

government in the province of Ontario and Bill C-3 respecting the disposition of Crown lands and Crown assets. The hon. member believed that we were bringing in that sale for strictly partisan reasons.

I want to remind my friend from the New Democratic Party, the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, that the sale of the SkyDome in Toronto is very much a part of what we are talking about in this bill today. The land on which the domed stadium in Toronto was built was Crown land. The federal government's contribution to the domed stadium in Toronto was through the Crown corporation CN. It was CN that made the contribution of those lands to the project.

I have heard estimates ranging from \$50 million to \$150 million in terms of the value of those Crown lands.

We have a situation in the province of Ontario where it can be debated. The press do not want to touch it. It is a mystery. I do not know why they do not want to touch it. I am not knocking the private sector that scooped this deal from the province of Ontario. It shows that they are pretty good operators. The problem is that a domed stadium is not just there for the Toronto Blue Jays or Argonauts. It is a tourism instrument that creates a lot of jobs in hotels and motels and in all the spin-offs from the tourism industry. When the Crown had access and participation in that Crown project we were able to have influence on the price of a baseball ticket or a hot dog or a beer. When it is put solely in the hands of the private sector we lose our ability to have influence on using this instrument for the purpose of the public at large.

We have a bill today that accelerates in an efficient way the selling off or the disposition of Crown lands. This makes me nervous. These are megadeals by and large. They should be given a proper analysis and a strategic long-range overview approach. We could be kicking ourselves in the butt five years from now and the taxpayers will never forgive us.

My colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River knows well the Harbourfront deals, the En Route deals and all the other deals that are related to the selling off of Crown assets. My question to him is: Does he not think that with only a year left in this government's mandate this bill poses some real dangers? Does he not think that

the few remaining Crown assets may be discarded or disposed of in a manner where proper long-term study may not be able to happen?

Mr. Lee: I want to thank my friend and colleague from Broadview—Greenwood for that question and an opportunity to clarify.

The SkyDome issue is a good example. It is not a federal property. It is the property of a provincial government. Harbourfront certainly was a property of the federal government. It is a good example of the problem we may face if subclause 16(1) is passed. I pointed out earlier the difference between subclauses 16(1) and 16(2). Subclause 16(2) says the government may sell and dispose of these things by regulation whereas subclause 16(1) says it may simply do it. It is because of the reference to a regulation in subclause 16(2) that we have in this House a hook to find out about what happened.

I do not know exactly the process by which the SkyDome was sold off in Toronto. Let us say for discussion purposes it was a federal property. I will bet dollars to doughnuts that if the government used subclause 16(1) of this bill then after the sale it would say: "We cannot tell you all of the aspects of this financial transaction for two reasons. The first is cabinet confidentiality. This deal was discussed around the table in cabinet and we have the right to confidentiality. Sorry, we cannot talk to you about this".

The second reason that is often used is what is called commercial confidentiality. When it sells it, it says: "The purchasers have asked the government not to disclose certain things because it would put the purchaser at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* competitors". I do not buy any of that. When this government takes our assets and public property and sells it and takes in the money then our taxpayers have to know what happened. They have to know every aspect of that deal. There must be what we call transparency and accountability. As I pointed out earlier subclause 16(1) takes us back 500 years to where the king did whatever he wanted. We just walked away from everything that Parliament was supposed to be. I am disappointed to see it there. I am devastated that it is there. I cannot believe that it has come this far.