

Government Orders

Nationalization means telling Canadians: This year, you will pay more taxes, because I need more money, since I decided to buy a furniture company.

Mr. Della Noce: At what price?

Mr. Vincent: At an outrageous price, as it was done in the case of Petro-Canada, formerly Petro Fina. I made the decision to buy a furniture company, so I raise your taxes, because I have to pay for it and, naturally, it is not profitable; evidently, I buy it because it is not profitable. Second, I will tax you a little bit more every year because I must keep it in business. I must tell you also that this unprofitable company I am buying with your income tax money will compete with your own profitable furniture company, one which creates jobs and also pays tax to me. This is what the debate is about today, the difference between privatization and nationalization.

Petro-Canada does not change anything to the price of petroleum products. Nothing at all. Once again, if it charged less than the other companies, it would have gone bankrupt and put itself out of business. Petro-Canada worked in a competitive economic context and did not give better prices to Canadians. It achieved nothing except costing money to Canadians and competing with private businesses, thus distorting the rules of the market.

This is what nationalization did to an oil company, and for a very high price. However, our Progressive Conservative government believes in free enterprise, believes that Canadians are capable of being productive, and they proved it. If we look at statistics since 1984, we see that Canada is now one of the most productive countries in the world. Canadians are capable of being productive, capable to do research and development, capable of being ingenious, of producing goods and selling them at a reasonable price. Because there are more than one capable Canadian producer in a given industry, we have better prices for all consumers. This is free enterprise, this is what the government believes in. Once again, we are talking about Petro-Canada, it could have been Donut-Canada or Hamburger-Canada or Furniture-Canada. It is a basic principle. The government is here to manage the taxes it collects from Canadian citizens and to provide services that private enterprise is not able to give. This is the major thrust of our policy.

If the unfortunate National Energy Policy implemented by a Liberal Government still existed today—it was abolished five years ago—all experts agree that oil would cost \$117 a barrel while a month ago, before the Persian Gulf crisis, it did cost \$20 a barrel and now it costs nearly \$40 as a result of the international situation.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, oil costing \$117 a barrel would mean gas at the pump costing about \$1.10 a litre. In other words, \$1.10 a litre compared to 66c.. That is also the difference between a government which allows the market forces and competition to operate fully, and a government which, for the sake of so called higher principles, intervenes in almost every economic field to counteract the economic system and ruin the skills of our Canadian men and women in every industry. This distinction is at the very heart of this debate on Bill C-84, Mr. Speaker.

I have referred to the Liberal Government, but unfortunately the NDP thinks and acts in a likewise fashion, always ready to step in and increase the tax burden of the people they claim to represent. But if every Canadian man and woman went to his or her Liberal or NDP Member and asked: Listen, how much of my income tax this year will go to Crown Corporations which compete with my own company or my employers' company? How much money is there in my tax account? Then, they would have to come clean. What is the answer, Mr. Speaker? Ten, fifteen, twenty per cent of the income tax paid each year to the Federal Government to support non viable corporations which compete with the private sector? Again last week, Mr. Speaker, I got a phone call from one of my constituents concerning a Crown corporation that was awarded a contract because its bid was below cost price. Sure enough the company in my riding did not get the job because a Crown corporation got the contract for less than cost price.

Mr. Della Noce: No sweat, that is taxpayer's money.

Mr. Vincent: No sweat. But he was furious, Mr. Speaker, as you can well imagine. I can think of another word which might not be parliamentary. He told me: It does not make sense, I pay taxes to have that company take contracts away from me. And he is absolutely right, Mr. Speaker, and he said it did not make any sense.