

industry I can tell you it is possible because the prices are controlled at the refinery gates. We have a Crown corporation known as Petro-Canada which is a party to that conspiracy. Mr. Speaker, I do not use that word lightly. It was used by government investigators when they appeared before the oil pricing commission investigating combines as they pertain to the oil industry. There cannot be a fair marketing atmosphere when government Crown corporations are entering into long-term reciprocal agreements with other major oil companies in the private sector.

We all know that Air Canada is a Crown corporation. We know that it is competing in the private sector. When we set up Air Canada, as we did the CBC, we did so to enable ourselves to supply services and product, as the case may be, in areas which the private sector could not serve as well. Today we have government administering businesses and competing in the private sector with subsidized tax allowances from the people in order to do this.

In conclusion, whenever we have this kind of legislation we must be very careful that it is protecting the consumer. I do not think there is sufficient control spelled out in Bill C-24 to ensure that Crown corporations will become accountable to government or Parliament, not to the Minister but to all Members of Parliament, in order that we can properly scrutinize their activities and hold them accountable to the Canadian people.

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this motion to put this Bill over for six months. I am convinced that the Bill, as framed, is the Government's attempt to soothe Canadians and to fool them into believing that this Bill will bring the mass proliferation of Crown corporations under control. The fact of the matter is that it simply will not bring them back under control. Until we have a new government with a new cabinet approaching all of these problems from a new perspective, we will just have more of the same.

You will recall, Sir, that when I spoke earlier in the debate I pointed out that for a period of 100 years, from 1800 to 1930, there were not more than one dozen Crown corporations created. During the whole depression period there were only four or five created. During the wartime period, a time of great need, there were only about 30 Crown corporations created. For a period of some 20 years after the war we had maybe four or five Crown corporations created. Since the present Cabinet was sworn in we have come into what we call the proliferation period during which time there have been virtually hundreds of Crown corporations created. Under the guise of Canadianizing, we have borrowed money on the foreign market and bought back existing Crown corporations which were operating in the country.

• (1610)

The result is that Canadians owe \$76 billion to foreign lenders. That probably puts us into a worse category than Mexico or many of the other Third World countries which are

in very deep trouble today. We have absolutely destroyed our potential to become the leader in the world.

I want to give an example of one company, Petro-Canada, which is an abuse of the ordinary taxpayer, our uncles, aunts and friends, people who are at the end of the shovel and who believe that governments should do what is right. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Liberal Cabinet has breached the fiduciary responsibility they have to the people of this country. When the Cabinet set up that Crown corporation they borrowed money in foreign markets to give tax breaks to Petro-Canada which other corporations could not take advantage of. One of the senior deputy ministers was on the board of Petro-Canada and they put through a special debenture to take advantage of a tax loophole and the Government closed the loophole within 10 days so no one else could take advantage of it. That is how they financed Petro-Canada.

Petro-Canada then went out and took over Atlantic Richfield, Pacific Petroleum and Petrofina. They paid far more than the market would have dictated, which created an enormous benefit to the shareholders of those companies. They then used the money, not to build plants or anything like that and create jobs, but to buy government treasury bills. They made an absolute killing at 19.5 per cent of that fiscal year, 1981-82 or 1982-83, rather than create jobs.

There are the 100 per cent owned subsidiaries of Petro-Canada, Mr. Speaker. Arctic Pilot Project Inc., Canertech Inc., under which you have Canertech Conservation Inc., Pacific Enercon Ltd., Mechron Energy Ltd., 107744 Canada Inc., Omnifuel Gasification System, Petro-Canada Consulting Corporation, which is now inactive, and Petro-Canada Inc.. Under that we have Asher American, Inc., Big Eagle Oil & Gas Ltd., Aquilla Holdings Ltd., and Fifth Pacific Stations Ltd. They say that company is now inactive but remember as I list these corporations they each have to have a president, a board of directors and secretaries. These people are not there for the creation of new wealth or the finding of new oil; they are there to sustain the infrastructure, the bureaucracy. When the oil and gas industry, those 700 companies that were owned by our fellow citizens, come in and tell us that at one time they had three geologists and one accountant on their staff and now they have three accountants and one geologist, they are telling us the truth. That is how we have destroyed the oil industry.

Some more subsidiaries, Mr. Speaker: GMI Co. (Bahamas) Limited. What is Petro-Canada doing in the Bahamas? Opal Oils Limited, under which we have Commodore Oils Limited, First Pacific Stations Ltd., Second Pacific Stations Ltd., Third Pacific Stations Ltd., and Fourth Pacific Stations Ltd.. That reminds me, Mr. Speaker, that when Petro-Canada bought Petrofina it paid twice the market value for a few oil and gas leases and 1500 service stations, most of which are too close to Petro-Canada's own stations, and they are having to sell them. But Petrofina got to keep the petrochemical plant, which is where the future of the oil industry is. It is not the retail pump, it is in the petrochemical plant. Petrofina was paid double the market value of the shares and they got to keep the most important part of their operation. It is a criminal act.