

Government Orders

The salvage value of the work being done has not been answered. We want to know what the government has for an alternative process to deal with the problem at Pearson. All kinds of money have been spent on plans, drawings, engineering, passenger load surveys, negotiations with users and tentative contracts that could still be honoured by a new contractor. There is a tremendous value in that, but until we know what it is we do not know what compensation the government should pay out for those things specifically and what the Canadian taxpayer will be able to recoup through the process.

The minister suggested that taxpayers are faced with cuts and therefore we should not consider going into court and allowing the contractors from Pearson to get a large settlement. Is that not interesting? Does that not send a wonderful message out to the business community?

It says that the Liberal government is in trouble with its overspending. The Liberal government has to make some cuts somewhere. It does not particularly care if they are fair or normal as long as they will save a lot of money and as long as someone else can be blamed. That is where some of these cuts will come from.

I do not want to see money wasted by the government any more than anyone else other than probably the government. We bring forward financially responsible proposals and the government seems to want to waste money. It is strange that it would suddenly turn around and want to be financially responsible. It is not proposing financial responsibility.

The matter has to go back to the courts. The courts will decide what went wrong in the process. They will discover whether there was any illegal or improper conduct on the part of anyone involved in the process and they will set the compensation accordingly.

If there was something wrong with the way the consortium lobbied the government it will be identified. The principals will not be compensated for illegal, improper type conduct. If they conducted themselves properly, just because we do not happen to like the way the rules work we cannot punish private enterprise for following the rules of the government. If that happens it sends out a message that no one should do business with the government, and that is not the kind of message we want to send out.

As far as what is going to happen to the bill, the Liberal government has an absolute dictatorship for the next four years. Obviously it can pass anything it wants as long as it can keep its backbenches in order. So far it has been able to do that. We do not know how long it will be able to maintain that, but for now at least it has managed to keep its members voting the way they are told. We have to suppose that it will go back to the other place.

How are we going to deal with it? I am going to meet with the Senate. It is very clear we want a triple E Senate, but as long as we have a Senate there has to be some function for it. If it provides the chamber of sober second thought, which is the function of the Senate, we will work with what we have to work with until such time as we can improve it. We will try to find a solution or an alternative way to bring the matter back to the House yet again until the government deals fairly and properly with the whole matter.

• (1635)

We will not support the government's motion.

Mr. Julian Reed (Halton—Peel): Mr. Speaker, I was listening very passively to the hon. member's speech until I heard the word "dictatorship". It was like being hit over the head with a two by four. It brought me to attention.

Mr. Silye: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Quorum, please.

Mr. Arseneault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that it is fine to call for quorum but we have many members in committees right now and doing House duty as do other parties. If we start these shenanigans about quorum, we are going to be spending taxpayers' money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Order. A request has been duly made by the member. He has asked for quorum. By recognizing the other member on his intervention I believe we were getting into a matter of debate.

Mr. Reed: The time the House was shut down with a quorum call probably resulted in another \$100,000 being added to the national debt.

My comments will be brief. The hon. member mentioned a four-year dictatorship and the government keeping the backbenches in line. He should know that the government was elected in the most democratic process existing on the face of the earth. Whatever he may think about that election forming a dictatorship, I suggest he is dead wrong. If he wants to compare what happens in this country with what happens in any other country on the face of the earth he is welcome to do it. I think he should do it before he makes accusations of the kind.

I assure him the backbench is totally united on the issue. As a member who comes from the metropolitan Toronto area or its periphery and whose constituents work at Pearson, at ancillary industries at Pearson, in the airline industries and so on, I say that a successful outcome to the bill is very important.

Mr. Gouk: Mr. Speaker, the term dictatorship suggests when those in power can do whatever they wish. That is exactly what we have. Any time we have a majority party it is the equivalent of a temporary dictatorship. It can be a benevolent dictatorship, if it wishes to get re-elected, but it has absolute power nonetheless. That is where that particular term comes from.