

be ministerial responsibility for the way in which that money is expended. Those things are the very underpinnings of our political system and are the things to which the Bill should be addressing itself. That is why we have urged that the Government come to grips with this issue and that is why we have waited so long for the Government to do so. I must say that having advocated greater control over Crown corporations for so long, it is a great disappointment to see that the proposals in the present Bill do not provide the means by which these goals will be adequately realized.

Because the Bill is so full of shortcomings, my colleagues on this side of the House and the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) in particular have articulated our opposition to this particular piece of legislation and pointed out its defects. What is perhaps most disturbing to me is the realization that this is not simply an isolated incident. In fact, the objections that we have made to this particular Bill are almost identical to those which have been made with regard to other pieces of legislation which have recently come before the House and some which are currently before the House. Bill C-24, which deals with Crown corporations, is only the latest example of the Government missing an opportunity.

The Bill attempts to deal with a problem which is crying out for meaningful reform but all it contains are cosmetic changes. We have seen that happen not only with this Bill but with others. The Minister has stated that Bill C-24 is designed to strengthen the control and accountability of Crown corporations. However, he neglected to tell us that the Bill does not affect all Crown corporations. There are currently some 315 Crown corporations listed by the Government but this Bill deals only with 183 of them. Another 108 Crown corporations are not mentioned at all. There are a number of mixed and joint enterprise and their subsidiaries which are not affected by the provisions of this Bill. As well, a number of the provisions in the Bill could exempt many of the affected Crown corporations from the public scrutiny.

There are many important matters which are not touched upon by this Bill. For instance, there are no rules regarding the spawning of completely autonomous subsidiaries; the Parliamentary Secretary just made mention of that. The Bill does not come to grips with the increasing prominence and influence of state-controlled corporations in the economy. In other words, the Bill does not accomplish the Government promises. In his press release, the Minister promised to strengthen the control and accountability of Crown corporations. I wish the Bill did that. However, it does not.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, little bits and pieces of the overall problem are being addressed but there is no comprehensive plan of action to deal with an extremely serious situation. The extent of the severity of that situation was made clear at least five years ago at the time of the report produced by the Lambert Royal Commission. The issue has been debated and raised time and time again since then. However, this is not the only example of the Government neglecting to come to grips in any meaningful way with a serious problem. I can say to the

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Minister whom I see in his seat that it has happened to others of his colleagues.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) recently brought in a Bill called the Canada Health Act which initially proposed to reform the entire health care system. It did no such thing. It tackled the problems of extra billing and user fees, something which was quite necessary, but it did not come to grips, at a time when it should have, with means to produce a more effective and efficient health care system, nor did it come to grips with the way that health care system should be funded. That particular Bill solved a few problems but, once again, it ignored the larger questions hidden below the surface. I would say that it did so to the detriment of all of us.

The same thing holds true with regard to Bill C-10 which is designed to amend the Divorce Act. That Bill is currently in the process of debate at second reading. The Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan) who is sponsoring that Bill has claimed that the amendments put forward in the Bill would make the process of divorce simpler, more equitable and more just. I would say that the need for that is undeniable. However, the Bill does not deliver what it promises to deliver in the same way that Bill C-24 does not deliver what it promises to deliver. The Bill which deals with the amendments to the Divorce Act could not in some measure make the legal aspects of divorce simpler. However, the effects of that Bill upon women and children could be devastating. The real problem was not dealt with in that particular piece of legislation.

Like the two Bills I have just cited, this Bill, which could have provided the opportunity for meaningful reform in an area that is in great need of attention, simply does not do the job that it set out to do. I would say that a large part of this failure is because of the way the Bill has been drafted. Rather than include strict rules and guidelines which would be incorporated directly into the Bill, the Government has chosen to use regulations as the means of controlling Crown corporations. Yet although it says it will use these regulations, we do not have the regulations. We do not know what is contained in the regulations; they were not tabled with the Bill.

• (1250)

I can only assume, therefore, that if the Bill were passed, all regulations would be made by Cabinet and away from public scrutiny. Once again, the accountability that the Government is speaking of and that we are demanding simply would not be there. It would mean that Cabinet would be the judge, jury and police officer all rolled into one. This would hardly be in keeping with the so-called objective of the Bill, as Cabinet could, I suppose, change the regulations whenever it saw fit.

As I have said, this is not an isolated incident in the way in which government introduces legislation to this House. The control that the Government seeks to have within Cabinet in this Bill is not very dissimilar from the bill dealing with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Bill C-9. Once again, in that piece of legislation the Government did not spell out what it meant with precision. For instance, such words as