

Government Orders

told them to be careful and to eliminate overlap, they said that no such thing existed.

Today, I am giving the government a second piece of advice. I say: Add transparency and it will begin to make more sense. We will continue to give you good ideas and ask you to accept the decision of Quebecers gracefully when they say they are ready to be on their own. I do hope that you will be able to listen to them.

As a Quebecer, I will be happy to visit other provinces and, perhaps, act as a consultant representing Quebec and inform people from other provinces. I see that an hon. member would like to ask me a question. I will be pleased to listen to him.

[English]

Mr. Harbance Singh Dhaliwal (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the hon. member for Gaspé. I have the honour of serving with him on the fisheries and oceans committee.

I spent most of my life before I became involved in politics working on contracting and specifically providing services in government. This is a good step toward consolidating some of the many government departments, as I am sure members of the Reform know.

If we consolidate, billions of dollars worth of contracts will be accessible to every Canadian under the open bidding system. Right from the computer we will be able to access the number of contracts that are being bid on right across the country, whether it is in Halifax, Vancouver or any other part of the country.

Is the hon. member going to tell the small business people in his riding, the people who are now bidding for contracts, very good companies from Quebec who bid on contracts in Quebec City, Vancouver, Edmonton or Halifax, that he wants to take that opportunity away from them?

What is he going to tell them in his march to become independent? Now they have access to billions of dollars worth of contracts, as this open bidding system consolidates to include other government organizations such as crown corporations. Even contracts and opportunities that exist in other parts of the world like the U.S. or Asia-Pacific are put on its bulletin board.

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It creates tremendous opportunities for business people in Quebec, for new people, perhaps his own son who would like to get into business providing services for government, whether it is in construction, whether it is consulting or any other type of service.

What is he going to tell them? That he wants to take that opportunity away from them, the billions of dollars of government contracts they get to bid on competitively on which if they are the low bid and can be shown to qualify they will be awarded the contract? That instead of looking at an expanding market and

giving them more opportunities even beyond the borders, limiting them to a smaller market, limiting them to fewer opportunities? What response would the hon. member give to all those small business people in Quebec and those people who do work for government and are involved in government contracting?

They understand the tremendous opportunity which exists and the changes that will come about in the new infrastructure in terms of the information technology and the instantaneous access to that information. As we build that infrastructure these departments can be very important to consolidate the services that people have access to and the contracts and the business opportunities that exist.

I would like to ask the member what his response to them would be.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that it will be very difficult to be brief, but I will try to respect the wishes of the Chair.

Two questions were raised by the Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Oceans. First, what about the future of my son and the future of Quebec? The answer is that my son will be delighted to work as an international consultant, if Quebec is a sovereign, different nation.

Second, before we talk about the future, about what will happen in the months and years to come, what about what is happening today? They tell us: If you agree to stay, you will have access to a huge market worth \$5.2 billion in contracts.

I said earlier that Quebec only gets 15 per cent. How much more will we have in the future? The rules of transparency do not seem to apply. What explanation does the parliamentary secretary have for the Outaouais region, which gets only 1 per cent, while 99 per cent goes across the river? This does not bode well for the future.

Perhaps if members opposite and the minister agreed with our suggestions to include transparency in the bill, and if they also agreed that the procedure should be more standardized, then we would have some basis for discussion. Meanwhile, Quebec pays more than \$28 billion in taxes, and that is a fact. When those \$28 billion stay in Quebec instead of going to Ottawa, it will be easier on the gas to go to Quebec City and find out how we can get contracts. In Quebec, the process is open and transparent. It is administered by a public commission. With the \$28 billion in taxes we will keep down there and a well-oiled machine to manage the money, it will be marvellous.

[English]

Ms. Shaughnessy Cohen (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, when our government took office a year ago we made a number of very specific commitments to the Canadian people.