

*Conflict of Interest*

a cause for regret, particularly in view of the uncertainties of public life when, for whatever reasons, the necessity arises to dispose of it. In my years here I have found that we, as members, must retain a mutual respect for each other's integrity. Without this an already arduous and difficult career in the service of the country would be doubly difficult, even impossible. That is why I took the steps I have outlined. It is why I now urge the committee to examine the general questions I have raised. I am confident that if it does so an equitable solution can be found.

For my part, any or all of the documents to which I have referred, namely, the assignment of the right to dispose of my assets and the acceptance of that right, the trust agreement, which as I have emphasized was indeed an illegal document in the sense that it was not permissible according to the CRTC, evidence that it was executed in 1968, and anything else to demonstrate that the outline I have given today is a factual one, are available to any member who cares to contact me, for this issue this really illustrates not so much the quandary of a particular person but the very definite gap in the present arrangements regarding conflict of interest.

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Anything that I can do in this regard to help resolve the matter, I shall do. I mean, resolve it not for me, because I believe I have resolved it honestly and totally so far as the CRTC is concerned—the next step is up to them—but to resolve the question for members generally who may, indeed unwittingly, be parties to a licensed organization as a result of which they are not able to deal in total freedom with their assets. I shall be more than willing to assist them in that project.

In conclusion let me say once again that I am glad I have had this opportunity to dispose of a situation which has been, to say the least, embarrassing. I say embarrassing in the sense that although I have been doing the right thing, with no question in my mind or in my conscience, I nevertheless realize that here there was potentially a question in the minds of other people. If I can help dispose of this issue and assist myself and others in getting rules which will provide a simple means of resolving this kind of conflict, and which above everything else will ensure that people are not prevented from entering public life in these kinds of circumstances, then it seems to me that it is worth while to do so. I for my part am quite prepared to co-operate in whatever technique or methods the House, in its wisdom, decides to employ.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the hon. member for Annapolis Valley rising to ask a question?

**Mr. Nowlan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I certainly appreciate the minister's remarks tonight, and it is that mutual respect for each other's integrity which made my remarks prior to the supper hour somewhat sensitive, and I am glad I did not encroach too far.

The whole dilemma confronting us in this debate today is not that of the respect that I might hold for the minister as a minister, or as a colleague, or in the corridors as a friend; the dilemma we face is the public's perception of

[Mr. Jamieson.]

what we do here, either officially as members, as government leaders or—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member is hardly asking a question. I wish he would come to his question now.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am coming to my question. For this reason I should like to ask the minister two questions. First, when the offer to purchase was made in 1973—and I can understand the minister's hesitation in trying to expedite it—why did the agent not expedite it? Secondly, so that full public disclosure is made here tonight even before we get to committee, would the minister do his utmost, with his colleagues on the treasury benches, to answer the questions that I have on the order paper?

**Mr. Jamieson:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the first question, I am sure the hon. member can see the point. Once I have assigned responsibility to the agent, surely I ought not to instruct the agent what to do. I assure the hon. member there was no relationship at all between us regarding this matter.

I should also point out on the broader question that it is not unusual, as I understand it, for matters before the commission to drag on for a year or more. Indeed, I saw only yesterday that it was passing down judgments from June of last year, so I think the hon. member is aware that the time span is a long one.

With regard to the second query about the questions on the order paper, a rather broad area is involved here. I hope the questions will be answered to the extent they can be, but this afternoon my hon. friend raised a question, and since it was rather broad I hope the House will permit me to answer it at some length.

The question is rather general in the sense that it asks what constitutes a contract. For example, references were made to various departments for which I have had responsibility. To the best of my knowledge there were no such contracts. There may well have been, for instance, an advertising campaign relating to safe driving or to the breathalyzer test or something of that nature, which presumably was placed by an advertising agency, but I can assure the hon. member, again without qualification, that there was no influence on my part. Quite the contrary.

This also seems to me to raise a question to which I suggest the committee address itself, namely, a clearer definition of what actually represents a contract between the "Crown" and a member of parliament or anybody else. Does it in fact extend, for example, to Air Canada, or to the Wheat Board in its permit book system with the farmers? What is a contract in those terms? I do not profess to have the answer, but I can assure the hon. member that from my point of view it will be answered to the best of our ability.

**Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, in following the minister I want to echo the words he just used and assure him, as I am sure all other members in this House will be quick to assure him, that our deliberations in this House of Commons of Canada, if we are to serve the people of Canada who sent us here, do depend in