

Government Orders

can act much more vigorously and effectively to attract potential clients from all over the world.

While negotiating that transfer, we realized some things. Of course, Ottawa wanted to negotiate a long-term lease and we wanted to look at the purchase options because for companies that come to the industrial park surrounding the airport, it is not easy, never knowing whether in 20, 30 or 40 years the airports will still be there or not, because the government might take them back.

So we raised some interesting issues in the negotiation. From a financial point of view, \$30 million in annual revenue is generated and is to be reinvested in the community through infrastructure projects. However, we had to negotiate hard to convince the federal government to give us a \$12 million share out of those \$30 million. The government told us: We are willing to give that money back to you. However, according to our financial projection, we had \$30 million in revenue in the past, but only \$18 million was reinvested in Montreal.

It was very important to us that the revenue generated in Montreal would stay in Montreal. We clearly demonstrated that by investing \$150 million, that is \$30 million annually over a period of five years, in airport infrastructure projects in Montreal, something which would not have happened before.

Of course, the fact that Toronto was favoured made the private sector smell the opportunity. Indeed, the private sector saw an opportunity there and we know what happened during the election campaign. The previous government said: We will give this to the private sector; we have many friends involved. This, of course, brings the whole issue of political party financing. In the end, I think that the Conservative Party bowed to the pressure of friends eager to take advantage of a good opportunity.

What happened then is that the new government realized that it also had many friends involved in the dealings. This situation led to this infamous Bill C-22, which is now before us and which seeks to allow the government to compensate its friends, who also happened to be friends of the previous government. It does not matter which camp lobbyists belong to! I have nothing against them; they look after their own best interests. However, I think that when you spend taxpayers' money, you have to do it in an appropriate manner.

This is why I wanted to take this opportunity to tell once again to this House that local airport authorities are the best protection against this problem with lobbyists.

Of course, if a royal commission of inquiry was set up, the private sector might think twice in the future before asking a

minister to table bills such as this one to compensate friends of the regime with taxpayers' money.

In conclusion, I will gladly oppose Bill C-22, but I also think that our amendment asking for the setting up of a royal commission of inquiry should be implemented. I urge hon. members to support that amendment. And while we are at it, this commission could also look at the possibility of letting the Greater Toronto Area manage the airport through a local airport authority. This would provide maximum protection against lobbies, while also ensuring that taxpayers money is well managed in Canada.

• (1130)

[English]

Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan): Mr. Speaker, killing the Pearson airport deal was a very good thing indeed. The Prime Minister and his government should take some credit for having done that.

The enabling legislation, Bill C-22, contains compensation provisions for the developers. Why is that? As reported in the *Ottawa Sun* on October 6, 1993 during the election campaign, the then Leader of the Opposition, the present Prime Minister said: "I challenge the Prime Minister to stop that deal right now. People have a right to know what is in the deal". The Prime Minister was entirely correct in saying that.

To go further on the side of the government, to quote the Minister of Transport, speaking in the House on April 26, he said: "Our government after careful examination of the agreements has determined that they are not in the public interest. Our examination included a report by Mr. Robert Nixon who described a flawed process clouded by the possibility of political manipulation".

The Minister of Transport went on to say: "This government rejects the previous government's way of doing business on behalf of Canadians. A reliance on lobbyists, the backroom dealings, the manipulation of bona fide private sector interests and the lack of respect for the impartiality of public servants are absolutely unacceptable". I applaud the minister's words.

Therefore if we take the government at face value, it decries the backroom deals and would have everything brought out into the open. However, the fine print of Bill C-22 will allow the Minister of Transport to provide for appropriate payments to the partnership for its out of pocket expenses. There is the problem.

On the one hand the government said: "Get things out into the open" and on the other it says in effect: "Trust us, we will provide whatever compensation we think fit and there will be no need to publicize it".

Only three weeks elapsed between the signing of the contract on October 7 and the order to put it on hold. If there is any compensation payable for work done in that short period, then let it be spelled out in complete detail and let it be made public.