

Government Orders

The exact amount of money received by the lobbyists is not known. According to the real estate developers' sources, it would amount to \$1.5 million over 18 months.

Mr. Nixon also questions the excessive rate of return granted to the airport tenant. He also mentions the role of patronage and pressure groups in this transaction. The role of lobbyists in this affair went beyond what is usually expected. The investigator tells us that lobbyists were directly responsible for the reassignment of several senior officials and the request from some other officials to be replaced.

We ask the government to get to the bottom of this transaction and to hold an independent public inquiry which alone can reassure disillusioned taxpayers. Is this another promise in the red book that will remain a dead letter or be postponed indefinitely? When does the government intend to keep the promise mentioned in the red book during the election campaign of a code of ethics for ministers, senators and members of Parliament, political staff and public servants, to provide a proper framework for their relations with pressure groups? The openness and accountability of government are at stake.

In conclusion, for us in the Bloc Québécois, in future, Pearson Airport in Toronto should be run by a non-profit airport authority, like the airports in Montreal and Vancouver.

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I speak again on the issue of Pearson Airport, a subject close to our hearts. I would like to start by responding to a point the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands made earlier in his speech. My friend opposite said the Bloc Québécois was criticizing and that we might be criticizing for the sake of criticizing or because we could find nothing else to criticize.

First, the people across the way should not forget they are the ones responsible for the legislative agenda. Bring in something else and we will go along. It is just that so far in this Parliament, the legislative agenda has been rather light. The people of Canada and Quebec have a right to see things happening here.

• (1335)

Many promises were made in the red book. Now, the government is getting political mileage out of making good so to speak some of these promises. But we need more than mere promises to make this country work.

There is an echo in this place, Mr. Speaker. So, I will carry on with my speech to make sure the Bloc Québécois' position on this is perfectly clear. For the information of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, I would like to quote, if I may, from an article published on May 9 in the *Ottawa Citizen*. I think it shows pretty clearly why the Bloc Québécois is questioning the Liberals' motives for wanting to pass this motion so quickly.

I am not perfectly bilingual, but I will read this article in the language of Shakespeare, as it was written in English. This will give the anglophones in my riding an opportunity to hear how I speak this language I am trying to learn but have not yet mastered.

Here is what Mr. Greg Weston wrote. I will spare you certain points of detail, but the part that I found particularly interesting reads as follows:

[English]

Given the billions in potential profits the developer lost in all this and the government's apparent bazooka-like approach to compensation, the silence from the negotiating table seems rather deafening.

Cela veut dire que ça rend sourd un peu.

In that respect one observation from the recent compensation meeting in Toronto is perhaps worth noting: The firm with the largest stake in the development consortium and therefore the most to lose is Claridge Properties. It happens to be controlled by Montreal billionaire Charles Bronfman who happens to be a friend of the Liberal Party.

L'histoire commence à être intéressante.

As it also happens the Liberal government still wants to develop Pearson airport in a big way, will be looking for a suitable developer and is eager to get the work started this fall. One of those at the recent compensation meeting in Toronto observed a pretty relaxed group of Claridge executives. Interesting, no?

[Translation]

That is what our friend Greg Weston wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen* on May 9. How can we, from the Bloc Québécois, give the Liberals opposite a blank cheque when there is already talk about games being played behind the scenes?

We want to know what we are dealing with before any compensation is paid. We want to know what happened, and who was involved in particular, to see how Pearson airport could be developed later on.

We sense certain things. We hear that the government wants to develop Pearson Airport, still. So, it would be very interesting to start over with a clean slate, instead of using what I might call the "humus" borrowed from the previous government and the current one as well.

I also wanted to stress the importance of this case. We are not talking about something minor. Some 57,000 passengers go through this airport. Twenty million passengers a year. Three hundred destinations in 60 countries. Plus 56,000 direct and indirect jobs and some \$4 billion in economic spinoffs in Ontario.

So this is very important; we cannot remain silent and trust them when they say that there were no lobbyists. The \$4 billion at stake is very important for the economy.

The contract still has not been made public. However, if we believe what journalists have told us about it, the Nixon report points out that lobbyists' involvement of this case seems unusual. Lobbyists were more active in this case than in any other where the government must make decisions. So it is very