

Those were announced during the last Parliament. I was one of the people who contributed to the present lobbying legislation that we now have, which has not been promulgated yet, I do not think. At least it is not in effect at the present time, but we did adopt it as a Parliament during the last Parliament. I think it was a good effort in all-Party co-operation.

In terms of other public works and supply and service contracts, some measures have been improved over the last two or three years.

I think everyone will say—and even the Prime Minister acknowledged that particularly in the beginning of his mandate in 1984–85 or so—that there were considerable difficulties in the administration of that. I am not going to get into the activities that went on, the charges and so on that have occurred. Those are there on the public record.

I think what we have to do, and some of these things have taken place already, is to ensure that we lower the threshold which is utilized in order to determine what contract goes out for public tender. We need to enforce the regulations in so far as determining what the exceptions are to those tendering procedures. There are always emergencies when we have to call a plumber in the middle of the night to repair a facility, a boiler or a heating system. I think we all recognize that this kind of situation must continue.

We must tighten up the rules as much as we can. We must also strengthen the conflict of laws that we have not only for Members of Parliament and cabinet Minister but for some of the senior civil servants as well. I think the stricter those rules the better they will be. Some people have said that stricter conflict of interest rules will discourage people from entering public office. I hold exactly the opposite view. In fact, hopefully the stricter the rules, the better the system will be. If the system is better, people will be more attracted to run for public office because it will enjoy a higher level of reputation than it does at certain unfortunate times right now.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): First, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to say a few words in this hour of debate that is coming to an end today on the Throne Speech. Also, I would like in the first place to take this opportunity to thank my constituents in Saint-Maurice for trusting me on November 21, 1988, when they elected me as their first Progressive Conservative MP in 97 years.

The Address—Mr. Pronovost

During the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, numerous references were made to all areas involving the environment, and my constituency has been very much in the headlines these last few days with the PCB spill from the Belgo plant in Shawinigan. People in my constituency have been very concerned, because this is the second toxic spill from that plant in three months and they have every reason to be disturbed. The Belgo plant in Shawinigan has been in breach of the environment laws on many occasions over these last few years, a fact that has surfaced a number of times.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I was very amazed during these last weeks to see how much the whole issue of the environment is an important one to people in my constituency and to Canadians from sea to sea.

I had the opportunity, pleasure and privilege to rise three times in this House in two days on the matter of the Saint-Maurice river pollution. I did some research to find out about the behaviour of the two Liberal Members who were my predecessors during the last 25 years.

To my great stupefaction, Mr. Speaker, and to the shame of my constituents, we have found that in 25 years of Liberal government, not once did these two Liberal Members, Mr. Chrétien and Mr. Grondin, find a way to rise in this House to condemn the pollution and very deteriorated state of the Saint-Maurice river.

It was my pleasure to do so on three occasions in two days. And the constituents in Saint-Maurice wondered why Jean Chrétien did not do that. Why did he not rise in this House during the 20 years he represented us here, why he did not do so? We understood why last year, Mr. Speaker, when Jean Chrétien was elected to the board of Consolidated Bathurst. We are paying the price for 21 years of silence. Jean Chrétien was rewarded for not saying a word in this House and for having let the Saint-Maurice river become one of the most polluted in Canada. Today, Mr. Speaker, pollutants are often spilled in the Saint-Maurice river. Consolidated Bathurst, Belgo Division, has never had any trouble with the federal government.

We now have a new Minister of the Environment (M. Lucien Bouchard), who will not be pushed around. The new Minister of the Environment is not afraid of Consolidated Bathurst. He has said in this House that if Consolidated Bathurst has broken the law, the Federal government will take legal proceedings. During 25 years of silence, never did Jean Chrétien, who was Minister of Finance, who headed about every Department, never did Jean Chrétien, with all his power and influence, dare say such a thing. The citizens of Saint-Maurice sure fixed his wagon along with that of his gander on November 21