

Supply—Justice

Mr. Fulton: If my hon. friend would be prepared to give me details, either here or privately, I would be very glad indeed to look into any such case.

Mr. McIlraith: The sort of thing which happens is that after a cheque is issued by the national capital commission it usually takes two weeks from the time it leaves that office until it is received by the minister's agent who turns it over to the person to be paid. That delay is wholly abnormal because at that time the department have no fiduciary duties in connection with it. The duties of the department have ceased after the cheque is issued, the necessary certificates are issued and the other preparatory work is done. There has been an extension in the time taken after the Department of Justice is advised of a settlement and the agent of the department is instructed to clear up the transaction. In these two parts of the transaction there is a considerable delay, and it is working a real hardship on the persons concerned because, as the minister knows, where there is not possession the crown does not pay interest and in the few cases where it does pay interest the interest is at 5 per cent and the cost of borrowing money is much greater at this time to the person concerned. If a settlement has been reached, they are entitled to the money, and it is their money which is being unduly withheld when there is any improper delay.

Mr. Fulton: I should be very much concerned if there were any improper delay, and I hope that if the hon. gentleman knows of any cases of improper delay he will bring them to my attention. I understand he had some conversation with the officials of my department a year ago when he was requested to supply particulars of any cases he had in mind. However, I am advised that he has not so far given us particulars of any such delays.

Mr. McIlraith: I should be very glad to give particulars of these cases to the minister.

Mr. Regier: I wonder if the minister will now admit whether or not there is an official list of attorneys being supplied to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a guide to whom they may or may not employ to do legal work.

Mr. Fulton: I think that question should be directed to my colleague the Minister of Public Works because, as I have explained twice already, such recommendations as I may make are made, as must always be the case, to the minister under whose authority an agency such as the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation works.

Mr. Regier: I must say that in view of the admissions the minister has made during the past couple of hours his answer is not exactly adequate.

Mr. Fulton: It is the third time I have answered the same thing.

Mr. Regier: The minister has admitted that he makes recommendations. We are not sure to whom he makes these recommendations or why or on what ground he makes them. May I ask the minister why he makes recommendations if he knows nothing of a list of eligible attorneys in the possession of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation? Why does he make any recommendations whatever?

Mr. Fulton: I make them because, as I understand it, it is my constitutional responsibility to do so.

Mr. Regier: In other words, I take it the minister admits that there is a list of eligible attorneys.

Mr. Fulton: If the hon. member is unable to understand the situation I do not think there is anything further that I can say. I have explained this three times already, and if the hon. gentleman cannot understand it I regret I am unable to contribute to the clarification of his mind.

Mr. Regier: I know the minister well enough to know that he will regret those words on reflection. I also know his sensitivity when it comes to political considerations. The minister knows very well indeed, and has in effect admitted, that there is in existence a list of eligible attorneys. I am not going to blame the minister. In fact I feel sympathy for the minister, and most of the Canadian people have a good deal of sympathy for the hon. gentleman and cannot understand why he has been kept under wraps and not allowed to expose himself and all his potentialities. However, there is such a list in existence—

An hon. Member: You have said that before.

Mr. Regier: I know I have said it before. Some of the Conservatives need to be told a lot of things time and time again because they are so deaf that they will not hear. The minister admits that there is a list and that he makes recommendations to that list. I should like to ask the minister as to the basis upon which he makes his recommendations. He has spoken of such a basis, and the correspondence makes reference to such a basis. On what basis are members of the bar removed from the list and on what basis are others added to the list?