

*Government Orders*

This whole business of Bill C-22 and the Pearson development contract was a very questionable process at best. We question the type of lobbying that was done, the allegation at least that there was an excessive amount, the close links that those lobbyists had with the Prime Minister's Office and a lot of the actions that the government itself took, the short duration, using one of the bidders to provide a lot of the parameters for the bid in the first place, the way it was signed at the last minute when it was known that the Tory government was on its way out. It was a very questionable deal. There is no argument on that at all.

We have a backroom deal. One of the problems is the government is offering us a backroom solution to this problem. That is not acceptable.

• (1620)

We have not heard a single piece of evidence stating specifically what improper, illegal action was taken by the bidder in this process. That is what we are trying to get to the bottom of.

My colleague in the Bloc tried to get to the bottom of that. We tried to get witnesses in and had very little luck with it, either co-operation from the witnesses or for that matter co-operation from the government in subpoenaing those witnesses.

On the other hand, it is said that during the time this was signed the leader of the Liberal Party said that if he got in this deal would be cancelled. That is not what he said. I want to clarify that. He stated that he would hold an independent public inquiry into this entire process.

I have talked to the principals involved in this consortium. They said that did not hold any fear for them. They welcome a public inquiry into this. They will open their books to anyone, as they did when this so-called public inquiry took place. They said they have nothing to fear, they have done nothing wrong.

What happened with our independent public inquiry? The government hired Mr. Robert Nixon. Is it really an inquiry when from start to finish in finished report the whole thing took 20 days? It took place largely behind closed doors. We were not able to suggest who he might talk to. Several of the people the industry thought would be the obvious people for Mr. Nixon to talk to did not get called in. There was no opportunity to cross examine the evidence that was put in. Whether or not it was a fair inquiry or a public inquiry does not seem to be answered.

To decide whether the inquiry was independent we have to look at who Mr. Nixon is. Mr. Nixon is the former leader of the Ontario Liberal Party. Mr. Nixon was the chairman of the 1987 Liberal task force on Pearson Airport. Mr. Nixon is the father of a sitting Liberal member. Immediately after he put in his report

in 30 days, Mr. Nixon was named as chairman of the atomic energy commission. Independent?—I hardly think so.

There is another allegation. I think it is fair to bring the allegations into this House because all we have heard about this contract are allegations. In Mr. Nixon's so-called independent public inquiry there was no evidence. There were only allegations of possible improprieties, of possible wrongdoing. There was not one shred of hard evidence brought forward by Mr. Nixon.

The allegation that is floating in industry right now from many sources is that there are two Nixon reports, one Mr. Nixon actually wrote and one that was written for him and actually submitted. Do I have proof of this?—no, I do not, any more than the proof we have seen of the wrongdoings by the Pearson consortium in this whole deal. Allegations are all we have seen.

Then the Standing Committee on Transport decided it would hold hearings and we would have a chance to air all this out and find out what went wrong. As my colleague in the Bloc stated, many people were asked to come before the committee but very few of them showed up. This did not help the case of the consortium.

I was not very pleased that a lot of these people who claimed that they were hard done by did not come forward to defend themselves. We also did not get very much co-operation from the Liberal government in trying to ensure that we got those people in.

There were a couple of other interesting events. Aside from the people we asked who did not come there were several principals who asked specifically to come to the hearing and were denied. These were people like William Pearson, the president of Agra Engineering, George Ploder, president of Bracknell Corporation, and Scott McMasters, president North America, of Alders International Canada. One of the principal investors in this whole contract was denied the right to come before the committee. Why is the government trying to hide what truly happened in this whole process?

The topic of the return on investment being excessive has been brought up, while we have heard figures that are all over the scale.

• (1625)

The government was first alleging 18.5 per cent. Today we heard some figures going up to 28 per cent. The reality is this was examined by a firm I think the House would agree is credible. I am so overwhelmed by some of the stuff the government has done that I am at a loss for words on some of this. The firm I am talking about is Price Waterhouse. I do not think anybody here is going to question the integrity of Price Waterhouse. It said 14 per cent return.