

Sale of Polymer

• (1540)

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, speaking on a motion which I had moved that day, a prominent member of the Conservative Party, a financial whiz kid and ex-banker, which eminently qualifies him to be a prominent member of the Conservative Party, the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), had the following to say about Crown corporations as recorded at pages 2561 and 2562 of *Hansard*:

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that when we are considering the desirability of Crown corporations we should keep in mind that, while it may be necessary to have certain Crown corporations for certain services, whenever possible Crown corporations should be divested and put back into the private sector.

Then the hon. member for York-Simcoe stated:

... I am simply stating to this House that in considering the motion before us—

That being the motion which I had moved:

—we should bear in mind that Crown corporations are not to be encouraged in further development or expansion.

A little later he said:

This growth in Crown corporations is something that should be arrested at the earliest possible opportunity.

I now come to that vigorous socialist defender—

Mr. Stevens: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness, I think the hon. member for York-Simcoe should make it clear that he was referring to CMHC, not to Polymer.

Mr. Lewis: If that is what the hon. member was referring to, he certainly was obscure last Friday, Mr. Speaker. He talked about Crown corporations in a very general sense.

I now come to that great socialist defender who has just taken his seat. I must tell you, Sir, that I am deeply moved by the way the Conservatives defend socialist principles and appeal to us to do that. It really is moving, Sir. One cannot help but feel that there is still some hope for the redemption of the hon. member for Yukon, but that will happen many years, probably, after he has left this place. On October 15, 1963 this House was debating the affairs of the Northern Transportation Company that operates in the Yukon. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) argued against extending or even continuing the operation of this corporation. During that debate he stated his views in several places. Let me give Your Honour one short example, as recorded at page 3611 of *Hansard* for 1963. The hon. member for Yukon said:

But it seems to me that when private enterprise reaches the stage where it is ready to take over and maintain services which were not there when the government entered the field, it is then time for government gradually to withdraw. I say this because it is repugnant, to my point of view, for a government openly to be competing with investment capital, ...

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: Those are the words of that great socialist to whom we listened. Let me take you back, Sir, to when Polymer, after the second world war was to be continued as a Crown corporation in this country. The matter was discussed in the House in 1946 when the government

[Mr. Nielsen.]

companies legislation was before parliament. That legislation affected all Crown corporations and was to continue Polymer as a Crown corporation beyond the second world war. Hon. Howard Greene, speaking for the Conservative Party, said—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: What are you talking about?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about Polymer and am merely citing a few examples to show the hypocrisy of the motion which is before the House and the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party. Speaking in the debate on that legislation which was to continue Polymer as a Crown corporation, Hon. Howard Greene said in part as recorded at page 2130 of *Hansard* for June 3, 1946:

The sixth objection is that by using these crown companies the government is putting into effect a very fine method of bringing about a socialist state.

A little later he said:

Let that sink in, that the CCF are applauding the fact that this bill makes socialism easy. ... I warn the government, I warn private members of the Liberal party particularly, that this bill ... is opening the floodgates of socialism.

He was speaking on the bill that was to continue Polymer as a Crown corporation. I am told that at that point a good many members sank trembling to the floor.

Mr. Reid: All the Conservatives did.

Mr. Lewis: If you look at the debate in this House on the establishment of the Canada Development Corporation, you will find that the Tory party, led by its present leader, opposed the establishment of that corporation, because they opposed the establishment of another Crown corporation. They said that a dozen times.

An hon. Member: So did you; so did you.

Mr. Lewis: We opposed it.

An hon. Member: You were condemning it, too.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I have time—

Mr. Alexander: Not much.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: I have lots of time, Mr. Speaker. If those yahoos will sit quietly, perhaps they will hear something. We opposed the establishment of Canada Development Corporation as proposed by the government, precisely because it was not a Crown corporation. We opposed it because it was not under the management of the government and because it was intended to be, as it has become, a private mutual development fund. But the Conservative birds on my right, whatever kind of birds they may be, opposed it for a different reason. They were against it because they are opposed to any government intervention in the market places of this country.

I could go on citing numerous examples of the kinds of things those people have said against Crown corporations.