

Government Orders

pretty nice bunch! A bunch of heavies exerting undue influence on the government decision-makers in an unspeakable manner.

Their domination puts our institutions in danger. It produces harmful effects on decision-makers who see and rub shoulders only with one reality, the reality of rich people and large firms. That is very disturbing for ordinary people because decision-makers get disconnected from real social and economic problems that affect the poorest.

The social and human issues are over-shadowed by financial and economic interest linked to profit. All those ex-friends and lobbyists wandering around government offices are looking for profits and they have exceptional tools and means to reach that goal. They can easily open all the doors that give access to ministers and senior officials, and it is not to discuss the weather. All the pressure and influence peddling often gives good results. Decision-makers yield to the requests of friends and lobbyists who are often working for firms that will not hesitate to contribute to the old parties' election funds.

• (1310)

What becomes of ordinary citizens in that system? What becomes of those thousands of organizations without money that are working to improve the well-being of groups and individuals? Do ordinary citizens and those organizations have the same powers, the same access and the same opportunities as those who use their considerable means to influence decision-makers? I do not think so. Certain results are very revealing. The poor and people living in difficult conditions are increasingly forgotten. There are more unemployed workers and more people on social welfare. There are more people who are hungry, more children living in unacceptable conditions and more elderly living alone and receiving less treatment.

As a matter of fact, there are more poor people. And the poor are getting poorer, and the rich are getting richer! Is that the kind of society that we want? Do we want a society increasingly divided into categories? That is what is happening on the field. Figures and statistics are clear. Decision-makers must absolutely come back to reality and try to ensure a better distribution of disposable income between social classes, and they must find a solution to all those excruciating problems. I do not believe that ex-friends and lobbyists can be trusted to see to that. As regards the airport and big profits, I agree they do an excellent job; but when it comes to social problems, we should look elsewhere.

It is urgent that the government establish strict rules for lobbyists. The population has the right, and it is essential, to be informed of all activities pertaining to public administration. The population has that right because at the end of the day it is the one who pays.

Those rules must allow us to know everything about lobbyists. Who are they? Who hires them? Who pays them? What are the goals and results of their activity? Whom do they meet? Actually they should be X-rayed and they should be followed around by a little bird so that we can know everything they do. If the government does not address that problem, the confidence of the population in its elected officials and in our institutions will continue to deteriorate even more rapidly.

I ask the people opposite to wake up because the population is awakening and it is getting fed up with favouritism, bribing on the part of the friends of the party and lobbying of the rich at the expense of the ordinary citizens.

You have denounced for years the absence of openness. I think time has come for you to act.

Mr. Maurice Bernier (Mégantic—Compton—Stanstead): Mr. Speaker, it is a pity that the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell decided to go to lunch right when I was going to tell him why the Bloc Québécois had moved in this House the motion that we have been debating. I see that he is back. I would not want to paraphrase the minister of Transport who said in this House, this morning, about us, the members from the Bloc, that we thought he was stupid because we did not seem to understand his answers. I think that my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has the same resentment towards us.

I am going to read again the motion moved by the Bloc. It is important to understand the meaning of it. The motion asks that the motion be amended by striking all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-22, An Act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of Terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport, because the principle of the Bill is flawed due to the fact that it contains no provisions aimed at making the work done by lobbyists more transparent".

• (1315)

It sounds clear to me. The member said that the Bloc would have wanted that bill to settle the case of lobbyists. I think that we might as well specify something for the member without necessarily writing it down. We are talking about the lobbyists who were involved in the Pearson deal, not about the lobbyists who, day after day, stick around the Liberal Party to get favours.

It is crystal clear. Those who reject that motion must not understand its relevance. The motion says that the bill contains no provisions aimed at making the work done by lobbyists more transparent. We are talking about those numerous lobbyists that can be found sometimes on the side of the Liberal Party, sometimes on the side of the Conservative Party but, at all times, on the side of the government. We want to know about that, and that is why we are asking for a royal commission of inquiry.