

*Government Orders*

I have used up all arguments to convince my colleagues from the committee to subpoena people on the Bloc Québécois's list of witnesses. At that time, I remember very clearly the chairperson of the transport committee, the hon. member for Hamilton West, telling me: "Come on, sir, you know perfectly well that this is a procedure which has not been used in Canada since 1917 or 1918". But that was totally false. I sincerely hope that the chairperson of the Transport Committee did not knowingly try to mislead me because I checked and I found that that procedure was used in 1989, in 1990 and in 1992 to summon witnesses.

• (1605)

There was even one instance, in 1989 or 1990, when the present government House leader used that special procedure to summon witnesses to appear before the committee. I sincerely hope that the chairperson of the Standing Committee on Transport was not acting in bad faith.

I will give you another example. I told the committee members that since Leo Kolber was a parliamentarian from the other place, he would surely co-operate with us given his duties. Furthermore, at the time the contracts were signed, the *Ottawa Sun* reported that on October 10, 1993, that parliamentarian was a member of Claridge's board of directors and owned 60 per cent of the shares in Pearson Development Corporation.

You have to admit that he was a key witness who could have helped us shed some light on the matter. On top of that, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported on November 9, 1993 that the same member of the other place had given a reception at \$1,000 a plate in his Westmount residence at the beginning of October, a reception attended by Mr. Charles Bronfman, among others, and by the present Prime Minister who, at the time, was in the middle of his election campaign.

If I had the time, I could also talk about the cleaning up of political party funding. We saw again, as recently as yesterday, that some people preferred to receive contributions from large firms rather than to have a clean election fund. The Bloc's position is clear and that is why the hon. member for Richelieu moved such an amendment.

I could give other examples. All those arguments that I put forward were useless since my request was denied by the Liberal majority on the committee. I could also mention the case of Mr. Otto Jelinek, a former Conservative minister who is now president of the Asian subsidiary of the Matthews group. The answer was the same as in most other cases. The Liberal members on the Transport Committee told me that it would be premature to subpoena Mr. Jelinek since he intended to appear voluntarily.

You will understand that, given the refusal of my Liberal colleagues to summon the people who could have helped this House understand the situation, I have no choice but to say that

this matter is not transparent. I wonder if the Liberals are protecting the same people as the Conservatives or some other people. I also wonder if it is possible that the friends and backers of the system contribute to the election funds of both old parties.

What is troubling is that Canadians still do not know all the facts as to why the contract was awarded to Pearson Development Corporation. And I find it sad that the Liberal majority is enjoying hiding the truth.

It must also be pointed out that if the Bloc Québécois does not know all the facts, it cannot be expected to decide on the validity of the financial claims made by each of the concerned groups.

When we look at the Nixon report, some words leave us with a bitter aftertaste. We could wonder what Mr. Nixon meant when referring to malversation in connection with lobbyists. Did he have any real evidence of this? Do you know anything about it, Mr. Speaker? If you do not know, I do not know either. No witness knows. Nobody but the opposition seems to want to know about it on the Hill. But then, who does know? We are being asked to make a decision involving the expenditure of tens of millions of dollars when nobody really knows what the Nixon report meant.

The Minister of Transport spoke about criteria governing compensation claims. Could the minister make these criteria public? If he has nothing to hide, I am sure he will not hesitate to do so.

Mr. Speaker, you are a lawyer and you know very well that due process was not followed by Mr. Nixon. In French law too there is the rule of *audi alteram partem*, the right of both parties in a case to be heard. I am sorry, but this rule does not seem to have been followed, no more than due process, by Mr. Nixon.

• (1610)

It is unfortunate that the minister should rely on a report full of half-truths to request—and that is what he is doing under clause 10 of the bill—the authority to spend tens of millions of dollars.

When will the minister launch a public inquiry to get right to the bottom of this matter? Several Liberal members approved of this inquiry, but they were gagged and had to toe the party line.

If the government motion is passed, obviously the bill will be passed too, but would the Minister of Transport agree? For want of a public inquiry, I ask him once more to have the Standing Committee on Transport examine any agreement and make recommendations before he signs it. If the minister says that the agreement was rejected because it was not acceptable for Quebecers and Canadians, why not give elected representatives the opportunity to make the necessary recommendations? The government would demonstrate its openness. Otherwise, a feeling of frustration will linger, and doubts will remain in our mind and that of the public in Quebec and Canada.