

Oral Questions

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The hon. member obviously has not read it. The hon. member for Hamilton East has been away too long. It is designed to get the deficit down. It is also designed to redirect \$800 million of moneys to encourage a greater amount of training for unemployed workers.

It is one of the bills that is being held up in the Senate. It is one of the bills that the New Democratic Party, in a very cynical way, is supporting the Senate in holding it up.

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HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. When did his government first learn that Peter Lush received while he was chairman of the Hamilton Harbour Commission a payment of \$400,000 for a real estate transaction?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Transport informed my colleague yesterday that there would be an independent law firm named so that they would be able to examine the actions that have been taken. I am sure the hon. member would wish that to take place before he made any further statements.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I am simply looking for facts, as the hon. minister mentioned earlier, on the floor of the House of Commons.

Given that six months ago I advised the Minister of Transport that the chairman of the Hamilton Harbour Commission was also acting as a real estate broker in the sale of \$10 million worth of property to the Hamilton Harbour Commission, and given that the lawyer for J. I. Case, the seller of the property confirms that Peter Lush was paid a \$400,000 commission on the sale of the land when the land deal closed, will the Prime Minister recognize the ineptitude of his Minister of Transport and relieve him of his duties immediately?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand my colleague's actions at this time. In March that member from Hamilton said—and I have it in the *Hamilton Spectator* of March 14, 1990—"I am satisfied with that. I can live with it" in explaining what had taken place. My colleague the

Minister of Transport said that there would be an independent law firm engaged to review the situation and that their report would be made public. I hear the member for Hamilton West. I do not understand, unless it happens to be the history of Hamilton and the harbour commission, dating back to 1975 and 1979, that causes the hon. member to have this inane desire to investigate the activity which is taking place in Hamilton. Will the hon. member not wait for the investigation as everyone else will?

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the two Ministers of Transport I address my question on the same matter to the right hon. Prime Minister. Yesterday, in response to my request for a full public inquiry, his Minister of Transport said that the individual in question, Mr. Lush, had asked for an independent review and that he would be naming an independent law firm to review this matter.

Why is the government only agreeing to Mr. Lush's option, rather than satisfying the interests of the Canadian taxpayers which would be best served by a full and public inquiry on a public matter involving public funds? After all, to whom is this government responsible?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I can only quote my colleague, the Minister of Transport. I am sure the hon. member and all members of this House would like to be assured of the ability of individuals to receive justice without having it biased in any way. I can quote my colleague, the Minister of Transport—

Ms. Coppins: How about \$400,000.

Mr. McKnight: The member for Hamilton East would also, I am sure, share that concern.

I can only quote my colleague, the Minister of Transport, in *Southam News*, citing a recent Supreme Court of Ontario decision. They said a public commission is not the place to conduct these investigations because people's reputations are at risk and they have no recourse to reply. I am sure that the hon. member would accept that. I am sure the hon. member would wait for the independent law firm to be engaged and review this. And it will be made public, as my colleague, the Minister of Transport said yesterday in the House.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I return to the Prime Minister and I hope that he finds the