

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 1, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

• (1110)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Monday, April 30, consideration of the motion of Mr. Ouellet (for Mr. Gray) that Bill C-24, an Act to amend the Financial Administration Act in relation to Crown corporations and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Mr. Speaker, when I left off speaking yesterday I was stating that the Government does not really care to consult Canadians on how their dollars are spent. The Liberal economic record is something that any intelligent leadership contender would want to distance himself from. Unfortunately, all of them are somewhat tarred with that brush. The new would-be leaders will not even stage an honest to goodness debate with each other as we did in our leadership race. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they are afraid to say something that might give Canadians some type of policy, something to look forward to. All you have to do, Sir, is pick up *The Toronto Sun* for this morning and take a look at Donato's cartoon. That cartoon says it all very clearly.

I suppose the only positive thing to have come out of the past 16 years is the clear lesson that Canadians have learned, namely that socialism does not work. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has provided proof of that. The phalanx of Crown corporations is central to the attempt to create a socialist state in Canada, and of that there is little doubt.

The Government, through its army of state-owned enterprises, has a hand in everything. It is active in all forms of transportation, in telecommunications, in energy, in exploration, in computers and aircraft and in the nuclear, fishing, and agricultural industries. Most of them are identical. We have "Cana-this" and "Cana-that" to the point where we "Cana-do" anything right economically and we have lost what once was a proud economic record. It would be quicker and easier, Mr. Speaker, to list all the things into which the Government has not put its hand.

Today's Crown corporations represent the most massive intervention by Government in the private sector that we have

ever seen in Canada. This network of state-owned agencies outside the control of Parliament—and I say in all seriousness outside the control of Parliament—has almost as many employees and almost as large a budget as the regular Public Service. It is disgraceful.

This parallel government has been used to carry out the centralizing policies of the Prime Minister. I thank God for his *dénouement* from the political stage. Through the CIDC, CDC, the NEP and FIRA, power has become increasingly centralized in Ottawa, and specifically in the Prime Minister's office. These corporations have siphoned off investment and jobs from the private sector. They have intervened massively in the economy and they have used taxpayers' money to compete with the free enterprise businesses of this great nation. The result has been the loss of foreign investment and the concomitant loss of jobs, pushing up an already high unemployment rate. These policies have bankrupted small businesses across the country, and this is in spite of the established fact that small business is the only sector that is generating new jobs today. Statistically in the last two years only the private sector has created new jobs.

The Government has invaded the free marketplace with a vengeance and with our tax dollars. When governments use our money to interfere with our livelihoods, then something has gone awfully wrong and it certainly has in Canada.

William Simon in his book entitled *A Time for Truth* repeatedly warns that if you lose your economic freedom, then you lose your individual freedom. Personally I do not want to see that happen in this great country of ours. When governments waste our money in this way without accounting to us for the way it is spent, then that is doubly wrong. And that is exactly what has happened through the creation of these Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

In response to the Opposition's repeated demands for corrective action, what does the Government do? It brings in a Bill that will only make the situation worse. If this legislation were to pass in its present form, and we intend on this side to see that it does not, accountability would be curtailed even further and Cabinet control of a significant amount of taxpayers' money would actually increase.

Exactly what is the magnitude of the problem we are considering here, Mr. Speaker? As I have already pointed out, we do not know for sure how many Crown corporations there are. We do know that annually they account for more money than do the annual budgets of some countries, for example, Switzerland, Greece and Austria. The Auditor General was by no means exaggerating when he referred to Crown corporations as sub-governments. In the countries I have mentioned, the taxpayers have control over how their dollars are spent.