

*Government Orders*

The best way to protect reputations is visibility and openness, and a public inquiry. Of course such an inquiry will be costly and will take time, but I ask this House if democracy costs something. Is democracy too costly? Are the costs more important than living in a democracy? I am sorry, but democracy is priceless. You cannot put a price on getting the facts and spending taxpayers' money wisely.

However, if the minister refuses to conduct a public inquiry because of costs and delays, he could ask a parliamentary committee to do it. Does the minister realize that the whole tendering process was botched? Consequently, will the minister take the necessary steps to prevent such a fiasco from happening again?

The government could refuse to order a parliamentary committee or the Standing Committee on Transport to conduct a public inquiry; this would bring us back to square one. If that happens, can the minister tell us how long the compensation claims process will take? As we know, the Nixon Report mentioned obscure dealings by lobbyists. Since these schemes were not revealed to the public, can we fear that such scheming will taint the compensation process?

At the transport committee hearings, when Robert Vineberg, Pearson Development Corporation's lawyer, appeared before us, I had prepared some very tough questions. If you do not believe me, you need only refer to the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Transport. It is an aberration. We had written to the representative, Mr. Vineberg's client, who told us that Mr. Vineberg would answer for him. I asked Mr. Vineberg over and over again if he was speaking for his client and he assured me that he was not, that he was speaking in his own name and that he could not speak for his client.

What happened was that two people were not only mocking us to our faces, but were arguing back and forth and we never got an answer. Mr. Vineberg is a well-known member of the legal profession here in Canada and I asked him four questions: Should an already flawed contract—because the rules of assent were flawed from the beginning—provide for compensation in case of cancellation? Would he agree with a public enquiry? Would his firm willingly submit financial analyses? Finally, I made a brief comment saying that those who live in glass houses should not cast stones.

● (1615)

I will not quote the answers because not one of them is worth repeating in this House. We would also have liked to get answers to other questions. For example, while he was involved in the case, had he ever been aware of any malversation in connection

with lobbyists or of civil servants or political personnel being too closely interested in the Pearson issue? Also, did he agree with the profit analysis in the Nixon report which indicated a 14 per cent profit after taxes? I also asked him if he did not find it a little bit strange that bidders were only given 90 days to prepare their bid for a 57-year contract worth \$1.6 billion? Are such things normal and reasonable in a democratic society? We have to wonder. The answer is obvious. There is not one Canadian who will find that it makes sense.

I am only relating some of the juiciest parts of what Mr. Vineberg said. I understand that Canadians and Quebecers will be able to read the whole thing in the minutes of the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Transport. It is a jewel in its own right, but the answers are not worth repeating in this House.

I could go on talking all day long about this famous Bill C-22 and the proposed amendments. I have already spent a lot of the taxpayers' money to convince this House to satisfy Canadians by keeping them informed of ongoing negotiations between the government and Pearson Development Corporation.

When I talk about money spent, I am talking about the transport committee's hearings, and the salaries of federal civil servants, researchers and MPs. This is a lot of money spent to achieve very little. I would like to add that my party and I agree with the government's motion to reject all the amendments presented by the other place. I am in agreement with the government but for different reasons.

First, as I mentioned earlier, I cannot accept that non-elected individuals try to have the upper hand on decisions in this country. Second, I cannot accept that the Pearson Development Corporation be given compensation for any loss incurred before April 13, 1994 since the circumstances surrounding the awarding of the contract were flawed to start with. This being said, if we reject the amendments proposed by the other place and adopt the government's motion, a doubt will always linger in the minds of Canadians for lack of a public inquiry.

Once again, I plead with my hon. colleagues to allow a royal commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of this so that trust in our leaders may be restored.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** We will now proceed to the other stage of debate where members will have 20 minute interventions, subject to 10 minutes questions and comments.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Liberals may not have as much support in caucus for this motion as they might like us to believe. I am sure being good members of the old style party of the past that they will vote the party line as they are told. I understand that they cannot find anyone else to speak to this debate. I am really sad if that is the case because I have some questions I would like to ask and have answered here today. We will have to make of the process what we can.