

Liberal candidates and the Liberal Party because they have hidden from public view the vital activities of Government, the vital services, and they have masked them in Crown corporations.

I will call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please! It now being 6 o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 o'clock.

At 6 o'clock, the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the House rose at six o'clock the Hon. Member for Halifax West (Mr. Crosby) had the floor.

Mr. Crosby: Before the recess, Mr. Speaker, I said the motion presented by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) provides an opportunity to consider the key safeguard of our parliamentary democracy, namely, the public accountability of the Government. I support the motion and I make the charge that the Government, under the current Prime Minister and indeed, under his Liberal predecessor, Lester B. Pearson, have, by planned and deliberate policy, endangered our democratic system by avoiding public accountability. One instrument of that evil and dishonest policy has been the use, or the misuse, and abuse of the Crown corporation.

Let me say very quickly that there is good reason and justification for the employment of the device of a Crown corporation in our democratic system and in our society. There are and will be circumstances and situations when an activity, service or enterprise can be governed, provided or operated by a Crown corporation. The people of Cape Breton in Nova Scotia were well served when a Crown corporation called Sydney Steel Corporation was formed by the Government of Nova Scotia to continue the operation of the Sydney Steel works after that black Friday in 1967 on which the plant was closed and thousands thrown out of work. But in the hands of a devious Government intent on avoiding public accountability and parliamentary processes, the same corporate device can be used to isolate an activity, service or enterprise that the Government desires to cover up and keep hidden from public view and censure.

Let me review very briefly the situation in Canada at present. We have almost 200 federal Crown corporations wholly owned by the Government of Canada. They account for gross expenditures exceeding \$30 billion. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition rightly termed this corporate morass

Supply

"the underworld of Government"—a sea of organizations peopled by characters like Joel Bell, Jack Horner, Pierre Juneau and assorted Liberal hacks like Bill Mingo and Harrison McCain—the mafia of Government.

By comparison, the current revenues of all Canadian provinces total only \$45 billion, and if you view only the Atlantic provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, you will find revenue totalling only \$3 billion, only one-tenth of the revenues that flow to our federal Government underworld. Let me record the fact that last year the revenue of Petro-Canada alone exceeded \$2.7 billion. You could say that Petro-Canada has grown, in terms of revenue, to the size of the entire Atlantic area.

We know the problems that exist. I have mentioned some gross examples and the Auditor General has documented many more, but what is the answer? Fortunately, we have a relatively simple solution and it is endorsed by many knowledgeable people.

First, a Statute of the Parliament of Canada should be enacted that would legislate all the necessary requirements and processes to ensure full parliamentary and public accountability of Crown corporations. Second, there should be a careful review of all existing federal Crown corporations by a competent tribunal or parliamentary committee so that existing Crown corporations could, in some cases, be restricted or eliminated and in other cases abolished.

We have the statutory model already. It was mentioned in the motion introduced by the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition. When he was Prime Minister he introduced Bill C-27, so we could start immediately to resolve the problem. We could start with the enactment of the statutory provisions contained in Bill C-27, and we could start immediately on a parliamentary review of existing Crown corporations.

I said at the beginning of my remarks that I believe that the national Government should exercise a social conscience in the framework and context of the free enterprise system. The Government must support and foster the free enterprise system. It is that system that will produce the wealth and enable us to establish social programs, health care services and educational services required by the people of Canada. We cannot do that unless we have in place a viable private sector that can produce the necessary wealth to carry on and pay for the required services.

The Crown corporation, as advanced and operated by the Government of Canada, has been the nemesis of the private sector. Those corporations have taken over areas of activities that for decades, and indeed for the whole of this century, have produced the wealth that allows us to have one of the better social systems in the world.

Anyone who supports Crown corporations in his desire to oust the private sector, in the result will destroy our social