

important members of the Conservative party, people who are close to other cabinet ministers, are getting rich and getting rich out of the public trust. Contracts are being awarded with no sense for the taxpayer that any respect is being paid at all to get the best deal or even to justify the contract.

What we are urging and what we are asking is that the government clean up its act. It is not a good enough answer for the government to say that it is cleaning up its act by turning over information about a particular individual or a particular situation to the police.

• (1820)

If I can pursue the example of the Gravel case, during the time in which the matter was under investigation by the police, the government refused to answer any questions about it. It refused to answer not just about Mr. Gravel's involvement but about the implications of having a member of its caucus on the take getting bribes, and the way in which that would alter the operations of the government against the interests of the taxpayer.

When the individual was charged and we asked questions about it, the government refused to answer questions about it because the individual was charged. When he was before the court it refused to answer questions about it because it was before the court. When the individual was convicted and no public interest was served at all in refusing to answer questions about the details and background, again it refused to answer questions saying that the book was closed.

Let me pursue the Gravel example again. If someone is prepared to give a bribe to have his contract accepted by a government department, it is important for us to know, apart from the responsibility of the individual, whether that contract a necessary contract. Was it something the government really needed to be done? Was there someone else who would have done it for less or done it better? These are all very relevant questions. Whether Mr. Gravel in the particular case ended up being convicted or not, we are entitled to ask those questions and have answers to them.

Now I come to the case before us, of Senator Cogger. Whatever his individual responsibility is found to be, whether charges are ever laid or ever successfully brought, what is uncovered is another piece of this

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pattern of a government that helps its friends *en route* to awarding government contracts, *en route* to making government decisions. It is not good enough to tell us that Senator Cogger is possibly being reviewed in the other place. It is not good enough to tell us that the RCMP may be looking into the matter.

Whether they are or not, we insist that the government answer for the probity, honesty and fairness of the way in which government programs are being admitted. Everyone in this country is becoming more intensely aware, day by day, that having a friend of the Prime Minister help you for payment, having a friend of another cabinet minister, having a prominent Tory help you, is a certain way of being able to succeed in getting a grant, a loan, in getting a contract to put up a building at an airport, or in getting a lease from the government for space in a private building.

There are many examples of it, and in each case the government has insisted that it will only focus on the individual and the individual's responsibility. Whether the individual is responsible or not, whether we are talking about a rotten apple, we are talking about a rotten government.

This Parliament is the place where we are entitled to raise these questions. We are entitled to hear from the ministers of their attempts and their sincere efforts to clean up their act and try to restore for Canadians a government that the Canadian people can be proud of.

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that this question has been raised before and has been answered.

I would like to refer the member to the response by the former Minister of Transport, the hon. member for St. John's West, on February 22, 1988. I quote:

The procedure was one of the most open and above-board ever used by any government in Canada. A committee of permanent civil servants headed by Mr. Warrick, the former manager of the Toronto airport, was in charge of the call of the proposals for the whole procedure. They made a recommendation. Four groups put in proposals and they recommended what they said was the best proposals, after their weeks of analysis. Everyone was given the same chance to make a proposal and to bid.

They came to me then and I approved their recommendation. I did not go against their recommendation. I did not try to overrule their recommendation.