

*Petro-Canada*

voters, have far, far less access to the officers of the socialized enterprise than do the shareholders of the capitalistic enterprise. Yet socialist theory makes much of the image that the enterprise belongs to the "people". When does the President of Air Canada face the taxpayers and account for his stewardship? Indeed the more dogmatic the socialist theory becomes . . . the less access the "people" have to the operation of the socialized enterprises. Irony becomes tragedy.

If we are to have socialized enterprises, established for the benefit of the people, then clearly they should be operated for the people and not for the government of the day. Only in this way can the productivity of such enterprises be raised to the point where they are making their full potential contribution to the standard of living of the people. Fortunately the solution is simple and the means are at hand. Accountability must be increased and the involvement of the civil service network must be decreased. These ends can be met by having the people elect a board of directors for each socialized enterprise, with an annual report and annual public meeting and by having the government elect one-quarter of the directors.

I think that statement has a lot of merit, Madam Speaker. This bill will pass and we will continue to have Crown corporations, but it seems to me that a much improved system of checks and balances is needed to ensure that there is parliamentary control of objectives, general direction and financing, without unduly impairing the day to day operations of the corporation.

One method of improving the present state of affairs would be the adoption of certain principles followed in the United Kingdom such as the establishment of a select committee on nationalized industries. Such a committee would have wide powers, highly expert assistance and a permanent membership. Evidence would be heard in secret, but it would be published later along with a report. Officials of the Crown corporation would be informed in advance of the questions to be asked so that there would not be any possibility of witnesses being pilloried. The report would be unanimous and would be prospective as well as retrospective beyond parliamentary control and secrecy. All committee members would be bound by secrecy regarding the report and evidence, and all politics would be confined to the floor of the House. The committee could tackle one corporation or industry at a time. It could also examine the relations of those corporations with the public.

The advantages are obvious, Madam Speaker. For the public and parliament, the Crown corporations would come under effective scrutiny. The managers of these corporations would be relieved of undue ministerial interference and would have an opportunity to put forth their own point of view knowing that the committee was dealing with their operations in an objective fashion in the interests of the public, in the interests of parliament, and in the interests of true accountability.

If we are to continue to have a proliferation of Crown corporations in this country it is, I repeat, imperative that we also have the mechanism for parliament and its institutions to explore adequately and examine their activities.

As I have indicated, this bill will undoubtedly pass. But I do not believe that the bill is needed, Madam Speaker. It is difficult to understand why we have to establish another Crown corporation in our so-called free enterprise society. If the idea is to have a greater degree of Canadian ownership in this industry I have no argument against that. I think it would be better, however, to change the tax laws to make it more attractive for Canadians to invest,

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

and more attractive for oil companies to divest themselves of their shares and sell to Canadians.

The government seems determined to go full steam ahead with the bill as it stands, however, ignoring its built in dangers. Surely a more effective method of scrutiny should be considered. Many Canadians would find a greater degree of comfort if there were greater public scrutiny and, indeed, a better system involving parliamentary examination of the operations and objectives of this bill. If we fail to influence the government of the soundness of our reasons, the result will be nothing but increased debt for the taxpayers of Canada.

● (2140)

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** The minister wishes to speak. I remind the House that, if he speaks, he will close the debate.

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, before I commence my remarks may I ask the House to agree to something which I gather has been discussed by those responsible for House business, namely, that in view of the wish of the official opposition for a recorded vote on this matter, the vote shall not be taken this evening but shall be postponed until orders of the day are called tomorrow afternoon? If I have correctly interpreted the agreement, perhaps it could be made an order of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** Is it agreed that the recorded vote shall be taken tomorrow?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Madam Speaker, the prolonged speeches we have heard on this bill from the official opposition probably involve two essential points. The one which can be briefly stated is that, according to the official opposition, no responsible government, no responsible first minister, and no responsible minister of energy, mines and resources would bring forward a bill to propose the creation of an energy company under government auspices which would use public funds in order to supply energy in Canada. Repeated speeches made by those opposite condemned the government for proposing to go ahead, by the creation of this bill, and provide for further energy security for Canadians.

I am sure that other members, as I have, found it amusing to hear the Progressive Conservative party condemn the kind of proposition which has been adopted by the Premier of Alberta with the formation of the Alberta Energy Company, and by the Premier of Ontario by the creation of the Ontario Energy Company. Apparently those two gentlemen, for whom I have the highest respect and whom I look forward to meeting this week, are condemned by the official opposition for being horrendous and irresponsible.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Not at all. The government is condemned, not the premiers.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, it is clear both these gentlemen are socialists. Perhaps the hon. gen-