

Teleglobe Canada

If the Government were to say in the end—and the intent of the motion, the purpose of these interventions by Liberal Members is to tell the Government: You want to privatize Teleglobe Canada, go ahead, you have the majority, but we do not agree. If you want to claim that it is a sound financial deal, that is your privilege. But do say as well—and this is where we want to help you—that you have protected the rights of the people who work for this company. Although I am not quite convinced, you seem to have guaranteed and maintained job security as well as the same pay increases opportunities in the company, but all people now on the Teleglobe Canada payroll should be assured that they will continue to benefit from their vested rights in the good pension plan to which they have been contributing all along.

Mr. Speaker, you are indicating that I have only one minute left. I would conclude by expressing the hope that some Conservative Members from Greater Montreal as well as elsewhere in Quebec and other regions will support this motion and urge the Minister to show every consideration for the working people and put less emphasis on the purely economic aspects of the deal.

• (1150)

[English]

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the amendment put forward by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), is specific and clear. It states that the proposed Bill C-38, which deals with Teleglobe:

—shall come into force on a day or days to be fixed by proclamation but—

And this is the important part:

—not until an agreement incorporating an employee compensation program has been negotiated and accepted by the employer and the employees of the new corporation established pursuant to Section 4 of this Act.

Yesterday the Minister of State for Privatization (Mrs. McDougall) in her intervention made the point that until the Act is proclaimed, a new corporation cannot be established and the amendment preconditioned for proclaiming the Act cannot be satisfied. This is where we differ on both the question of procedure and the question of policy. We say to the Minister that this can be done. As put so well by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Montreal—Saint-Marie (Mr. Malépart), and earlier in the morning by the Hon. Member for Ottawa-Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), the interest of the employees must be protected. That was the main thrust of the speech made yesterday by the mover of the amendment, the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe.

• (1200)

What we face today is a Government in its third year in office which is set in favour of privatization of Crown agencies. Yet in its third year it is incapable of coming forward with a set of principles or guidelines, a general policy, for the protection of its own employees when it privatizes. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is that the way to run a Government? The

Government has left these people hanging loose. Then, at a certain point, it has said, as the Minister said yesterday in her intervention, and I hope I am paraphrasing fairly, that we cannot cross every t and dot every i before the demands of each employee has been met. This is not just a matter of crossing t's and dotting i's. This is a matter that concerns the future of a number of employees. Therefore it should not be relegated to the category of small items. As the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe reminded us yesterday, there are some 1,107 employees involved here. We are talking about a substantial number of Canadians who have worked for their country in this Crown corporation. Not only have they worked for the Crown corporation, they have made it into a success story.

We on this side of the House regret very much this Bill coming forward. We do not think the Government of Canada should sell this success story. If anything, it should keep Teleglobe and ensure that it becomes a model for other Crown corporations. The fact remains that what we on this side of the House are endeavouring to do, if we cannot stop its insane policy of privatization, something to which we object in the first place, is hope that it will come to its senses in the treatment of these employees. That is what the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe is fighting for. I am more than happy to join him and my other colleagues in support of this social rescue operation.

The Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe indicated to the House that the Government has not come to a satisfactory conclusion in terms of Treasury Board and Memotec, which is what prompts this motion at third reading. Therefore a situation has been created which creates a vacuum in the minds of everyone concerned, hence our initiative.

Evidently, what is at stake here is the fact that the employees of Teleglobe could see anywhere between \$7 million and \$10 million less being transferred to the new owners of Teleglobe in order to cover, as the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe put it so well yesterday, their acquired pension rights. How would Members of Parliament like to see something like this undertaken with respect to their pension rights? There would be an outcry from back-benchers to front-benchers and back again several times. There would be a tidal wave sweeping this place.

Mr. Keeper: That is what the Government will do next.

Mr. Caccia: Maybe it is setting a precedent, who knows? However, I do not think it will do that because it is too conscious of its own majority rights. But because of that it should not apply different standards to the employees of the Government of Canada and, in particular, as it does in this case to the employees of a Crown corporation that is being sold.

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier put it very well this morning. He said the Government, not as an acquired new theology but as a political commitment during the last campaign, committed itself to the desire of selling to the