

*Oral Questions*

with these made-to-measure orders for Power DirecTv, in which the Prime Minister's son-in-law has an interest.

Several witnesses heard during the public hearings strongly opposed the draft orders in council, because they will eventually make us lose control over the Canadian broadcasting system. Does the minister realize that, after the recording, publishing, video and film industries, he is about to hand over to Americans the last cultural stronghold still controlled by Canadians?

• (1440)

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after reading the communique released by the Bloc Québécois this afternoon, I think that the party should be called the "blague québécoise", the Quebec joke. We held all kind of consultations, including public ones, and we received the report of a committee of experts, as well as several submissions, including some from groups such as the Consumers' Association of Canada, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting and the Conference of the Arts. Those groups urged us to accept the proposals made by the committee of experts. I should also mention the majority report tabled by the committee, as well as the report of the Senate, where the government does not have a majority. We are told that we did the appropriate thing.

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Senate said that these orders were unconstitutional, but that the government could go ahead with them. This is some reference!

Will the Minister of Canadian Heritage admit—assuming he can answer before it is too late, since things could change between now and this fall—that if he goes ahead with his draft orders in council, he will not only undermine the CRTC's integrity and independence, but will also postpone Canada's access to direct satellite broadcasting and allow Power DirecTv, which is an American company, to maintain and expand its illegal market in Canada?

[English]

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think what all Canadians need to understand is how vital this part of the information highway infrastructure is going to be to Canadians. It is for that reason that we have been very concerned and very careful about ensuring that we see the creation of a framework within which we would have a competitive and open system.

The hon. member, who makes quite bizarre allegations on this issue, is trapped in her own rhetoric. The very groups that say the most about supporting Canadian culture have supported the approach the panel of experts recommended on this case.

What is clear to all Canadians is that we favour a system in which there will be licensing, competition, better choice and lower prices for consumers. The Bloc Québécois favours monopoly. It is as simple as that.

**TRANSPORT**

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport is determined to squander a billion dollars of the Canadian taxpayers' money.

Settlement of the unconstitutional cancellation of the Pearson contract will cost taxpayers between \$400 million and \$500 million. Even if the government manages to get Bill C-22 through the Senate somehow, constitutional experts have said it will be thrown out of court. On top of this, the minister is determined to pay additional money to Hughes for a contract that will provide less than contracted for and that is behind schedule.

Why does the minister not cancel the Hughes contract instead of the Pearson contract and save the Canadian taxpayers \$1 billion in the process?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have tried to avoid doing in answering some of the questions from the hon. critic for transportation for the third party is to take courses in dealing with split personalities to try to cope with them.

Mr. Speaker, if you listened to that question you would understand that on the one hand he is suggesting that we are going to lose \$400 million to \$500 million as a result of the cancellation of the Pearson contract.

We are on the record as saying that we will compensate for reasonable out of pocket expenses, not one cent more, regardless of who thinks, including the hon. member, that we should be taking care of people who have not driven a nail or laid an ounce of concrete at Pearson by giving them up to half a billion dollars.

With respect to Hughes, we have gone to the Auditor General of Canada. We are negotiating with Hughes. We recognize that there was mismanagement in that contract, both on the side of the government as well as by Hughes. We recognize that. We have admitted that publicly. Now we will do with Hughes what we are attempting to do with Pearson, which is to protect the taxpayers of Canada, whether he likes it or not.

• (1445)

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Transport is to protect the Canadian taxpayer by paying more for less, no wonder we are in trouble.

Instead of doing the right thing, the government is trying to manipulate testimony going to the Senate. Members of the Canadian Bar Association were to speak very critically of Bill C-22 during the Senate hearings. The Minister of Justice called them to his office and told them to back off. The implication of penalty is obvious.