

S.O. 31

We are entitled, as is any Government, to the best information possible. Thus, what we have done is set up a committee to investigate the regulatory reform situation. We have released discussion papers. We have had the benefit of a private sector task force report on the CDIC. We intend to introduce legislation which will strengthen the regulatory powers of the federal Government. We will demand that federal regulators place realistic values on real estate which is held by the institutions which we regulate. We will institute legislation to empower the Minister of Finance to prevent the transfer of ownership of federally-incorporated financial institutions in cases where we deem that transfer to be against the public interest. We will take action to enable the supervisors to fully examine all activities.

I commend to the House an article by Seymour Friendland of the *Financial Times* of Canada dated September, 16, 1985, wherein he goes a couple of steps further. He suggests that if we are to have regional banks and trust companies—and I think we are all in favour of that—that we force them to diversify their loans. I think that makes some sense. We should look at that situation in order that we do not have all of the loans in one industry and in one region. It is just the same old story of having all your eggs in one basket. Mr. Friedland suggests we take a look at that point when we put in place the regulatory reform regime. That makes sense.

What can we learn from this situation? We have learned that we need a new regulatory regime for federal financial institutions in this country.

Second, we have learned the real interest of the Official Opposition, none of whom are in the House to hear my remarks. I hope they will read them in *Hansard*. When the debate commenced there were two Members out of forty in the House. I commend my colleagues from the New Democratic Party. They were serious about this debate. They had people in the House to participate in it. We all listened to the well researched, several-page address, of my colleague from Hamilton Mountain.

Third, we heard unbiased allegations made by both the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) and the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) with respect to what we will divulge to the House. They have asked for the following. They have asked for the auditor's letter to the Board of Directors. We have agreed that the letter shall be released to the committee. They have asked for the letter from the Inspector General of Banks to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) dated September 24, 1984. We have agreed that the committee shall receive that letter. They have asked for a copy of the participation agreement of the support package. We have canvassed permission from all parties involved and they have agreed to release it to the committee. They have asked for the report of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board. We have asked permission of the Federal Reserve Board, both through official channels and diplomatic channels. It is U.S. officials who refuse to release the document to us. However, we are still pursuing the matter. They have asked us to release the names of the uninsured depositors. Members of the House know that

Section 251 of the Bank Act and that Section 24 of the Access to Information Act make this disclosure impossible. Those sections protect the privacy of individuals, which is fundamental to the banking system. It is fundamental to our beliefs.

What is ludicrous about this is that the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain has suggested that we put in place retroactive legislation. He suggests that since this was not thought of when the Bank Act was drafted and amended that we should think of it now, pass an amendment and have retroactive legislation. I can think of nothing more odious, nothing more undemocratic than the passing of retroactive legislation as the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain proposes.

It has been suggested we are stonewalling. I suggest to the House that the New Democrats and the Liberals are far more interested in television time than they are in the truth. They know they can stonewall this matter in negotiations between House Leaders and prevent the matter from going to committee. They know they can come back to the matter with question after question in Question Period, none of them making any sense. In this way they can have their cake and it too. I do not really think they will find that the Canadian people will believe them.

Perhaps the most important thing we have learned is that we have one of the best Ministers of State for Finance that this House has ever seen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: The Minister entered the house in 1984 after a varied career in financial circles. She had an excellent reputation in our Party as a political organizer and as a very competent person. I suggest to the House, Mr. Speaker, that since then she has been tested as no Minister of State for Finance, has been tested, in my experience, and perhaps as no Minister of this Government has been tested. At no time, Mr. Speaker, has she been found wanting either by our Party, by the Government, by the Cabinet or by the Opposition. She has made the difficult decisions and she has stood by the difficult decisions. She has answered the questions. She has made the statements. She has been the witness in committee. She has done everything and she has done it in a determined, forthright and convincing manner. As colleagues, we are all proud to serve with her. I suggest that that would include Hon. Members of the Opposition. I have watched their daily frustration because they have thrown their best questions at her and have not made a dint.

● (2210)

The best line the Opposition can take up is the \$1 billion bail-out. I would like to specifically address that issue in this national House of Commons.

We, as a Party, campaigned on national reconciliation. We said that every region of this country is important, and it is important to us all. I suggest to the Liberals and I suggest to the New Democratic Party, that if we put \$1 billion worth of transfer payments into the Atlantic region, we will bail out