

[English]

I truly hope my remarks have gone some way to dispel the confusion the amendment has attempted to cast over a perfectly straightforward piece of legislation.

[Translation]

All that needs to be done is to fix the plumbing, so let us get to work. You can rest assured, however, that I will speak again about our treatment of the plumbers. For that, I will certainly rely on the help of the opposition.

Mr. François Langlois (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on this bill and on the motion tabled by the Leader of the Opposition. I listened carefully to the hon. member for Saint-Denis and, before her, to the hon. member for Portneuf.

Before pointing out a few ill-chosen comments made by the hon. member for Saint-Denis, I will briefly discuss the general provisions of Bill C-22, and particularly clauses 9 and 10. Clause 9, which reads as follows:

No one is entitled to any compensation from Her Majesty in connection with the coming into force of this Act.

It is absolutely clear. No recourse is possible against the Crown. If Bill C-22 is passed, an individual will not be allowed to go before the courts, explain how he suffered a prejudice, and ask to be compensated following a measure taken by the Parliament of Canada under the powers granted to it by the Canadian Constitution.

However, the following section has the effect of undoing what is established in section 9. In fact, section 10 goes even further, since it provides that the Minister may provide for the payment of such amounts as he considers appropriate. In other words, the government is saying: Do not sue us; we will give you something. There is no need to sue the government. People who have, or who claim to have suffered a prejudice, will simply submit their claim informally, without any legal proceedings, by simply making a phone call, or through a behind-the-scenes lobbyist, and they will receive a cheque from the government of Canada. It is much more faster than an open process, either court proceedings or public hearings, that can be appealed to the highest courts, so we close that door.

We should be more honest and clear about section 9. Instead of saying that no one is entitled to any compensation from Her Majesty, we should say that no one is entitled to compensation from the courts, because the companies seeking compensation can always go directly to the minister. To say that no one is entitled to compensation is not exactly true. No one is entitled to compensation from a court of law.

I would bet a few dollars that the compensation that will be awarded by the minister will probably be much more generous than any that would have been granted by the courts, because it is so much easier to come to an agreement between friends about

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any loss suffered. When we talk about friends, we always come back to the same basic question: "Tell me who pays you, and I will tell you who you work for". Who is financing the current government? The current government is being supported, although to a lesser degree, by the same backers than the previous Conservative government.

Why do these big companies and corporations give huge amounts of money to political parties? Because they support the leader or his or her colleagues, or even the party's platform? Of course not! They do it in order to have access to the government. They want a good return on their investment.

• (1235)

The Leader of the Opposition gave us, in the Bloc Quebecois, a meaningful demonstration of that when he demanded that each and every contribution to our party be made only by people who can vote in Canada. The Bloc Quebecois is financed only by individuals; we do not take contributions from legal entities, which are not always good citizens, especially when it comes to the funding of political parties. Indeed, one can wonder why they finance political parties.

We in the Bloc Quebecois can freely discuss this bill, since our hands are free. Individuals who give \$20, \$50 or \$100 to the Bloc Quebecois know very well that they will have no influence on their member of Parliament or that they will not be able to blackmail him into doing anything. If voters wanted to blackmail us for their \$200 or \$300 contribution, we would simply write them a cheque for \$200 or \$300 and bid them goodbye. It is as simple as that in the Bloc Quebecois.

Thus, the motion recently put forward by my friend, the hon. member for Richelieu, and aimed at limiting the public financing of political parties to a maximum of \$5,000 per person would allow for great progress in the control of their elected representatives by voters, giving them reasons to regain confidence in this institution.

The hon. member for Saint-Denis mentioned earlier in her speech that the Leader of the Opposition had made remarks about Paramax, among others, to the effect that people must be compensated. Quite on the contrary, what the Leader of the Opposition demanded in the Paramax issue was that the funds which were not invested in the helicopter contract be reinvested in the development of a high-speed train. That is quite different. We asked to reinvest the same amounts, not to pay lobbyists or to compensate speculators for anticipated losses. We asked the government to reinvest that money in high-technology industries so that it is not lost for Quebec. We never ever asked that money be paid to people who had stood to gain in any form.

For me, the most difficult provision of Bill C-22 to swallow is that some people who remain anonymous will be compensated because their speculative scheme failed. The previous government, the Conservative government, had decided to privatize the airport. People thought that it was a good opportunity to make