

hurting enough as it is, and I am referring to the unemployed, to senior citizens who have worked hard all their lives. Above all, they can do without the very serious threat of attacks on RRSPs and pension plans.

This is unconscionable, immoral and obscene, and the Liberals should be ashamed of themselves.

[English]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the amendments to Bill C-22 sent to the House from the other place.

The motion before us today is quite simply a slap in the face to each and every taxpaying citizen who felt that the previous government had gone too far by attempting to sell terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson airport to a group of self-interested investors in the dying days of an endangered administration.

• (1710)

Contrary to the statements made by some of our friends in the other place, the proposed amendments to Bill C-22 have little or nothing to do with protecting the legitimate collective interests of taxpaying Canadians. No, the motion before us today is about protecting the private interests and profits of a handful of self-interested individuals over and above the collective interests of the unknown hard working taxpayers of the country.

As chairperson of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport I can report that due process was served when our committee conducted its thorough review of Bill C-22 last May. In addition to a clause by clause analysis of the bill, the Standing Committee on Transport conducted hearings in order to obtain input on the legislation from individuals directly involved in the Pearson deal.

We heard testimony from several witnesses including Transport Canada officials; Hession Neville and Associates, an organization that put an unsuccessful bid on a Pearson contract; Air Canada officials; and representatives of the Matthews Paxport Trust, Mr. Gordon Baker and Mr. Donald Matthews. Of course we will never forget the colourful and melodramatic testimony of the legal counsel representing the Pearson Development Corporation.

In addition to the hearings, the committee considered the findings of a report on the Pearson deal submitted by Mr. Robert Nixon to the right hon. Prime Minister. On this point it should be noted that Mr. Nixon's report contained the following conclusion. Maybe members of the Reform Party would be interested in what it concluded. It stated:

Government Orders

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.

As stated in the report itself, Mr. Nixon's comments were based on what was considered to be in the best interest of taxpayers, the travelling public and general economic development of the area. That statement captures the very essence of my case against today's motion.

Some of our friends in the Tory dominated red chamber and their friends in the Tory dominated Pearson development deal would like us to believe that Bill C-22 is a Draconian piece of legislation that, among other things, breaches the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights by taking away the fundamental right of Canadians to legal recourse in the courts. Indeed the level of romanticized fiction in that argument is similar to that which might be found on any given day in a cheap supermarket tabloid.

With regard to the constitutional issues surrounding the legislation, it is worth while to examine an approach that has been used by the Supreme Court of Canada when interpreting the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in order to put things in their proper perspective. I am referring to the so-called purposive approach to interpreting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as stated by Canadian constitutional law expert, Peter H. Russell. He said:

The main thrust of the purposive approach to charter interpretation, fashioned by Chief Justice Dickson in some early cases, is to inquire into the reasons a particular right or freedom came to be valued in the history of western civilization and thereby to identify the interests each right or freedom was meant to protect.

I would like to focus on the latter portion of that statement pertaining to identifying the interests each right or freedom was meant to protect.

In most democratic societies, including our own, it is a generally accepted principle of democracy that with some exceptions the legitimate interests of the collective are held in higher regard than that of individual private interests.

As I stated, however, there are exceptions to the rule: for example, a situation of some sort of social or economic injustice or inequity brought on by such social phenomena as racism, sexism, poverty or any number of things that might characterize a historical disadvantaged or disempowered minority group or individual in our society. Under such circumstances it is incumbent on us to ensure that the interests of the disadvantaged or disempowered minority are not overpowered by that of the majority. If we apply this approach to the current Bill C-22 and its proposed amendment we can see that in fact the government is attempting to act in a forthright manner.