

Senator Guy Charbonneau's company to advise them on where to buy new insurance policies. Two months later, most of the port's insurance business went to Pratte-Morrisette Inc., whose board is headed by Senator Guy Charbonneau. Surprise of surprises! It kept the business for the next five years. Canadians only found out about this cosy relationship six years later, in June of this year.

Here is another case that members will be interested in. Maurice Mayer received a commission of at least \$225,000 for buying land for the Montreal Ports Corporation. Mr. Mayer is a real estate broker, a senior Tory fund-raiser, and a friend of the Prime Minister's.

An hon. member: Shame.

Mr. Laporte: His name was proposed by another well known Conservative, and a director of the port corporation, Andre Gingras. What makes things interesting here, Mr. Speaker, is that Gingras and Mayer were business partners at the time, negotiating a \$10.4 million federal government lease for an office building they owned with three other partners. Those other partners were all Tories.

Incidentally, the public works minister at the time, Roch LaSalle, overrode the objections of senior public servants and directed bureaucrats to help the partners win the lease. But that is another barrel and another bunch of pork.

Mayer's contract with the Port of Montreal came in December, 1986. We found out about this in June.

If we are to understand what is happening and if we are to satisfy ourselves that nothing is wrong, then we must have that openness. There is a need for some kind of *glasnost* through the entire port regime.

There is a perfect example in the case of Canada Ports Corporation. At last year's annual general meeting, most of the board members spent around \$4,000 mainly in the dining room and lounge. There are meals and entertainment at exclusive private clubs. Board members get paid for participating in conference calls. Four calls equals one day's work or \$300.

Students of the government's record will probably not be surprised to learn that most of the board members are quite well connected to a particular party, the Conserva-

tive Party. We had to find this information out through the Canadian Press.

Pork-barrelling is not unique to Canada Ports Corporation, of course. The vice-chairman of Montreal Ports Corporation is a former Tory candidate in Westmount and board member, Peter Ohrt, is a former staffer in the Prime Minister's office.

That is all well and good. Perhaps these people are the best qualified and their party affiliation is a mere accident. But it does raise questions, and those questions can only be satisfied in the full light of an accountable and open system.

The recent controversy surrounding Peter Lush and the Hamilton Harbour Commission is also instructive, and not just for the question of whether there was any wrong-doing. The government did nothing to facilitate the flow of information. It stonewalled on questions of conflict of interest. Later, by boycotting a transport committee meeting, it blocked the inquiry into the affair.

And if, as the hon. transport minister has maintained, Mr. Lush has done nothing wrong and was an innocent victim of half truths and innuendo, then the government has only itself to blame for allowing the closed door nature of the commission to make complete information an impossibility.

Secrecy and unaccountability are the parents of waste and extravagance. They tempt people to cut corners, skirt the rules, and carve off a little bit more than perhaps they should be carving off. Now, more than ever, government has not only to be open and honest, but must appear to be open and honest.

It is no coincidence that Canadians are cynical about elected politicians and appointed officials. There is an increasing feeling out there that the government of the country is not run for the benefit of its citizens, but for the enrichment of a privileged few. That belief is reinforced every time Canadians see tax reform that benefit the wealthy, instead of working people. It is driven home every time the government knuckles under to its big business friends and waters down badly needed environmental policies. And it is confirmed in an era of cut-backs and belt-tightening, an era of sacrifice, an era of hardship and every time we find out about appointed officials living high on the hog.

Government Orders