

problem, \$66,000 could go a long way toward making individual Canadians who are experiencing difficulties more comfortable. I say that with particular reference to some farm and other business enterprises that I know from personal experience are having a great deal of difficulty at the present time.

● (1520)

It is difficult to deal with a business operation at arm's length. That is what we, as the elected representatives, are doing. We are dealing at arm's length with over 400 Crown corporations at the federal level and many more at the provincial level. In dealing with those organizations at arm's length, we have lost a degree of direct involvement and an understanding of that business operation.

When public funds are being used by these corporations, we in Parliament ought at least to have the financial accountability that should come with good management. We have lost that. All we ask in these amendments is that we not give the carte blanche which the Government has been giving to these Crown corporations over the past number of years. We are asking that they back up a little. We say that half of what the Government is asking for is plenty to last the corporation for at least the next decade, particularly in view of the number of cases it is involved with presently. There are not that many; 62 last year. We want an opportunity to look at this again before this Government agency spends that additional amount of public funds.

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice in support of the two motions presently being debated concerning the Export Development Corporation, specifically Bill C-110. As elected representatives of the people of Canada, we are accountable to the electorate. We are responsible, at least we are supposed to be, for the vast sums of money that flow through the hands of this Government.

As my colleagues who have already spoken on this issue have indicated, we are not against the fundamental purpose of the Export Development Corporation. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we are concerned with is the total lack of accountability that we as elected representatives have over the actions of the Export Development Corporation in particular and over Crown corporations in general. This is a matter of fiscal responsibility pure and simple.

Bill C-110 appears to be something we see all too often around this place. It is a carefully crafted piece of legislation, designed by bureaucrats hired by the Liberal Government, legislation that neatly does an end run around Parliament.

Parliament has become a terrible nuisance to this Government and to the ruling mandarins. It is something to be handled and manipulated, all the while giving the impression that it, Parliament, is still the voice of the people and that the best interests of the citizens are being looked after. Nothing could be further from the truth. The way in which this Bill is

Export Development Act

drafted is typical of legislation we continually see which pretends to "control" Crown corporations.

Last week, during the debate on Motion No. 1, we saw how this Bill proposes to edge out the private sector and can place a preponderance of bureaucrats on the board of directors. This establishes the power. Bureaucrats have almost as much disdain for self-made, successful private sector businessmen as they do for Members of Parliament.

It is interesting to speculate upon the expertise that could be called upon by the bureaucracy and appointed to the board. For example, I wonder if someone will find their way on to the board who previously worked for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This is a Department I have some familiarity with, and it is not uncommon to find capital projects completed with up to 500 per cent overruns. We do not have that problem in Indian Affairs any longer because we cannot get the computer print-outs. That is how they solved it. The bureaucrats responsible for these overruns are still on the job. If they had been civil engineers working for a city or town, I dare say they would have been fired.

Will they call upon the experts who presented us with Canadair? Will they second to EDC the civil service geniuses who masterminded the PetroCan takeover of Petrofina? Will they draw upon the wisdom of those who allowed the Canadian taxpayers to lose \$125 million on Consolidated Computer? Will they appoint to the board the now fluently bilingual Ed Clark because of his gift to Canada of the National Energy Program?

The track record of bureaucrats handling finances both in Government departments and Crown corporations is lamentable. It is difficult to feel any confidence in this type of management. It is no wonder that we rise in this place day after day and scream for some vestige, some shred, some tidbit of accountability. It is no wonder that 64 per cent of Canadians feel that Parliament is irrelevant. I am willing to bet that 64 per cent of Members of Parliament feel that Parliament is irrelevant.

In Motions Nos. 3 and 5 we see how it is proposed to open the purse strings so that billions of dollars in borrowing authority will be available for the board of directors to dispose of as it sees fit. We have heard from other speakers today that this amount of borrowing authority will last at least until the end of this decade. It is far more authority than is needed.

It is interesting to note how the Minister of State for International Trade (Mr. Regan) has so easily fallen prey to his own bureaucracy. In June he stated to the committee that he had complete confidence in his officials. He admitted that he does not keep a watching brief on outstanding loans. He trusts that his officials will alert him well in advance of any loan default. It sounds very similar to the Canadair fiasco. I would be willing to bet that the Minister will wake up some morning and read about an EDC loan default in the newspaper; that would be the first inkling he would have of the problem.