

Eldorado Nuclear Limited

Mr. Parry: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) for his perceptive comments. Indeed, I would like to respond to the first part of his comments in which he was criticizing what I can only describe as the caricature that the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) made of the actual structure by which Crown corporations are managed.

It is of course entirely inappropriate for the Hon. Member for Calgary West to suggest that Members of Parliament or even members of the Government would be involved in an operational way in the management of Crown corporations. For him to caricature the real situation in this way I would say is an abdication of a parliamentarian's responsibility to describe, whatever his or her preconceptions, things as accurately as they know how.

As the Hon. Member for Regina West said, the situation is quite clear. The Government appoints a board of directors for a Crown corporation. The board of directors hires the management. The Government acts as the shareholder, whereas in a private situation there are many shareholders. But the principles of corporate organization remain the same. The board of directors instructs the management. The board of directors of course accepts direction in policy matters and policy matters only from the Government.

It may be that Tory Members have been getting involved in mischievous ways in attempting to interfere with and run Crown corporations. Maybe what we are hearing is not so much a caricature as perhaps a confession. I would have to point out that in provinces such as Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia, which have had the benefit of Crown corporations established by New Democratic Party and CCF Governments, those distinctions have been observed. Those distinctions have been made to work. Indeed, Crown corporations have been run in accordance with sound business principles.

If the Tories' plan is to deviate from that trend, then let them do so. When I hear the Hon. Member for Calgary West in response to a question about whether Petro-Canada is well managed or not say that it is poorly managed, then I say it is obvious that if that is a comment made on behalf of the Government and not one merely arising out of frustration, it is the responsibility of the Hon. Member to put that opinion and that analysis to the shareholder, which is the Government. After all, he represents the riding which is directly adjacent to where Petro-Canada has its headquarters.

He should make the Government the beneficiary of the knowledge and insight that he has into the operations of Petro-Canada. I am sure that the Government knows, even if the Hon. Member for Calgary West does not, the correct way to communicate such an opinion to the board of directors of Petro-Canada. The board of directors of Petro-Canada of course, if it agrees with the analysis, has the power to make those changes in management that it feels are appropriate under the circumstances.

Turning to the other part of the question, it is obvious that there are enormous costs out there, unestimated, unanalysed and unknown, for the Government if it sells off merely the assets of a corporation without selling off the liabilities as well. That is something that flies in the face and is totally contrary to sound business practice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time allotted for questions and comments has now terminated. Is the House ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The question is on the amendment of Mr. Benjamin. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those in favour of the amendment will please say ye.

Some Hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): All those opposed to the amendment will please say nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five Members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Call in the Members.

The House divided on the amendment (Mr. Benjamin) which was negatived on the following division:

● (1230)

(Division No. 317)

YEAS

Members

Benjamin
Blackburn
(Brant)
Blaikie

McDonald
(Broadview—
Greenwood)
Waddell
Althouse
Young

Heap
McCurdy
Parry
McLaughlin—11

NAYS

Members

Allmand
Andre
Axworthy
Belsher
Binns
Blenkarn

Bouchard
Boudria
Boyer
Caldwell
Cardiff

Clark
(Brandon—Souris)
Clifford
Collins
Comeau
Cook