

Interim Supply

the concern of the press and the public in connection with this matter. Had we not reached a stage where so little attention was being paid to the truth in this house there would not be the same concern evidenced on all sides. We trace back the history of the answers we have received from the minister in the past in connection with some of the debates and we can easily see that the memory of the minister is not exactly what it used to be. I think there should be a full disclosure of all the aspects of the handling of this matter and the handling of the sale.

I think back to the pipe line debate when we were told that the pipe was all stacked outside the pipe mills in the United States. I think back to the explanation of the time for financing before the board of transport commissioners, and the two answers that we got. I think back to the time when the question was raised about options in connection with the pipe line bill. Yes, and more recently, I think back to the time when the question was raised as to the letters to the C.B.C., the personal nature of them and later the official nature. It seems to me that unless we are prepared to take the attitude that the rule book of this house might as well be thrown out of the window we are entitled to answers in connection with these specific questions raised in connection with the handling of this particular matter.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Mr. Chairman, I have been attacked. Do I have no right of reply?

The Deputy Chairman: I just recognized the minister.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I am sorry, sir. This afternoon the tone of the next election campaign is being set, a smear campaign. I have been attacked by men who so far as I know have never carried any responsibility in the world. I have been carrying fairly heavy responsibilities in this house for 22 years, and prior to that very heavy responsibilities in private practice for 20 years. So far as I know no one has successfully attacked my record in connection with either period.

I made complete disclosure of my position when this matter was raised earlier. Sir James Dunn and I had been friends for a great many years. When I found I was made an executor under his will my first inclination was to withdraw. His widow urged me not to do that. She looked upon me as a man she had known through my association with her husband and she was most anxious that I would continue. I made it clear then that I would not take any part

[Mr. Hamilton (York West).]

whatever in settling the amount of the tax. There were four other executors, one of them the solicitor for the estate. If there is any question as to whether or not that was carried out, I am sure the Minister of National Revenue will say whether I ever spoke to him or to any of his staff in that connection. I made it clear from the beginning that I had no financial interest in any asset of the estate. The principal asset was shares in the Algoma Steel Company. The Algoma Steel Company has its own president and its board of directors. I have had no part or influence in the management of Algoma, as must be obvious to those in the house who understand corporate practice. I am excluding the two members who have spoken because evidently they do not so understand.

At the time I said one of the factors that induced me to continue was that I did not want to see control of this company pass outside of Canada. I think I have been influential in preventing any trend in that direction. Offers have been made for shares that have been rejected on my suggestion that ownership of the kind contemplated would not be good for Canada. The hon member has asked certain questions. The first was, how was the value of the shares fixed? It was fixed as the quoted value of the shares on the day Sir James died, in accordance with the law. The next question was, has there ever been any argument between the estate and the taxation division as to the amount of tax? The answer is no. To the best of my knowledge after the considerable time which was needed in an estate that extended from Canada, to England and several countries to collect the necessary information, the assessment was made. It was made, I think, about a year after the death—perhaps that might not be exact. In the meantime I had nothing to do with the management of the estate in any way, shape or manner. However, in order to pay the succession duties it was necessary to liquidate a certain number of the shares of Algoma as well as other assets owned by the estate.

Now my hon. friends have read in the paper about control of Algoma passing. Sir James had control; all the shares in his estate represented control. The shares which are being sold to pay the taxes certainly do not represent control, and since they are being sold to more than one buyer—I do not know how much information I am entitled to give here about the estate but I can say that there is more than one buyer for these shares, and no buyer has control or anything like control. I think that is what any fair-minded person would hope would happen to the Algoma shares. In future no single bloc of shares will represent control, and there will