

the legislation but it is not prepared to tell us what it says. That is typical of an arrogant government.

This Bill gives huge regulatory-making powers to the Government. As such, it is typical of the Government's excessive desire for secrecy and unbounded administrative discretion in running the affairs of government, insulated from any parliamentary or public scrutiny and control. Government Members say: "Keep them in the dark; let us not open up the process so that Parliament knows what is going on".

I refer Hon. Members to the wide discretionary powers given to Ministers under the National Energy Program as an example of how the Government operates. In earlier times, such legislation would have been rejected out of hand by the House. I regret to say that we have reached the point where the Government blithely tables this legislation and feigns shock when Hon. Members express honest and heartfelt dismay at the extent of regulatory decision-making powers within it. Government Members say: "Oh, we would not dream of doing anything like that", but we have come to know otherwise. The Bill itself says one thing. When the regulations are presented, the Government does quite another.

There are three fundamental problems with the extent and nature of the regulating powers in Bill C-24. First, every section of substance has attached to it a regulation-making power by which the Government in effect defines how the section will operate or by which Crown corporations can be exempted from the requirements imposed by the section. As one example, I refer to Section 100 which appears to indicate that the Minister of Finance must approve the terms, conditions and timing of any and all borrowing by a Crown corporation. However, Subsection 135(4) authorizes the Governor in Council, by regulation, to exempt a specified Crown corporation or a Crown corporation of a specified class from the application of this section. What the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. The Government is asking Parliament to buy a pig in a poke. Without seeing the regulations, how can we possibly know how the Government intends to use the Bill?

Second, even if we were to see the regulations, how would we know that the Government would not change them the day after the Bill is passed or use them over the years to subvert completely Parliament's intention or understanding when it approved the Bill? The answer to the question is that we would not know. We have no assurance; there is no guarantee whatsoever in the legislation.

Third, there are few if any criteria in Bill C-24 that constrain or establish a framework within which the Governor in Council may make regulations. There are no criteria limiting the Government's power to move corporations from one schedule to another, from one classification of Crown corporation to another. The form and content of corporate plans, operating and capital budget and corporate by-laws are set by regulation, but we do not know what are the regulations. How do we know whether it will be a one-line operating plan? Is that what the operating plan is—a one-line capital budget? Bill C-24 does not specify the circumstances under which the

#### *Financial Administration Act*

Government may exempt corporations from any requirement in the Bill.

The Minister indicated that he intends to table the regulations before committee review. We thank him for that small mercy.

Perhaps I could call it one o'clock at this particular point.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** When the House rose at one o'clock, the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mr. Thomson) had the floor.

**Mr. Thomson:** Mr. Speaker, if it is permissible, I understand that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Ouellet) would like to table the correspondence with the Auditor General.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before recognizing the Minister, I should inform the House that this can only be done with the unanimous consent of the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, in my speech I referred to correspondence exchanged between the Auditor General of Canada, the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray). I therefore wish to table this correspondence in both official languages and I would like to thank my hon. colleagues for giving their unanimous consent.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the Minister of Labour. Is it agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Thomson:** Mr. Speaker, just before we adjourned for lunch, I had concluded that there are no criteria contained in Bill C-24 by which the Government is limited in its power to move corporations from one schedule to the other. There is no form in content with respect to corporate plans operating in capital budgets. Corporate by-laws are also set by the regulations. Bill C-24 does not specify the circumstances under which the Government may exempt corporations from the requirements of the Bill. I went on to say that it was reassuring