

*Energy, Mines and Resources*

government. There is an automatic government guarantee conferred by giving agency of Her Majesty status. It is questionable.

We already know from the Supreme Court of Ontario ruling which my colleague put on the record last night that the competition act and actions that are unlawful for everybody else in the private sector in Canada will now be lawful for administrators or corporations that are conferred this agency of Her Majesty status in this bill. We as Members of Parliament really do not fully understand the breadth nor the complicated nature of the power being conferred by Bill C-102. It will empower the Minister of Energy to put Crown corporations in place as his need so arises in the marketplace.

In committee the minister told us that rather than use Petro-Canada for these purposes he thought there would probably be more control and it would be safer if special corporations were put in place. Yet my colleague the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe pointed out that the powers needed were absolutely unnecessary, that they existed, and the agency status of Her Majesty carries a potential for abuse that we in this House do not understand. I join with him in a plea to members opposite and to members in the NDP ranks that we strike from the bill lines 11 to lines 14 found on page 2 because everything the government needs is in place now. Surely we do not have to confer this special status on corporations, the need for which has not yet been defined by the minister.

Having said that, I am very sorry the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) is not with us today. He was here last night. He has been very diligent in his duties as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. He sat through all the hearings and studies on the need for a Crown corporations act in Canada. This was before we started expanding this subgovernment which is now out of control and is not accountable, in spite of what anyone else wants to say in this House, to the committees and the systems under which we operate.

The President of the Treasury Board wrote a book when he was in the private sector called "Fiscalamity". We have read the book. His sincerity and the depth of his concern is known to us all. Having worked as a colleague with him on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I know how able and sincere his concerns are. But why, now that he is President of the Treasury Board, is legislation like this coming in that flies in the face of the work of the Lambert Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability, and which flies in the face of years of work on the part of the Treasury Board in that department's blue book calling for Crown corporations? Why does it fly in the face of a very good report submitted in the Thirtieth Parliament by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts which laid out major recommendations and conclusions on this subject matter?

What do we have to do in the way of an appeal to the government on behalf of the taxpayers of Canada, an appeal on the part of people who are now becoming genuinely concerned that their freedom is being threatened because the

parliamentary system is not working, the bureaucracy and the subgovernment of Crown corporations are in a runaway condition, able to call on the Consolidated Revenue Fund when they fail and they have agency of Her Majesty status?

We are also dealing with the fact that the boards of directors and their powers in the special Crown corporations are not the same and are not subject to the same laws as are businesses incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act. This gets back to Professor Florie's warning in 1979 to us in Toronto, which is that government controls the private sector but no one controls the public sector.

My plea and cry in this House to members on the government benches is: "Please wake up and understand the seriousness of what we are doing when we allow Crown corporations to be put in place at the whim of a minister with agency of Her Majesty status." That is a power the minister does not need.

If you had been attending the special committee hearings on Bill C-102, Mr. Speaker, you would have found that the second reading speech of the minister in this House, he had to admit, was somewhat misleading. He mentioned that we needed competition, that this was a way of providing competition in the marketplace and that these Crown corporations were necessary.

What concerns me is that we have moved way beyond the fifty-fifty mix of private-public involvement in the marketplace. These Crown corporations, particularly with the status which we are asking to be removed from the bill, are outside the laws that apply to everyone else. Also, their directors are not accountable as are directors in the private sector.

● (1710)

In committee the minister assured us that the chief executive officers of the new Crown corporations would be appointed from their boards of directors. One just has to look at the incestuous relationships which are now developing within the Crown corporations sector, within the public sector or this subgovernment that is outside the purview of and accountability to the House. Accountability could only come if this major piece of work on the part of the Treasury Board had been implemented in the Crown corporations act. That act has been drafted and is ready to be tabled, but we have not seen it.

I pleaded with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources not to come in with a bill like Bill C-102. He had all the power he needed in the present processes to do what he wanted, but he said: "That takes time and there is not time for what I want to do." the powers in Bill C-102, particularly the status we are trying to remove with the amendment to which I am speaking, are far broader than anything that minister or any future minister needs to act on behalf of Canadians.

I believe hon. members of the New Democratic Party and all speakers on this side have said that Bill C-102 is very, very bad. The bill itself should be withdrawn, instead of our being required to struggle with the powers being given to the minister in the bill.