

Order Paper Questions

| 5. (a) | Tory, Tory, Deslauriers & Binnington | Keyser, Mason, Coleman, McTavish & Lewis |
|--|--|--|
| Additional receipted expenses were paid as follows: | | |
| Fees paid to various legal assistants | \$ 6,745.66 | \$13,836.79 |
| Travel, telephones, office sup- plies, courier services, searches, library services, photocopying | 7,618.26 | 4,364.27 |
| (b) Total other payments | \$14,363.92 | \$18,201.06 |

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. That was a terrific dissertation that we just heard. I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary could tell us the date of that question.

Mr. Flis: Madam Speaker, this question was tabled on February 21, 1983.

Mr. Lewis: I find that amusing, Madam Speaker, and I am sure we all do on this side of the House. There are some 4,700 questions, some going back to March, 1980, but the Government popped this question in last week and got an answer back quickly. It shows that the Government is not interested in answering questions unless it can put a political connotation on them. We have seen a disgraceful example of how questions should be answered in the House. I am ashamed of the Government.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, I am delighted that we were able to give such a prompt answer to that important question. It should be pointed out that during this session the Government has answered 3,953 questions on the Order Paper, that is, 83.7 per cent. For the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) to say that we are not interested in answering questions on the Order Paper is obviously rubbish. We answer them promptly.

Mr. Flis: Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member raised this point. With his long experience I think he should know that there are certain questions the answer to which is at our fingertips and we try to supply that answer immediately. There are other questions that involve more than one Department, that involve a lot of research and expense to the Government. They take longer.

I know that I speak on behalf of the Department of Transport in saying that when we have the information we are willing to give the response as quickly as possible.

Mr. Lewis: Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Smith) if the Government has ever answered a question that quickly before, and if the Government feels it should play politics with something as important to the people as the Mississauga disaster.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, obviously we answer questions as soon as we get the information. I hardly think that an answer that is succinct and to the point and which sets out the facts can be regarded as playing politics, particularly when the Hon. Member who asked the question is from Mississauga and when the incident occurred in his riding.

Mr. McKnight: Madam Speaker, I should like to tell the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council that I have had on the Order Paper a question regarding the distribution of calendars by VIA Rail. It is a very simple question. It was placed on the Order Paper well before the question that he just answered for his colleague on the Government side. It was placed on the Order Paper on January 19. I asked for the cost of the calendar, how many copies were printed and who authorized the calendars.

I do not think that is a very difficult question to answer. I am sorry that I do not sit on the Government benches so that I could have my questions answered rapidly. I am sorry that I am not the Hon. Member for Mississauga North (Mr. Fisher) who called for the inquiry—who demanded the inquiry.

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, obviously I will be delighted to look into that matter on behalf of the Hon. Member. I will do my best to ensure that he gets a speedy reply. We always want to co-operate with Members.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, I hope that the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council is not going to give me the same answer—that he is delighted to look into this. My question was asked on April 2, 1981. The lists were all prepared at that time. I asked for the names of the people who had been invited to President Reagan's dinner. I happened to see some defeated Liberal candidates there. Is the fact that patronage was shown to defeated Liberal candidates the reason that this question is still not answered, or has it just become habit that the Liberals take every Liberal to the through and nobody else has a chance to get at it?

I should like an answer to that question. The lists were prepared two years ago. Why is the answer being help up? That is what I would like to know.

• (1540)

Mr. Smith: Madam Speaker, I am shocked at the Hon. Member who has cast aspersions on the respectable Canadian citizens who were invited to that dinner. I will be delighted to look into the matter on his behalf. He says that he does not want to hear that; I do not think he would want to hear that I would not be delighted to do so. I assure him that I would be delighted to look into it on his behalf.

Mr. Taylor: Madam Speaker, the defeated NDP candidates and the defeated Tory candidates are also respectable citizens. They should get the same consideration as the defeated Liberal candidates, so do not give me that baloney.