

had made some comments concerning this transaction. To show the complete contempt that the president of this Crown corporation has for Parliament and for the Auditor General, he had no hesitation in saying, as reported at page 11:18 of the committee report for Friday, April 13 last:—I objected strongly to the Auditor General qualifying our certificate because I felt that—

At that point I interrupted him and asked:

Is that not his job if he thinks there is a serious enough breach?

● (1620)

Then Mr. Aitken said:

Yes, but I think he is mistaken. I disagree violently with the attitude he took in criticizing us.

Who else is to criticize a Crown corporation which has done something wrong? If the Auditor General is to be chastised or to have his attitude disagreed with violently, I do not know who we in this Parliament can turn to in an attempt to get the facts concerning these irregular transactions. When the president of the Canadian Commercial Corporation appeared before another standing committee I tried to quiz him about his version of what actually transpired, and I specifically asked whether he was prepared for the type of statement the Auditor General would probably make in his forthcoming report. I got nowhere; I received a very evasive answer. I was told that the Department of Justice had supplied a legal opinion, which they had followed, and based on that legal opinion they felt everything was all right.

In his report to the House of Commons for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1972, the Auditor General takes up three or four pages on this subject, pointing out what he calls the improper retention of public moneys. I suggest that hon. members read those pages which begin at page 53. For example at page 55 the Auditor General said:

Such procedures were clearly devised to circumvent parliamentary control

There the Auditor General was commenting on the intrigue he traced between the activities of the Canadian Commercial Corporation and the Export Development Corporation, and what he believed was quite unlawful. He stated at page 56:

That the law officers of the Crown are of the opinion that the retention from, and investment outside of, the consolidated revenue fund of public money in this way is lawful—

He went on to state:

That is a most serious situation and we recommend to Parliament that it require the law officers of the Crown to draft for Parliament's consideration suitable amendments to the Financial Administration Act that will ensure that the retention of public funds in this way can no longer be considered lawful.

Perhaps in partial answer to the comments of the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik) I should say that this is a good illustration of the frustration we in the opposition meet when trying to get at the facts concerning these devious and irregular activities which have been developed and certainly expanded by the present government. This is why I believe there should be an inquiry into some of these activities, and in particular into the secret tender policies of the Department of Supply and Services.

Control of Public Funds

Touching on another matter, I think we should bear in mind that the government, through various devices such as the airport revolving fund, has been able to obtain moneys without parliamentary sanction, to be subsequently used for whatever purpose the minister deems appropriate at the time. I have in mind a matter that is of importance to my area, namely, the new airport in Toronto to be known as Toronto International Airport No. 2, at Pickering.

Here we find that through the device of getting the government committed and then coming to Parliament for funds, we are put in the position of refusing to allow the government to meet that commitment. It is interesting that in this case the hon. member for Ontario was most adamant. He suggested that if we refused the estimate in respect of the proposed airport at Toronto, the people in his area would not have the funds to carry out certain expropriations involving 18,000 acres of land. We are told that if we attempt to block the funds, the commitment cannot be honoured and the people will not have the funds required for the expropriation. I suggest this is a circumvention of the whole process of approving the expenditure of public funds.

This question is particularly important when we consider the magnitude of the project. It was estimated that the land acquisition in the Toronto area would cost approximately \$60 million. After the commitment was made and the expropriation finalized, we learned that it was to cost \$90 million. This is a commitment in respect of which we had virtually no say. It amounts to the expenditure of about \$90 million, for an average of \$5,000 per acre. This has been done by the central ministry of transport, and I emphasize "central" because there has been no reference to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. He may continue, however, with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Stevens: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members for allowing me to continue. I would summarize by saying that in my view the central authority, namely, the ministry of transport, is continuing to develop the airport in the Toronto area notwithstanding the fact that the expenditure will eventually amount to at least \$500 million and that this is the only authority in North America at the present time proposing such an airport development.

This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the United States, where the federal authorities do not get involved and where the airport activity in the case of the O'Hare airport in Chicago is five times as great as the activity in the Toronto area. The Chicago authorities do not feel they need a new airport facility, whereas the authority in Toronto, where the activity is only one-fifth, is developing an airport which will eventually cost over \$500 million. The Toronto airport is rated as number nine in activity on the continent, Montreal rates as number ten, New York as number one, Chicago as number two, and Los Angeles as number three. In spite of the fact that Montreal and