

Government Orders

Unfortunately, the decision is restricted to cabinet itself. The government will use section 9 to discourage all kinds of people from trying to make a case, and the rest will be up to the decision of the minister, in the privacy of cabinet. It is unacceptable to exclude Parliament, as the government is trying to do here, from such important decisions and to give Cabinet a blank cheque. And on top of that, to give so much latitude to the Minister of Transport who has already made a mess of the grain situation in western Canada. It is unacceptable to authorize payment of compensation without being sure such compensation should be paid.

There are several reasons why we would like a royal commission of inquiry.

• (1300)

Why a royal commission? To find out why the government officially requested proposals for the privatization of Terminals 1 and 2 at Pearson. Why would everything be done in a single phase? No pre-qualifications, unlike the process for Terminal 3, which included two phases. Why was the time frame in the request for proposals so short? Only 90 days. It was impossible for groups that, unlike Claridge and Paxport, were not already involved in the airport's management, to submit a valid bid.

Why was the contract signed on October 7, 1993, in the middle of an election campaign, after some reluctance on the part of the chief negotiator who demanded written instructions before signing? What was the exact role of the lobbyists? Whom did they approach? What was the cost to the taxpayer of this hasty decision? Who really benefited? Why did the Conservative government want to privatize Pearson, the most profitable airport in Canada?

In fact, there are a number of questions that arise, a number of fundamental questions about lobbying and the government's role. The government wants to try to cover up this affair. The Bloc Quebecois, including me, will vote against Bill C-22, and we will demand a royal commission of inquiry to shed light on what happened.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Richelieu): Mr. Speaker, while interventions are limited to ten minutes, I would like to say a few words on that horrible and surprising bill. Surprising, yes and no, since, in this Parliament, when the Liberal Party forms the government, we are used to hearing two different tunes: one during the election campaign and another after the election. In my region, we call that speaking out of both sides of one's mouth. When they were in the opposition, they sang another tune.

When we started the debate today, I think that the hon. member for Bellechasse, who is a notary, did a marvelous job of outlining the legal aspect and the legal contradictions of that bill. The hon. member for Québec-Est has just finished his

speech with at least ten questions. Very precise questions calling for clear answers. Only a commission of inquiry empowered to call for sworn testimony could find the answer to those questions.

Yet, the deal was made by the previous government. Why is this government covering up a deal made by its predecessor? Previous speakers of the Bloc Quebecois also mentioned that. The reason is that the same gang is running both parties. This is why we had a budget similar to Conservative budgets. This is why the reform of the unemployment system is similar to the one brought forward by the Conservatives with Bill C-113. This is why the elderly are now under attack as they were under the Conservatives.

This is the reason why the salaries of our courageous civil servants are frozen. The constables that I see up there have their salaries frozen for six years, but that is not a problem. All this is done in an official way in order to be transparent. But when time comes to pay friends that are part of a gimmick like the one at Pearson airport, then it is left to the discretion of the minister or of the cabinet. That is the situation and this is why we are asking for a royal commission of inquiry.

Why should a minister be allowed to reward a chum? And the list of chums of the party is known. The list is there with the names of organizers, senators, people who have generously contributed to this party, as well as to the other, both of which are maintaining such an unacceptable system.

[English]

Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like a ruling from you. Is it appropriate that the member from the opposition could say that there was a payoff involved with the Pearson airport and Liberal Party funds? That is not really appropriate for this type of debate.

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary will appreciate that the word payoff is a word that means many things to many different people. I will not find that a point of order in these circumstances.

[Translation]

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Speaker, I see the hon. parliamentary secretary is afraid of the truth, so he raises points of order to interrupt me and gain time. They had ample time to say what they wanted between the four or five Bloc Quebecois members who just spoke; they did not do so simply because they have nothing to say. They just want this debate to end because they are ashamed, they bow their heads so as not to see their own minister, their own party say today exactly the opposite of what they said during the election campaign. It is now time for them to reward friends of the party, those who brought them to power. They have to return favours.