

Government Orders

There is a clear explanation for the 22 committees announced in the last budget. Why create so many working committees when they had the red book and said that it contained solutions to all problems? According to them, there were solutions for all issues and the government had plans in all areas. But that was not enough, they had to create 22 advisory committees with the last budget. Why? Because these committees will need communication companies, lobbying firms and people to subpoena witnesses so it will be possible to reward friends of the party and financial contributors. So they spread favours around generously, just like the Tories did in 1984. They reward people and then they will present a bill on lobbying and say: "We must change things now that we have taken care of our friends".

This Pearson operation is typical; let us not call it the bill, but rather the Pearson operation. This operation rewards friends of the party. If you are sincere when you say you want to solve the problem, as you seemed to be during the election campaign, then throw down your masks, show your face, accept a commission of inquiry; you will not be smeared if you are really sincere, if you did nothing wrong. Take off your masks, create the commission of inquiry and then we will see. We will see if you are so innocent and if you are sincere when you speak about lobbying. If the commission of inquiry concludes that changes are required, we will then invite you to go even further. That will be the real step, the first real step in the right direction, the direction of party financing by the people.

I presented a motion on that point. What did the Liberal members reply?

• (1310)

They ridiculed a motion which exemplifies the beauty and the greatness of Quebec in the area of political transparency. Other provinces share the same desire since seven of them limit the amount of donations to political parties. At least, they set a limit. Here, in the House of Commons, we will not set any limit. The government knows which side its bread is buttered on. I understand why the Liberal members remain silent, their heads bowed low in shame. They were financed by these people.

When I was a senior at l'Académie de Québec, my philosophy teacher, after a particularly brilliant argument which had left us speechless or totally unable to counter, used to say: "Dear friends, it is not given to swines to appreciate pearls". Of course, he said that in jest. I wonder what he would think—he is long dead now, but I cannot help thinking of him and he might be doing the same right now—if he saw this scandalous piece of legislation. Bill C-22 could have heralded a new approach

regarding lobbying firms and transparency. But instead, what we have is a Conservative document.

This bill is no different from those the Tories used to pass to protect their buddies, their clique. No wonder we have a deficit. No wonder no decision is made. It is because the government is waiting. It just came to office and is giving its financial supporters a chance to fill their own pockets, under the same system as we had with the Tories.

That is why we say that it is high time for the government to make a move, and order a commission of inquiry as requested by the Bloc Québécois. It would go a long way, not only to get to the bottom of this, but also to expose all the secret manoeuvring of lobbying firms and, eventually, to control their actions through a well-structured piece of legislation that could remedy this situation.

I see that my time has expired but I am sure that I will be granted unanimous consent to continue for another ten minutes or so. The member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is signalling me. I thank him. I will then continue for just 10 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The member asked the question. Is there unanimous consent for him to go on?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: It does not look like it.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the speech of my colleague, the member for Richelieu, prompts me to take part in this debate, even though I do not have much influence in the Toronto Lester B. Pearson airport deal, as member for Kingston and the Islands.

In any case, this contract poses a problem and I am glad this government did something to correct the situation.

[English]

What we have been faced with is a filibuster by members of the party opposite who seem to think that when the government tries to fix something they had better jump on bandwagon.

I know what happened. Throughout the election campaign while we were criticizing this deal and indicating that it was unacceptable to the people of Canada, we heard absolutely nothing from the hon. member for Richelieu and his colleagues. They are busy trying to make up for lost time and they are doing it by making windy speeches in the House, saying how awful this is. They are trying to find fault with a perfectly reasonable and sensible government bill that gives the government the power to abrogate this deal. That is my understanding of it.