

Government Orders

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, what we really need are the tools for our development: a radical decentralization and the powers required to make our decisions. In the same way that Quebec wants to acquire these powers by becoming a sovereign State, at the regional level, we want to have a say in the decision-making process.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing for several days now what members opposite are saying about this Bill C-22 and I note the interest that my speech seems to generate. Several members are getting ready to listen carefully to what I have to say. I can feel it, Mr. Speaker.

You see, members opposite are telling us, by way of an amendment, and I will read it:

This House declines to give second reading to Bill C-22, An Act respecting certain agreements concerning the redevelopment and operation of Terminals 1 and 2 at Lester B. Pearson International Airport—

and please take note of this,

—because the principle of the Bill is flawed due to the fact that it contains no provisions aimed at making the work done by lobbyists more transparent.

In other words, according to them, legislation to amend the Lobbyist Registration Act should be part of Bill C-22. I think that someone just said yes.

Mr. Speaker, if the government had dared to amend public morality legislation, such as the acts on lobbyists or conflicts of interest, without the prior consent of the House, and had introduced it as a government bill, can you imagine what the members opposite would have said?

I have worked on several occasions in the past on bills dealing with public morality. You will recall, I am sure, the bill of 1987, which came after the unanimous report of a parliamentary committee. I recall that members from all sides of the House were saying: "Finally, we will have legislation on lobbyists because we worked together and not because the government dictated it, since a public morality matter must be part of a consensus".

[English]

All right. Then had we today introduced as a government without consultation with the opposition an amendment to the Lobbyist Registration Act inside a bill for the Toronto international airport, first of all we would have likely been out of order because that would have been an omnibus bill with no binding provisions in it to join the bill together. The Reform Party member across will know that is a prerequisite. In other words, there must be a mechanism to hold those two things together. If they were inside a bill there clearly would not have been then, and so it would have been out of order.

Second, in the unlikely event that the bill would have been in order, those people across the way would have been the same ones to pooh-pooh—not to use any other words that would be unparliamentary—the efforts of the government because they would have said this is not the way to introduce a lobbyist registration bill.

An hon. member: Oh, yes.

Mr. Boudria: It is the way, says the member across the way. I think he had better make up his mind. I am looking forward to his speeches. How do they expect us to introduce those amendments to the LRA, the Lobbyist Registration Act?

[Translation]

It was an honour for me to work on two parliamentary committees dealing with lobbyist registration. Because of the defeat in the last election of certain members of other parties, I am the only member in this House left among those who worked on that issue.

• (1300)

[English]

We as a government have promised in the red book on page 94 that we would amend the lobbyists—

An hon. member: Read the red book.

Mr. Boudria: My colleague challenges me to read the red book. I will read from the red book, page 94. All members must pay attention to this, it is very important—lobbying reform:

The lobbying industry has expanded enormously in Canada during the nine years of Conservative government. The integrity of government is put into question when there is a perception that the public agenda is set by lobbyists—

Serious concerns have been raised in the minds of Canadians—

It goes on to say that a Liberal government will move decisively to address these concerns. We will produce amendments to the Lobbyist Registration Act based on the report of the committee, the report that I have here. That is what we are going to do. That is what the opposition says it wants. Except that today it is asking us to put these amendments inside a bill for an airport. Is that a way to propose a bill involving public morality? I say no.

My learned colleague from Moncton, learned in the law, says no. All my colleagues who know far better about these things say no. I am sure the members across say no.

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Boudria: I say to the hon. members, why do they not just withdraw this superfluous and trivial amendment? It has nothing to do with the subject that we are talking about. It is there to delay the passage of a bill, a bill that was promised as part of our commitment to the people of Canada that we would stop the nonsense that the Conservatives got into which was the giving away of one of our largest national assets, the Toronto international airport, more commonly known now as the Pearson airport.