

Canadian Commercial Corporation

this organization is doing. I am pleased that it is operating under the Department of Trade and Commerce. I would also agree with the financial critic of the opposition when he says that there should be not only a report but a tie-up with the report of the Department of Trade and Commerce, so that we would be able to place these accounts before parliament, and in turn before the public accounts committee for careful scrutiny. In this way we would be able to make a careful study as to whether the expenditures have been made along proper lines.

Then there is one other feature of particular concern to the area from which I come. I would draw to the attention of the Minister of Trade and Commerce the fact that the operations of this organization seem to centre to a large extent around this industrial province of Ontario. Most of the purchases are made here because of the close contact the organization has with the buyers and sellers in these Ontario organizations. While the minister might say that these organizations have their local representatives in the various sections of the country, the fact is we believe that sections outside Ontario are not given the same opportunity. I would urge upon the minister, under whose jurisdiction this organization comes, that greater consideration be given to the different sections of the country, particularly the very fine province of Nova Scotia, and the maritime provinces in general. We believe that many of the contracts given to other sections of the country rightly belong to the maritime provinces. Not only could we supply the goods, but we could supply them in a more efficient manner. I have in mind particularly supplies to the armed forces—the army, navy and air force. For instance, who would think of buying butter in Ontario or Quebec to serve troops in Nova Scotia? But deliveries of butter are being made daily from areas outside the maritime provinces to serve the forces in Halifax. It is almost ridiculous. But that is what has happened recently. I pointed out at the time that I did not think it would work to the satisfaction of the department or of the organization which was doing the buying. Of course the results were what I expected they would be. They were unable to supply eggs and butter in sufficient quantities to meet the daily requirements. I think greater interest should be shown by this organization in the purchase of local requirements from local concerns, and I urge the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) to consider this matter.

One other glaring example of lack of knowledge shown by certain officials was drawn to my attention only today. I do not

suppose the average member of the house knows what a wharf fender is. A wharf fender is made up of some sixty to eighty small logs which are tied together and used to protect both the wharf and the ship coming into the wharf. Only recently a local concern which had been supplying these fenders for years were told that logs were going to be brought in from British Columbia for this purpose. We have every respect for the type of lumber and logs produced in British Columbia, but we feel there is no justification for bringing logs from British Columbia to Nova Scotia when we have quantities of that type of log available.

I am not saying this in harsh criticism because I am in accord with the work being carried out. However, I wanted to bring these matters to the attention of the minister and the organization because I believe this organization should be concerned, not with the economy of one or two particular provinces but with the economy of the country as a whole. I intend to support this resolution.

Mr. E. G. Hansell (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, I suppose that we in this group will have to support this measure because it simply provides for the extension of these powers for a short time. We have no particular criticism to make of the operations of this corporation. However, I would like to put on the record my personal views with regard to crown companies generally. I am inclined to think that these companies simply take responsibility out of the government's hands, thus giving the government a way of escape. However, I do not think the government can altogether escape responsibility for the operations of crown companies generally.

Personally I am a private enterpriser, and I am proud of that. Crown companies are usually costly. They do not necessarily have to show a favourable balance because, generally speaking, they can take the position that it does not matter very much if they are in the red, the taxpayer will be there to foot the bill. I think the minister will admit that this bill is designed to help private industry and I think because of its very nature that it does help private industry.

The difference between crown corporations and private industry is that private industry must be efficient; it must provide service because it is competitive and it must show a profit or it will go broke. But if it does go broke that is its own business; it cannot call upon the taxpayers to foot the bill. Crown companies do not have to do these things. Even though they do not do them, they can still remain in business.

We have some glaring examples in Canada of crown companies that are sapping a good