

Government Orders

this way: public access to government; transparency of dealings with governments; simplicity of the system's administration.

The Ninth Report to the House of Commons by the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, tabled in 1993, stated and I quote: "When lobbying is conducted away from public view, there is a greater opportunity for decisions that undermine the public interest".

● (1555)

Thus, lobbyists are required to file returns with registrars. There are now different categories of lobbyists.

First, there are professional lobbyists who, for payment and on behalf of a client, undertake to arrange a meeting with a public office holder in an attempt to influence him or her on legislative proposals, on the passage or defeat of a bill or on the awarding of monetary grants or government contracts. These lobbyists are subject to very strict regulations.

And then, there are the other lobbyists. They are employees who, as a significant part of their duties, communicate with public office holders. Let us note that the registry of lobbyists may be consulted by the public. This second category of lobbyists is a problem because they are not subject to the same disclosure procedures.

In 1993, the standing committee recommended the elimination of distinctions between different categories concerning mandatory disclosure. It is crucial that we support those recommendations by the standing committee, since many lobbyists do not abide by the law. An anti-avoidance rule is needed. Obviously, staunch opposition is to be expected from many lobbyists.

The concept of openness should also apply to the financing of political parties. Incidentally, on March 13, my colleague, the hon. member for Richelieu, introduced a motion to restrict donations by individuals to \$5,000 a year and to eliminate all corporate contributions.

That motion reminded us that the real bosses are the voters and not the big backers.

The hon. member for Richelieu went on to say: "Although the proportion has changed, the amount provided is still significant and a potential source of conflict. Since the reform of 1974 and the ensuing evolution of fundraising, small contributions from private individuals account for a larger share of the financing of political parties. Such democratization is very much due to the institution of a federal tax credit on political contributions, which was adopted in 1974".

Mr. Speaker, some people may think the current legislation is an adequate means to limit influence peddling and that there is no need to impose a ceiling on donations. However, the accusations of influence peddling made in the last ten years against members of the Senate or the House of Commons tend to prove otherwise.

More and more, Canadians and Quebecers are demanding openness. This disproportionate influence must stop and the people must regain control over our electoral system. Quebec's legislation is a model for all aspects of the electoral system. Popular financing and the requirement to disclose the source and amount of contributions are an integral part of Quebecers' customs.

The last point I want to mention is the recommendation of a code of ethics for elected representative and senior managers, which would allow for more transparency in the registration of lobbyists. This recommendation leads me to the Pearson Airport affair.

Many players are involved and the two principal political parties were largely implicated in this scheming. We find the following companies: Claridge Properties Inc., Paxport Inc., Pearson Development Corporation, and names like Peter Coughlin, Senator Leo Kolber, Herb Metcalfe, Ray Hession, Don Matthews, Otto Jelinek and Fred Doucet, to name only a few.

● (1600)

So it is not without reason that Robert Nixon, Jean Chrétien's investigator, recommended cancelling the contract last November. Having named all these players, we have to conclude that a code of ethics for elected representatives and senior managers is essential.

Given all the disturbing facts of the Pearson Airport affair, it is of the utmost importance to ask the Prime Minister to appoint a royal commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of the dealings of those involved. Transparency must prevail if Canadian democracy is to regain its true meaning.

Mr. Maurice Godin (Châteauguay): Mr. Speaker, today's debate challenges all our political morals, our habits, our customs out of this Chamber, our relations behind the political scene and the influence peddling that usually remain hidden from the public. The study of Bill C-22 provides a unique opportunity to ask ourselves about the interaction that may exist between the political authority of a government and the economic power of large corporations.

We have before us a holding which resorted to the most extreme schemes to acquire terminals 1 and 2 of Pearson Airport in Toronto. The report by Robert Nixon, who was responsible for examining the deal, is very critical in that regard. Corporate transactions, transfers of senior departmental officers, exceptional tendering procedures, no requirement for a prior financial analysis, clauses benefitting the airport at the expense of others, everything led the investigator to believe that such an inadequate contract signed in such an irregular way was unacceptable.

One can understand Airport Development Corporation, Claridge Holdings Inc., Paxport Inc. and their consortium T1 T2 Limited Partnership. Pearson Airport was a jewel for developers in the air transport industry. With 20 million passengers each year, an area covering 1 792 hectares, three terminals, 15 000 employees, and 800 airplanes landing or taking off every day for