

Summer Recess

eral enforce the Criminal Code. If members opposite really believe in justice being done, why do they not refer the Bertrand report, the Henry report, and all the other data to the relevant attorney general of the province to see whether or not he lays a charge of criminal conspiracy under the Code, if a criminal act has been committed against the consumers of Ontario? If members opposite believe in freedom of information, why do they not have the courage, the honesty and the candour to send the material along to the relevant provincial attorney general?

I remind hon. members that the attorney general of the province in which this House is located has recently instructed his Crown attorneys to reveal everything in their cases to defence counsel. Crown attorneys who are worth anything do not hide matters from defence counsel. For the most part they show them all of their cases. Why will the Attorney General of Canada (Mr. Chrétien) not follow the same rule? Why will he not be up front about this matter and show everything to everyone? What is it in the Bertrand report that can cause him grief? Everyone knows that an attorney general, a provincial attorney general, or a Crown attorney does not pull fast ones, he does not hide things; he is as open with the defence as he can possibly be. I submit, given the indicated circumstances, the Bertrand report should be made available to members of Parliament, to the defence, and to all Canadians.

The next point I wish to deal with is why only six companies are charged? You will notice, Mr. Speaker, that there is not one single flesh and blood person charged in this case. Why? Hon. members will, for example, recall the dredging scandal case in which companies and individuals were later charged as parties to the offence. Why does the same not happen in this case? I think we are entitled to ask this question. The Canadian people are entitled to know the answer to it. Is the reason they do not charge anyone that if they were to do so, they would have to charge someone whom they do not particularly wish to charge?

We are told that only six companies are to be charged. Companies are merely legal fictions. I believe one of the defendant companies is only a shell. I suggest to the House that if the government were really trying to see justice done, it would at least explain to us, as members of Parliament, why it is that only companies are being charged and not individuals.

Would the government at least let us see part of the Bertrand report if it will not let us see the entire report? During ten years as a Crown attorney I cannot recall a case in which I was involved where a company was charged and the president of that company was not also charged. What is the point in charging the company with committing a commercial fraud and not charging the president of the company if he was the actual principal in the alleged crime? Often convicted companies are fined a nominal amount of money and the president of the company who was its guiding mind in the fraud gets away with it. Is that just? Is that the way to carry out a system of criminal justice which will win the confidence of Canadians?

I think I have raised some important issues, Mr. Speaker, which show that the matter before us is very important. It is an issue which will not go away. It did not go away for a certain gentleman south of the border. You cannot conceal things in a free society for very long despite the efforts made by members opposite. The Bertrand report will come out sooner or later. It cannot be locked up forever. I put it to hon. members opposite that if and when the Bertrand report is released, it shows anything different from what we have been told on faith to accept—and we do not have much reason to accept anything on faith on this matter from members opposite—that they will rue the day. We on this side will not let this issue go.

Some members here know that my political hero is Abraham Lincoln. I have a picture of him on the wall of my office. I recently had occasion to read Carl Sandburg's biography of Lincoln. I cannot believe that if Abraham Lincoln, or anyone of nearly his stature, had been confronted with this problem, as has the government opposite, he or she would not have said that this is too important for our basic institutions. He or she would get the best man or woman as a prosecuting special counsel, or a group of counsel. I think what Abraham Lincoln, or anyone who aspires to be like him, would have said, "Go ahead. Charge me. Charge my colleagues. Charge anyone whom you think should properly be charged in this matter."

I will end on a soft note. Members opposite do not live up to my standard of what a true statesman should do on this vital matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, after hearing the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Kilgour), I am convinced Abraham Lincoln would rather be in another office than his this evening.

Why are we here when all provincial legislative assemblies have adjourned for the summer? Why are we here preventing employees, honest workers of this House, from taking their summer holiday as they had planned? Why are we here keeping hon. members on both sides of the House from enjoying their vacation with their families as they had hoped? Because a handful of ultra-Conservatives have assumed control over the opposition. And also because, since the February convention, as we know, the Leader of the Opposition is no longer really the leader but only two thirds of a leader. As a consequence, those ultra-nationalists, those untra-Conservatives, rather, force Parliament to sit here because they have accounts to square with their own leader. I submit it is unacceptable that a bunch of ultra-Conservatives should try to coerce Parliament into denying postal workers their right to negotiate, that those ultra-Conservatives should want to oblige the government to make public reports that will harm innocent citizens who have not been accused of wrongdoing in the