

*Energy, Mines and Resources*

I want to re-emphasize that we are mixing apples and oranges here. The bill talks about the Canada Business Corporations Act. If there is to be any accountability to Parliament, it should come under the Financial Administration Act. The experts cannot tell us how it sorts out. One can listen to a lawyer in committee give a fuzzy answer. When one takes the answer to be analysed by outside lawyers, they say that the entire area is in confusion. The bill is giving unbelievable powers which do not exist anywhere in the private sector to Crown corporations that are shells and phantoms. If there is an area of concern in my gut, it is that Crown corporations do not have the sense of behaviour which is required of the private sector, be it their boards of directors, chief executives or otherwise.

Committees of the House have worked for years on the poor behaviour of Crown corporations and their officers. For example, Polysar was using dummy invoices to transfer profits made onshore to offshore corporations in order to avoid tax in Canada. Also Radio Engineering Products, a Crown corporation which was put in place with Crown money, transferred its assets out of the country so that the government could not seize them. They have the slickest legal minds in the world working in these areas. All we have to do is review the behavioural problems in AECL, particularly in its international dealings, none of which has been properly accounted; commissions being paid to people offshore; and joint contracting deals made with other countries, for example, the Argentina Candu reactor. All these behavioural problems exist when people are not accountable through a system of disclosure.

Hon. members on both sides of the House, Liberal and Conservative, have worked on this question for years. The Auditor General has written reports that the system has been out of control since 1974. With all the warnings of the Auditor General, with all the work of the office of the Comptroller General and the Treasury Board, we have not heard one word about the Crown corporations act, a magnificent piece of work on the part of Treasury Board. We have not heard one word on the reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the entire matter of bringing accountability to the government and to the House for this whole level of subgovernment.

There are various examples of runaway behavioural problems because these corporations are not accountable. There is no window on their operations. After all these years of work, one really wonders if this place is worth the time, sweat and energy one puts into it, because bureaucracy and that government will do what they want—to hell with accountability. I have just about had it, with all the work which people like myself, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke), the President of the Treasury Board, one of the Acting Speakers and hon. members on both sides of the House, have done. We have worked our hearts out to bring this issue to account. Then we see Bill C-102 brought in by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources which thumbs its nose at those of us who are trying to represent our constituents and the people of Canada in general in an area of accountability. There is something tragic about the entire bill.

All I am doing is speaking to you, Mr. Speaker, or to anyone on the government side who is listening. No minister should have the powers which are conferred in this bill. No corporation, if we do not know the purpose of its formation, should be given agency of Her Majesty's status. This is really the last straw. Anger is starting to build in the country. The government should wake up to the fact that what we want through Part III of the estimates is some decent, honest disclosure; that is what is needed. This bill flies in the face of years of work by hon. members on both sides of the House. It flies in the face of totally apolitical work and dedicated, sincere energy and effort to try to make the system accountable to Canadian taxpayers.

Also there is taxation without representation in the energy package. In the total package of these bills unbelievable powers are being given to a minister of the state. This would not be half bad, but an essential element of Parliament which we inherited from the mother of Parliaments is ministerial responsibility. Obviously from the examples we have had in this session, ministerial responsibility no longer applies in this Parliament.

This form of government cannot stick together. It will not work. It will cause anger and frustration. I am awaiting the point of outrage when the people at large really understand how out of control is the entire system. To pour my heart out into this stuff is almost the most thankless thing I have ever experienced in my life. The problem with the Crown corporation issue, which will be aggravated and developed further with Bill C-102, particularly with agency of Her Majesty status therein, is the fact that there is no review. There is no one to question the mandate, or the manner in which the Crown corporation is serving its mandate and its objectives.

We have a comptroller generals act and an Auditor General Act which contain a value for money concept that is the most advanced in the world. It is not that we want supply to return to where the opposition can hold it up by endless debate and impede the government in forward progress, but there is only one alternative to returning to what was pre-1971—an honest, well organized system of information which provides a window, a view and a degree of accountability on how well the mandates and the objectives of Crown corporations are being served by their managers. All too often we find the incestuous relationships of boards of directors being comprised of former public servants or public servants moving out of the department which created the beast into a position as chief executive officer or on the board of directors. How can a board of directors discharge or question a chief executive officer who has been appointed by cabinet or by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)? We should just think about that. They cannot and they will not.

This whole subgovernment concept, which is further aggravated with the presentation of Bill C-102 and this agency of Her Majesty's status, flies in the face of everything. I plead with members opposite to talk with the minister and allow this amendment, which removes lines 11 to 14 on page 2 from the bill, to pass and to let those people in the Crown corporations create their entities and shells through the normal channels which are available to them and in place right now. Let these