

Government Orders

I wonder if the minister could indicate whether there has been any thought given to Crown corporations and, specifically, the post office in this respect. We know that across Canada a number of post office buildings are being disposed of by Canada Post. Is it the policy of Treasury Board to consider the disposition of these properties at lower than market value or even for \$1 provided they remain in public use.

I would also like to pay particular tribute to the work of the member for Sault Ste. Marie who worked very hard on this bill and made a very positive contribution to it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: I would like to explain to the hon. member for York South—Weston that we are in a situation right now where things are totally reversed. The hon. minister was making comments after the intervention by the hon. member for Victoria. As we had House consent earlier and the hon. minister did answer questions after his speech, I think it would be only correct to allow the hon. minister to ask a question after the hon. member for Victoria spoke. There should be time for me to recognize the hon. member on a brief question which should be addressed to the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Loiselle: Madam Speaker, we have a responsibility as managers of this land for Canadians that we get the best possible value. Special cases can always be looked at. However, we generally work together with the authorities to achieve the best possible use, especially in urban areas. Our policy is always to get the best possible market values. However, there are occasions when other arrangements are made.

As for the government, whenever it wants to have access to new buildings it must pay the price. It has to manage that in a balanced way.

We examine each case as to its value and will try to be as helpful as possible given the very limited resources we have.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a general question about the disposition of publicly owned land or publicly owned assets.

We know that the provincial NDP government in Ontario has sold the public interest in the SkyDome. The taxpayers of Ontario had an interest in the SkyDome. It

was revealed this week that the proceeds of that particular sale would be used to reduce the deficit. In order to accommodate some fiscal responsibilities that the provincial New Democratic Party self-authored it is selling off public assets. The treasurer of the province of Ontario has indicated that it is appropriate to sell off assets—

An hon. member: At one-seventh the value.

Mr. Nunziata: —at one-seventh the value, as my friend from Broadview—Greenwood indicates, to deal with a short-term financial problem.

Does the hon. member for Victoria agree with his comrade, Bob Rae, in Ontario that the selling of publicly owned real estate is an appropriate way to deal with short-term fiscal responsibilities? Can he indicate whether this bill deals with where the money should go once public land is sold? Is there anything in here that would restrict where the money can go after a publicly owned asset is sold?

In my view it is wrong. It is penny wise and pound foolish to sell off real estate or assets to deal with some short-term financial problem. Once you sell it, and if you sell it at a loss as the provincial NDP government is doing with the SkyDome, it is gone forever. We all know that real estate only appreciates in the long run.

Does the member for Victoria agree generally with the concept of selling off the family assets to deal with a short-term financial problem?

Mr. Brewin: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for York South—Weston maintains his reputation for managing to interject into a non-partisan and useful discussion of a bill a very highly partisan point that arises in a different jurisdiction.

The member says this is not a tea party. I understand that and I understand the member trying to score a point in Ontario politics. Perhaps he would prefer to be a member in the opposition of the Ontario legislature than to be a member of the opposition here.

• (1040)

The Ontario government is trying to deal with the terrible mess left in Ontario by the Liberal government of Ontario. The Liberals left a huge, huge deficit and failed to deal with the festering sore of debt on the SkyDome. The Government of Ontario moved efficiently and effectively to deal with that. It has cut the losses.