

Energy, Mines and Resources

blank cheque for him to spend tax dollars as he sees fit, to extend the control of government into areas where today it is not involved directly without further parliamentary approval. If we do that, we have been very negligent in our responsibility.

When the parliamentary impasse ended a couple of weeks ago after two weeks of the bells ringing and Parliament being in a position where it was impossible to conduct business, the first order of business placed before the House was the issue of parliamentary reform. You were present in the Chair, Mr. Speaker, when members on all sides of the House got up and said that they support Parliament. They believed it was essential that we have reform of this institution to ensure that they could do their job on behalf of those who sent them here. It was said that it is meaningful when on election night people in Thunder Bay elected my colleague as he had some role to play, when people from Vancouver elected my colleague and when people from Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe elected me. We said that exercise of their franchise would be meaningful and amount to something and that Parliament would be able to discharge the responsibilities expected of it by our constituents.

We all paid lip service to Parliamentary reform, to responsibility and to our duties to our country and our constituents. What sort of parliamentary reform can the government be talking about when the most important reform is to put in place a legislative end-run on Parliament for the future? It is giving itself a blank cheque, allowing itself to do virtually whatever it wants in terms of Crown corporations in the future. It is ensuring that Parliament, which is impotent today, will be more impotent tomorrow.

We are simply giving away what authority has not already been taken away from us by the members of the executive. That is their idea of parliamentary reform. It is their idea of what members of the House of Commons and the Senate should be doing. It is their idea of what their backbenchers should be doing, that they have no authority to look into matters of this sort.

Members on all sides of this House had a chance to participate in that debate. All of us went on record saying that we wanted to strengthen Parliament, make it more meaningful, make it a place where decisions were made which are crucial to the future of Canada.

The onus is on everyone who participated in that debate and on every Member of Parliament who reads this bill, to search his soul and ask himself whether we are serving Parliament and the people who sent us here when we give away that power for all time. Should we pass this measure which is probably unconstitutional, a matter which is definitely unparliamentary? It clearly evades the spirit of Parliament and clearly undermines the role of Parliament. It flies in the face of the recommendations of parliamentary committees, a royal commission, the Auditor General, and statements of repeated governments, not just the Conservative government but the Liberal government as well, the Liberal government prior to 1979 and the Liberal government of today of which the

President of the Treasury Board has the responsibility for Crown corporations.

Surely we have to ask ourselves whether we are doing our job if we allow this to go forward. When the vote is taken on this issue, members on this side of the House will be voting against this bill. I suggest that members on any side of the House who are concerned about Parliament and their responsibilities to the people of Canada will join us in saying that this measure must not be allowed to pass.

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to participate in this debate tonight. I congratulate the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) on an excellent speech. Like his party, my party has no intention of supporting this measure.

Frankly, there are certain things in the measure that intrigue us. For example, we like the idea that we should have a Crown corporation to do a number of things that are outlined in Clause 1, such as explore, develop, produce, gather, refine and process in the energy field. We like the idea of the distribution and marketing of energy conservation technology. I do not see how anybody could be against that. The only question is whether the government should be involved and have a piece of the action or whether a private corporation should have it in its entirety. It refers to acquiring and holding shares of an activity referred to in the previous paragraphs, and all the rest of it. However, as the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe said, the bill goes much too far. We like it for those things I just outlined. We like it because it discusses the possibility of new corporations in the alternative energy field and in the conservation field. How could anybody object to that since we need incentives in that area?

It means the government might even be contemplating increased support for renewables and conservation. I hope so. The record so far in this area has been dismal. This afternoon the minister said that EMR has directed \$500 million into it. Compare that to what is going to be put into PIPs, the petroleum incentives program, and you balance \$500 million as opposed to \$6,000 million. You can see where their priorities are. The government is four square on the supply side regardless of the consequences, economic, social, environmental or otherwise. They are certainly not determined to limit demand.

As the minister said, it is important for Crown corporations to compete and complement the private sector. It is important, provided they do that, but I am not certain they are going to do that. I would like to think they are going to do it. How can we be certain?

If we are going to require that sort of openness accountability and freedom of information for public corporations and Crown corporations, the same rules should apply to all private corporations, that are on the dole, that is receiving tax expenditures. I refer to CPR, Dome Petroleum, Chrysler Corporation, Massey and all the private oil companies.

If we are going to ask of Crown corporations complete openness and accountability for public funds, we should ask the same when public funds and tax expenditures go into