

Government Orders

It is really interesting that the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce was one of the tentative investors in this. It invested at what looked like a 18.5 per cent return on that investment. When it dropped to 14 per cent, which is exactly what Price Waterhouse says it was, CIBC pulled out because it was not a good enough return for the risk involved in this type of investment. Maybe the government wants to suggest that CIBC is not credible, I do not know. It has not answered that.

Included in this particular bill is the fact that there should be no compensation for lobbying fees. If there was something illegal about the way this corporation lobbied the government then certainly it should not get compensation for any illegal activity whatsoever, no matter what.

If the lobbying was legal according to the government and we like many others do not like the fact that there is lobbying, then until such time that the rules are changed it is the same as somebody driving down the street at 90 kilometres an hour in a 90 kilometre zone and someone pulls out from a side street in front of them and gets hit; an investigation after deciding that 90 kilometres is too fast on that street. You do not charge the person who was doing 90 kilometres because he was doing it in accordance with the law, even if it was too fast for that street. That was not his fault. You change the speed limit but you do not do it retroactively. That is what the government is looking at in this particular case.

It talks of third party contract liability. It is going to allow a few dollars to compensate the principles in this for third party contract liability. Third parties do not have a contract with the government. They have a contract with the Pearson consortium. They can sue in court for whatever amount they care to sue for. It could well exceed \$30 million figure the minister threw out here today and there is absolutely no way for the principals in this to pay it. They have that much money out themselves, whether it is by regular and proper activities or whether it is some proper activity, notwithstanding they have already spent in excess of that. Now all of these third parties are supposed to be included in the settlement of \$30 million. It may or may not be appropriate. We have not seen the figures.

There is an ongoing problem with terminal 1 and terminal 2 and the government has not told us what its alternative to this contract is. I tried to find that out from the minister today in Question Period. We did not get an answer, which of course surprises me. It is Question Period, not answer period. That seems to be a very common thing, we do not get answers from the government to our questions.

This is something that should be brought out if we are going to deal properly with this entire business evolving around the Pearson airport.

We are looking for something that is very open, very public and very honest. The government is looking to make a secret compensation deal behind closed doors. The minister was asked when he came before the standing committee if he would make this process visible.

I proposed an amendment both at committee and at third reading here in the House to say we would support this bill if instead of hiring another independent person linked to the government who was going to collect all these claims from the consortium, the minister could decide whether he was going to pay, who he was going to pay and how much he was going to pay them. We asked if he will make these figures public, if we will be privy to these figures and the process used to get to them. His answer was about as vague as it was here today dealing with T1 and T2.

He said they might be able to release some of the figures, but they are not sure because cabinet is involved. The minute we involve cabinet we could wrap the figures up for 20 years and know absolutely nothing about what went on. Under those circumstances there is no way to ensure fairness has taken place.

• (1630)

Today in his address the minister said that the threat of litigation was holding up a new solution. No, it is not. We can have all the solutions in the world telling us what to do. There is absolutely nothing that is holding up some alternative solution to the Pearson airport problem with terminal 1 and terminal 2. All the minister has to do is agree with what is being proposed in the House back from the other place. The contract will be cancelled; it will be over. The fact that litigation is going on in court will not hold up new solutions.

We are looking for a court review of the entire process. That was not our solution; that was not what we desired. We wanted it done in the House through the Standing Committee on Transport where the entire process could be brought forth.

One of the risks that actually happens if it goes to court is that the government could end up reaching a settlement and we would never know the true story about what happened in the Pearson bid process. That is not something we desire.

To turn around at this point and simply close the door, to let the minister decide he will pay what he wants and there will be no recourse and no argument, the public will never find out who was at fault in the process.

Was it the people who bid? Was it the Tory government and the way it was done? Or, do the Liberals have a large part in some of the problems that went on here? As it turns out they talk about the Tory cronies coming to the trough, but in the later stages of the proposal there were as many, if not more, Liberals involved in both the consortium and the lobbying. Is that what the government is really trying to hide?