

*Government Orders*

office allows property to go there should be some kind of mechanism.

If a line department wants to sell a piece of land it should go through a process to examine other objectives of other departments. In other words, it should be similar to the way one would waive a hockey player from the NHL to the minors. Teams have to make sure that no one else in the same league has use for that particular hockey player. It should be the same thing with Crown lands.

We should not allow this, whether by the post office or Public Works. Public Works traditionally is asked by line departments: "Listen, whether I am in the environment ministry or in Transport Canada, go out and acquire a piece of land for me or build a building for me". When the object of the particular line department is no longer met, rather than just disposing of it right away we should not only check to see if there is some other short-term use, but also if there is any potential long-term use. I think that we have to put in some kind of a mechanism that could inhibit some of the possible abuses that may occur.

• (1050)

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Madam Speaker, with your permission I would like to put the same question to my colleague that I put to my friend from the New Democratic Party. It is with regard to the concept of selling off the family jewels. In this case federally owned Crown assets are being used to plug some loophole or some problem regarding the deficit or the government's fiscal responsibility.

I do not believe that is an appropriate way of dealing with the disposition of federally owned assets. In other words you do not sell off federally owned assets in order to assist when you have a deficit in a particular year. We know that the treasurer of the province of Ontario has indicated that selling off assets in order to reduce the deficit is an appropriate thing to do. Reducing the deficit is a one-time phenomenon. You reduce it once and that is it; you are into the next fiscal year.

The question to my hard working friend from Broadview—Greenwood is: Would he agree with the treasurer of Ontario's philosophy in terms of the disposition of publicly owned land?

**Mr. Mills:** I thank my colleague from York South—Weston for his question.

I have absolutely no argument with the private sector which is out to try to get the best deal it can for its shareholders and to meet its own objectives. I guess we have to give the SkyDome consortium full marks for its negotiating skill with the NDP treasurer of the province of Ontario.

I cannot believe the Toronto newspapers have not given this more coverage. If this was the Conservative government doing this deal there would have been story after story, day after day. I cannot quite figure it out. Because the NDP is doing it, it seems that most of the journalists are staying away from it.

However the people of Canada should know the facts. The facts of the matter are that the land upon which the SkyDome stadium sits was basically the national government's contribution to the domed stadium through CN. Today most experts would say that contribution was in the neighbourhood of \$100 million. On top of that we have an asset that cost the taxpayers of Ontario \$550 million. That would make our domed stadium worth approximately \$650 million.

What the NDP treasurer of the province of Ontario did was take this public service facility and sell it to the private sector for \$100 million in cash and a debenture of \$200 million which is deferred for 20 years. That is it and it is not even interest bearing. Where is the benefit for the province of Ontario's treasury?

It looks good on paper because a piece of paper has been shuffled from the province of Ontario's treasury books and put into another column. But the province of Ontario has basically given away its ability to have any influence or any exercise in the management of that piece of property. I say to my colleague from York South—Weston that the problem in that deal is not with the private sector operators. God bless them. They took the treasurer of the province of Ontario to the cleaners.

The problem is that the domed stadium was an instrument to provide tourism jobs for people who come to our baseball games, our football games, our tennis tournaments, our trade shows and everything else that we bring to Toronto.

If the private sector is allowed to push up the price of hot dogs in an unregulated fashion and push up the price of beer because it no longer has the province in there considering the tourism objective then all of a sudden the policy objective of that domed stadium goes right out