

Government Orders

place a moratorium on any changes or cuts in VIA Rail service between the cities of Samia and Toronto.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall all questions stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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[Translation]

MOTION FOR PAPERS

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the notice of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Shall the notice of motions be allowed to stand?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1520)

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACT

The House resumed from October 4, consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, an act to establish the Department of Public Works and Government Services and to amend and repeal certain acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. Nick Discepola (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying yesterday in my presentation, the minister has already invited all members, be they from the other side of the House or from this side, to get on the open bidding service.

[English]

The minister has also introduced in this bill clauses in the contracts effectively eliminating the practice of contingency fees and securing government contracts. This will go a long way in curbing the influence of lobbyists in this area. He has also introduced sound guidelines with respect to purchase of adver-

tising and public opinion research which brings the procurement of these services in line with general purchasing practices.

These and other initiatives taken by the department have already had a very positive effect on the partnership between the government and the business community. They have gone a long way toward reassuring the general public that the government is conducting its business in a fair, open and efficient manner.

Public Works and Government Service Canada is committed to seeking out more opportunities to co-operate with the private sector and to establish strategic partnerships wherever possible.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, in the past year, the Minister of Public Works and Government Services has achieved convincing results in support of government goals and priorities by increasing operational efficiency, eliminating duplication, establishing partnerships and restoring trust in our government. This shows among other things that integrating the most important common services into a single organization makes sense.

Bill C-52 will give the department the legal foundation it needs to pursue government objectives in order to better serve all Canadians.

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to let the member mislead this House. It is completely false to say that improvements were made in the Department of Public Works to make it more transparent and to reduce the influence of lobbyists.

Furthermore, for members of the Bloc, for example, it has become nearly impossible to obtain information on how Public Works awards contracts. As members of Parliament, we would like to have access to this information and we are prevented from having it. We get the feeling that there is not only lobbying and patronage but that there may also be a lot of inefficiency and waste.

So when the member says that the Department of Public Works is open and efficient, that is far from true.

Mr. Discepola: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the purpose of this bill is to bring together four organizations in order to reduce costs for the government and to provide taxpayers with better service at lower cost, so this bill is worth presenting.

I hear that there is no openness, but the open bidding service exists and all members of this House have been invited to use it. This computer system provides access to the information at any hour of the day or night. It does not cost much and even your constituents and business men and women can subscribe to it. It gives you information on the kinds of contracts available, their value, who bid in the past, how many contracts have been awarded in the past few years and also the value of the contracts that were awarded. If that is not open, I do not know what it is.