

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 9, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AGREEMENTS ACT

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-22, an act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mrs. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral (Laval Centre): Mr. Speaker, today is the sixth day of debate on this bill. More than 40 speeches on this subject have been made by members of the Official Opposition. No doubt our colleagues opposite think we have talked long enough but as we are expressing ourselves with elegance, I am sure they are delighted.

My career as a teacher has taught me one thing: even the clearest message is never understood by everyone, and we think that if we repeat this message often enough, the Canadian people will require this government to enforce, in the name of transparency, a law on political party financing.

The decision made by this House must reflect the concerns of Canadians and Quebecers regarding the transparency of political power. Supporting Bill C-22 is a vote for non-transparency. The Prime Minister, who calls himself a champion of transparency, would never forgive us.

Much has happened in Canada since October 25, 1993, including the arrival of a group of members for whom the transparency of political power is an illusion without strict legislative regulations regarding political party financing in particular. The shock of our mass arrival in Parliament traumatized Canada but, like some pills that are hard to swallow, I think this shock can only be beneficial.

The current debate on Bill C-22 conducted with competence and determination by the Official Opposition is instructive as its purpose is to demonstrate clearly that the lax federal regulations in effect concerning political party financing goes against our society's fundamental interests.

The traditional Oppositions of the 34 previous Parliaments were justifiably reluctant to point the finger at the friends of the government in office since the stronger the accusations the more likely they were to turn against them. The Official Opposition of the 35th Parliament, of whom I am a member, has demonstrated that the lack of legislation on democratic party financing can only create a vicious circle with a simple, obvious logic.

This logic is as follows: no one has the right to bite the hand that feeds him, the government least of all. The contributions made by large corporations to the election funds of the traditional federal parties, far from being an open secret, are considered as essential as bread and butter by this government. But there is so much butter that it threatens the most efficient liver. Otherwise, how can we explain Clause 10 of this bill, whose purpose is to compensate Limited Partnership if the Minister considers it appropriate to do so.

Who in this House can justify a responsible government giving itself the right to offer reasonable financial compensation when, according to Robert Nixon, this whole contract was nothing less than unreasonable. I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to decide for yourself as Mr. Nixon says this in his report:

My review has left me with but one conclusion. To leave in place an inadequate contract, arrived at with such a flawed process and under the shadow of possible political manipulation, is unacceptable. I recommend to you that the contract be cancelled.

• (1110)

Which the Prime Minister of Canada has done. The investigator he chose was the former Ontario Treasurer in the David Peterson government and leading figure of the Liberal Party of Ontario. His analysis could only be fair.

Let me ask the question again: Is it reasonable to provide reasonable compensation following the reasonable cancellation of an unreasonable contract? Any sensible citizen would tell you without hesitation: no. Why then would this government be tempted to say yes?