

*Financial Administration Act*

If CN's trucks are a necessary adjunct to its transportation operation, then it should retain its trucking sector. That is part of the whole transportation package.

● (1650)

**Mr. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I have just a quick comment and then a question. When the President of CDI Corporation checked Canadair last year he found that it had 22 vice presidents and he cut them down to 12. A few were retired. The difficulty with Crown corporations is that the employees multiply like rabbits. If the hotels of our railways were taken over by the Government, the first thing that would happen is that the number of employees would double. That is a bad part about Crown corporations.

If Crown corporations can do so well with hotels, why are they not doing so well with the post office? They have certainly had a wonderful chance there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault):** Order, please. I am afraid that the time allowed for the question period is over now. We are reverting to debate.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Will you not let me answer his question? I am sure you will get unanimous consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault):** Is there unanimous consent for the hon. gentleman to answer the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault):** The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, the only thing I have to say about the post office is that no one anywhere in any political party in the whole western world, or perhaps the whole world, would suggest for one moment that postal services should be part of private enterprise. That is some kind of dream world. I do not know of post offices that make money anywhere in the world, at least it would be very rare. The public does not expect them to as long as they get the service. If there are some losses, the public is prepared to share in the cost as long as they get the service. That has been the problem.

On the matter of the number of officers of Crown corporations, I plead with my good friends to the right, both physically and politically, not to condemn Crown corporations because of stupid government policies that allow a Crown corporation to have a dozen vice presidents. It is not the fault of the Crown corporation; it is the fault of government policy. Do not condemn a Crown corporation because of that. Go after the ones who did it. Do not blame the person who happens to be the vice president in charge of Wicker Chair in the lobby of all the hotels. He may have been a former Liberal organizer or something. Blame the Government that allows that to happen. It lays down the overall policy.

One of the disasters of laying down an overall policy occurred when Mr. Lang, a former Minister of Transport, instructed the board of directors of Canadian National to start

making a profit. Ever since then it has been downhill. There have been lay-offs and cancelled services from coast to coast because of an outrageous demand by the Government for CN to start making money. This has hurt a lot of Canadians. Surely that is the wrong reason. It is not the number of vice presidents but the policy of the Government which allows that to be at question. It is not the principle of whether you should have a Crown corporation.

**Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join my colleagues today in expressing my condemnation of this latest attempt by the Government to hoodwink Canadians. There has not been a major overhaul of Crown corporation legislation since 1951. The Liberals have been considering changes since 1972 and, as my colleague from Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) has pointed out, have been promising reform since 1977. This has not come about.

Now that we are into an election year, the Government has produced a most flawed piece of legislation in an attempt to convince Canadians that they will gain control over the monsters that have been created. Most of these are not really Crown corporations but are Crown corpses and should be buried.

As has been pointed out by previous speakers, there is no provision for any sunset laws in the legislation. The legislation will not work the way it is, Mr. Speaker. It will not work because the legislation is flawed and because we will let Canadians know that this is another example of the tired Government that has run out of fresh ideas. The current leadership race of the governing Party is evidence of that.

The biggest flaw in this Bill is that it does not deal with all of the Crown corporations that have been set up by this Government to interfere in the private sector, which is the engine that drives our economy. It applies only to about 183 Crown corporations, a little less than half of the total amount. Note, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot talk precisely about the number of these corporations because no one really knows for sure how many there are or what they do. Any number of Crown corporations can be exempted from this legislation by Cabinet. That is one of the major flaws. The Bank of Canada, the Canadian Wheat Board and the IDRC are excluded. If this is a good piece of legislation, why does it not apply to all Crown corporations? If it is bad legislation, why apply it at all? The trouble with this legislation is that it raises more questions than it answers.

Why, for example, will Cabinet be given the power to deny information to Parliament without explanation? Why is this so in a Bill that purports to make Crown corporations more accountable to Parliament? Why will Cabinet be given the power to amend the Bill, by regulation, without informing Parliament? There were seen shades of metric. Why will a Crown corporation be able to operate freely, with Cabinet approval only? Why will Cabinet have the power to regulate how Crown corporations dispose of property and what is done with the proceeds? Why will Cabinet be responsible for appointing boards of directors and chief executive officers as