been done to achieve that alleged objective; that is, to define "auditor" as it appears in the definition clause as being the Auditor General and not as it appears "including a partnership of auditors".

When I served on the Public Accounts Committee, we encountered a great difficulty. It was that every commercial Crown corporation created by government desires to avoid the scrutiny of the Auditor General and have but a simple attest audit for all of its activities. It is so comfortable for that to be

the case because private sector auditors have no responsibility to this House. They have but a responsibility to the board. They tell us that is where the responsibility lies.

If this Government is serious and really wants to make Crown corporations accountable to this place, it ought to amend this offensive piece of legislation to provide that the Auditor General of Canada is the auditor of all Crown corporations. Only then can Members of this House be assured that they will be in the position where they can extract the right information about the way in which the taxpayers' money is consistently being wasted.

I said that I would refer to a number of clauses which clearly indicate the way in which, by regulation only and not by laws passed in this House, the affairs of Crown corporations are to be governed. Let me refer to a few of them.

Under Clause 2.1, the very determination of the corporations to which this Act applies will be made by Order in Council. Subsection 202(1), Section 108, the powers of agents with respect to the disposal of the property of Crown corporations is determined by regulation. Section 118, the remuneration of offices and Section 134, budgets and operating plans, will be determined by Order in Council.

The suggestion by the President of the Treasury Board that he will submit a draft of the proposed regulations is of no comfort to the people in this place. Any draft submitted can be changed the next day. Every Member of this House recognizes that very simple fact. I urge that Members have some regard for the welfare of the people who are carrying the burden of this piece of legislation when they vote on it.

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of disgust that I stand to speak to this Bill today because there are people speaking who really do not know what is in the Bill. They are so naive that they do not know what the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) is doing, especially to those in western Canada. If the Minister really had wanted to do something, he would have copied or compared an acceptable Bill, such as the one my colleague, the Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty), presented when he was a Minister in the Clark Government. If the Government had brought forward a Bill like that, it would have been acceptable.

Members opposite forget that the insolvency Bill passed second reading of this House with one day's debate because it was as good a Bill as this House could put together. That was done by Members of all three Parties. We had input. This is where the Government is going wrong. It is going along on the same dumb pattern it has been following. It is as simple as that.

We are very distrustful of this Government. We had promises from the Government during the Crow debate. The farmers in western Canada know exactly what the Crow debate has done and is doing. It raises the cost of moving their grain. It is an expense that they can ill afford at this time. I quote Clause 17 of the Bill: