

Mr. MACDONNELL: The clause in question, I submit—

Mr. FLEMING: Go ahead and ask the question.

Mr. SINCLAIR: On agency corporations?

Mr. MACDONNELL: What I want to raise I think is a question that has considerable interest, at any rate, and it may at least involve a recommendation of this committee which could be dealt with later on.

I want to raise the question of what is the reason for the broad powers that several of the companies have? We have been given a list here, and several companies are incorporated with broad powers—some of them I think are perfectly irrelevant and quite improper for crown corporations. The answer may be that they are never exercised, but I do want to raise the question of whether they should carry on any other business, have the power to lend money to any other company, the power to sell and dispose of undertakings—are those proper and relevant powers for crown corporations?

The CHAIRMAN: Would not the minister be the one to answer? Those are questions of policy. The powers given to each corporation was a matter of policy discussed in cabinet and recommended by the appropriate minister, and acceded to by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. MACDONNELL: If I may discuss this with the minister—

Mr. SINCLAIR: Are we not getting an awful long way away from this bill? The various Acts of parliament setting up crown companies spell out the powers and responsibilities of those companies. All this Act is doing is giving us some control, some audit. In their Act of incorporation they are given powers to buy and sell, but this is not an Act for the administration of crown companies. This is the Financial Administration Act. If we are going to have each minister responsible for crown companies to come before us as if we were a committee on crown companies and ask what powers they have and what they can and cannot do—

Mr. MACDONNELL: I do not suggest that.

Mr. SINCLAIR: But very close to it.

The CHAIRMAN: Section 83 which we approved says:

The Governor in Council may make regulations with respect to the conditions upon which an agency corporation may undertake contractual commitments.

Now, Mr. Macdonnell knows that some of these corporations undertake contractual commitments according to their present charter but he wants to get further information as to what their powers are. I am in the hands of the committee. I think it was agreed that within reasonable limits you could in a short time ask a few relevant questions on the matter once we had the chapter approved. If the committee does not want to stand by my agreement—

Mr. JUTRAS: Section 83 applies in awarding contracts?

The CHAIRMAN: Contractual commitments and Mr. Macdonnell wants to refer—

Mr. JUTRAS: Mr. Macdonnell referred a moment ago to the various powers. He referred to powers generally and he referred specifically to many powers that he did not expect would be used. In other words, he refers to the general powers and surely that is completely out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Maybe he would like to get on with contractual commitments.

Mr. MACDONNELL: If you will say to the minister when he comes here that I raised this question and open the door for me to just raise it with him—

The CHAIRMAN: He will be at liberty to answer or not.