

Time Allocation

Finally Bill C-24 could be interpreted, I put it to you, Sir, to suggest that Ministers as representatives of the Crown may not be bound by the prohibition of Bill C-24 on the creation of parent corporations.

My next concern about the Bill is the question of the scope of coverage which simply does not cover many of the major structural problems relating to Crown corporations today. It is silent on matters of internal government organization and it is silent on the privileges and immunities of Crown corporations. It is silent on public servants on boards of Crown corporations. It is silent on the extent of the Government of Canada accounting entity. It is silent on the creation of parliamentary oversight committees for Crown corporations. In addition, as I am sure you know, Mr. Speaker, the Bill covers only wholly-owned corporations. It does not apply to the more than one hundred mixed and joint enterprises.

My conclusion, and I hope it is clear from what I have said, is that the Bill is a dreadfully poor Bill. It represents a net step into the past. In my respectful submission, this House, and any House representing the views of Canadians, should fight as strongly as it can against the Bill.

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, in my previous role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport I have had many dealings with federal Crown corporations—

Mr. McDermid: What do you do now, Jesse?

Mr. Flis:—one as recently as last week. Representatives of the Canadian National appeared before the parliamentary committee and gave us their annual report. At this committee hearing members of all three Parties are able to question the President and the Corporation has to account for every penny it spends of taxpayers' dollars.

Like any business when a recession takes place, a Crown corporation does not have a good year. If the year is good economically, a Crown corporation does better. I was very interested in the financial statement that CN gave the committee. In 1982 CN lost \$223 million that year alone. But in 1983 CN had a net income of \$212,333,000. Where do these profits go? To the shareholders. Who are the shareholders? The Canadian taxpayers. What is wrong with Crown corporations making profits for Canadians in order to keep taxes down? I see nothing wrong with that.

Mr. McDermid: Name one instance where this has kept the taxes down.

Mr. Flis: That is why I was a little disappointed when the Official Opposition tried to stop the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) making his motion under Standing Order 82 to move Bill C-24 to the next stage. Somehow the Official Opposition fails to respect the rules of this House which members of all three Parties have made. The rules are not made by the Speaker of the House. I was very disappointed that this type of obstruction was attempted again. I am pleased

the Speaker did not allow the Official Opposition to get away with that kind of obstruction.

As was pointed out earlier, surely after 88 speakers on this Bill we are ready to move on to the next stage. If 66 speakers from the Official Opposition could not get their point of view across, then I do not think this can be done if the Official Opposition puts up another 40 speakers.

An Hon. Member: You have blocked thinking.

Mr. Flis: This is not closure, Mr. Speaker. This is not time allocation. The motion posed by the President of the Treasury Board was to get the debate moving to the next stage. In my two years as Parliamentary Secretary I had the very pleasant experience of putting Bills through, such as the Canada Ports Corporation, the Canadian Aviation Safety Board, the western transportation initiatives and the domestic air policy. The meat of the debates took place in committees. That is where the amendments were brought in. There were good amendments from all three Parties. The Government is expressing very clearly that we are prepared to accept more amendments on this Bill but we are not prepared to accept a frivolous amendment which would stall the debate for another six months.

The Hon. Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) asked what does the Government propose to achieve by forcing through this Bill? I think it is clear to everyone that the last piece of legislation on Crown corporations or any revision was over 30 years ago. Surely it is time to bring in legislation that would provide this Parliament with some control over Crown corporations, with some accountability by Crown corporations, and would provide sound management. I cannot see why the Official Opposition, which believes in private enterprise, would be opposing control, accountability and sound management in Crown corporations. I am sure the Official Opposition would want those three things operative in a private corporation, but somehow members of the Official Opposition block the proposals when we want to bring them into being for Crown corporations. Yet every day Members of the Opposition get up damning the Government on Canadair, Air Canada—

Mr. McKenzie: And de Havilland.

Mr. Flis:—because the Government does not have control and it did not see why so much was spent, why a Crown corporation went so far into debt. At the same time the Official Opposition is against a Bill that will ensure this control, accountability and sound management.

Mr. McDermid: It does not ensure it at all.

Mr. Flis: How can the Official Opposition be against the Bill whereby a statute of Parliament will be required to approve the creation, the mandate, the financing and the disposal of every parent Crown corporation?

Mr. McDermid: Parent.