

● (1250)

The Hon. Member talks about “tendered” or “untendered”.

Mr. Deans: That’s the key.

Mr. Andre: What he is suggesting is we would not have been able to negotiate with Spar Aerospace to build the Canadarm if anyone in Spar was related by marriage to anyone—

Mr. Althouse: No, no, untendered contracts.

Mr. Andre: That was non-competitive.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): An exact parallel.

Mr. Andre: The CF-18s which were purchased by the previous Government have a life cycle of 20 or 30 years. We have no choice but to buy the parts for those aircraft on a non-competitive basis because there is only one supplier. The Hon. Member, to take his argument to its logical conclusion, is suggesting that no relative of anyone employed at McDonnell Douglas of Canada Ltd., Canadair, de Havilland, all of the producers of parts for the CF-18—because they are purchased on a non-competitive basis—have any right to participate in Government business. That is what the Hon. Member is saying. Does he have any idea of what he is talking about? I don’t think he has thought this through to its logical conclusion.

Mr. Deans: I thought it through.

Mr. Andre: This Government is aware of the potential for abuse. We do not want it to appear—we certainly don’t want it in the reality—that we are using taxpayers’ money to do anything else but give them the best value for it. That is our responsibility. So what do we do in cases where we are forced to enter into contracts by the circumstances of the business, advertising, by the circumstances of the situation, CF-18s, or by sole source situations because we want to buy Canadian rather than go offshore? Literally tens of thousands of those situations come up each year. What do we do to protect the public and to ensure that it gets full value for its money? We publish it. We operate in a fish bowl. Anyone through the freedom of Information Act can get access to the contracts, and it can only be done under the Freedom of Information Act because we want to protect confidential information. The amount of the contract is published weekly. I sent a copy to the Hon. Member’s office free of charge. We charge other people to recover the costs. He can look at that document every week to find out if there is anything unfair or suspicious. If, for example, my brother has a contract with a Government Department—it won’t happen because he is not in any business which would affect that but if anything like were to come up—the Hon. Member not only has the right, he has the responsibility to hold me to account in the House of Commons as the Minister responsible for government contracts. He has the right and the responsibility to make me defend the expenditure of those public funds and to ensure that the taxpayer received full value. I have said it before this week, Mr.

Supply

Speaker, and I will say it again; any time I can make a contract with a firm like Lawson Murray Ltd. which is going to save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars, I am going to do it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: That is what happens when you are in a situation where you cannot open a coupon or envelope and give the contract to the low bid. You have to start applying things like trust and experience. If the Hon. Member was hiring a lawyer, an accountant, a physician or any professional service whatsoever, where tendering is just not possible given the nature of the service, is the Hon. Member seriously suggesting that it would make prudent sense for him, or for the Government, who are interested in the outcome and result, to immediately dismiss everyone we know because there might be a conflict?

Mr. Benjamin: No, get off it. Speak to the motion.

Mr. Andre: Does it make sense that we immediately dismiss everyone we trust?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Tell us about Commonwealth Publishing in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Andre: That is absolutely absurd. What you want when you are hiring a lawyer is someone who is going to get you off the charge or win the negotiations with whomever you are negotiating. The Hon. Member knows that. If he is hiring an accountant or a management consulting firm, he wants someone he can trust and who will do a good job. We want exactly the same thing. It’s not secret. It’s published. We want the Hon. Member to look at it, to examine it and make decisions objectively on the results.

Mr. Benjamin: We just did.

Mr. Andre: I wonder whether one of those Hon. Members opposite will stand up and admit that Lawson Murray, instead of being vilified, ought to be applauded for the responsible actions it took in fulfilling this contract?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andre: Sanctimonious socialists really get to me. I suppose being a socialist, an NDPer, and being totally indifferent to taxpayers’ money is one and the same thing. One would certainly think so looking at the performance of the socialists when they are in office. In Saskatchewan, Don Keith, a defeated New Democrat, was appointed general manager of the Saskatchewan Development Fund. I wonder if that was competed for. How about Louis Roy, a defeated New Democrat, who was retained by the Department of Northern Saskatchewan as a \$4,000 a month consultant? Consultant contracts are not tendered, and they shouldn’t be. Perhaps he’s a good guy and I regret, in a sense, having to raise this point. The point must be made to Hon. Members opposite. When the performance is good, when there is a clear saving of taxpayers’