

Energy, Mines and Resources

bill will enable the government to establish new Crown corporations that will be responsible for holding and managing these assets for their owners, that is, all Canadians. Looking into the future, I would hazard a guess that it may be preferable to establish Crown corporations that are regionally based and hold Crown shares in specific Canada lands. As a result of the location of their offices and staff, and through the membership of their board of directors, these corporations could have first-hand knowledge of the energy requirements of the regions in question and be truly conscious of their needs, while managing their assets for the benefit of all Canadians.

In addition to Crown corporations to which would be transferred part of the assets represented by Crown shares in Canada lands, we might also need a Crown corporation other than Petro-Canada that would own and manage energy-oriented companies the Government of Canada might decide to acquire. In fact, Petro-Canada could act as an agent for such purchases, but its effectiveness as an instrument of the government might be reduced if it made too many acquisitions. A new Crown corporation might be necessary to stimulate competition in the public sector of the industry, and quick action would be necessary to make the transaction a success.

[English]

As members of the House will know, Petro-Canada has a subsidiary, Canertech, which is an investment corporation in the field of renewable energy and conservation technologies. I mention Canertech because it is another example of a potential use of the powers granted under this amendment. In this case, I am not speaking about a hypothetical situation, as I was when referring to the acquisition of petroleum companies, or a situation in which the action required is in the future, as is the case with the issue of which corporation is to hold Crown shares under the Canada Oil and Gas Act, but rather a situation where the amendments may prove useful in allowing Canertech to evolve as an independent Crown corporation.

● (2030)

As I mentioned, Canertech has its head office in Winnipeg. It is small in size, as is appropriate for its job. At present it is a subsidiary of Petro-Canada and it has benefited from corporate services, which would have been difficult for it to establish within itself during the start-up period. As time goes on, it might be preferable for Canertech to become a truly autonomous and independent corporation.

These are the main objectives and characteristics of the particular bill. As I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, it formalizes and brings Parliament more into play than has been the situation in the past, when we have seen cases where governments and ministers were creating Crown corporations without referring to Parliament. The bill will ensure that in the limited sector of energy the minister and the government can create energy corporations and Parliament has the possibility of a negative resolution to annul the decision, if it so wishes.

[Translation]

I therefore ask the members of this House to consider giving this bill second reading, because it will provide the government with one of the tools it needs to develop its energy policy. Of course, its applications are limited, in the case of new corporations, to the establishment of energy corporations, and where acquisitions are concerned, to the purchase of corporations established under federal legislation. In both cases, such transactions must be approved by the governor in council, by cabinet, and may be the subject of a negative resolution by Parliament. Still, it is an instrument that can be used to resolve quickly a number of specific problems and to take advantage of opportunities as they are offered. I believe that Canadians agree that their government should have such tools at its disposal in order to ensure the energy security of our country.

[English]

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, at the time of the impasse when the minister first introduced the energy security bill, hon. members on this side of the House said that there were several elements of the bill which could be dealt with differently. Some of the elements of the bill were unobjectionable, others we felt were unwise, and others we felt were of questionable morality, such as the provision which would amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and allow the seizure and sale of people's shares without their consent. Other elements of the bill, though, were downright dangerous. The provision introduced by the minister which we are debating now in the form of Bill C-102 falls into the category of being downright dangerous. I intend to deal with that question as we go along over the course of the evening.

One thing which certainly struck my curiosity, as the minister was making his comment, was his suggestion that there was provision in the bill for a negative resolution to be put down in either House, either in the Senate or in the House of Commons, on the strength of 30 signatures of members of the House of Commons or 15 signatures of members of the Senate. Yet, last evening I came into the House and I asked for a copy of the bill which had been tabled by the minister, and I found that it provided for a motion for disallowance on the strength of 50 signatures in the House of Commons or 20 signatures in the Senate.

I have in my hands what the Table says is the House copy of Bill C-102. Clause 7(2) reads as follows:

An order referred to in subsection (1) shall come into force on the thirtieth sitting day of Parliament after it has been laid before Parliament pursuant to that subsection unless before the twentieth sitting day of Parliament after the order has been laid before Parliament a motion for the consideration of either House, to the effect that the order be revoked, signed by not less than 50 members of the House of Commons in the case of a motion for the consideration of that House and by not less than 20 members of the Senate in the case of a motion for the consideration of the Senate, is filed with the Speaker of the appropriate House.

When I raised this issue with the minister, during his comments, he said that in fact the bill we are debating tonight