

as my trustee. Ross Montgomery was its agent in Halifax on this matter at the time. In March of this year the trust was transferred to Nesbitt, Thomson and Deacon Inc. where Mr. Montgomery continues to act as agent for the firm.

Since establishing my blind trust, there have been a few instances where statements or certificates were copied to me inadvertently by the brokerage firms. I notified my trustee of the error and asked that corrective action be taken. My trustee conducted my accounts absolutely independently and without involvement or direction by me.

I refer to Mr. Montgomery's statement:

I have been Stewart McInnes' investment advisor and broker for five years. When Stewart McInnes became subject to the federal Conflict of Interest guidelines, I opened a blind trust account with my previous employer. When I changed employers, a new blind trust was opened at Nesbitt Thomson. I have not, at any time, consulted with Stewart McInnes relative to the investments for the blind trust since they were opened. I am aware of a U.S. broker who was given responsibility to manage a small portion of the blind trust account. Inadvertently, after the fact, monthly statements were sent to Stewart McInnes but this practice was stopped when discovered. I am satisfied the Conflict of Interest guidelines for the blind trust account have been met.

I am disturbed by the insidious manner in which this matter has been dealt with by certain members of the Opposition. I categorically reject the innuendo and insinuations which have emerged. Everything I have done has been in full compliance with the conflict of interest guidelines. I immediately answered any and all questions with the facts at my disposal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Sheila Capps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I realize the Minister is rising on a point of privilege and, given that the privileges of all Members of the House relate to the question of honesty, I would like to be able to respond. I realize I cannot put a question to the Minister, but the Minister has stated in the House that in fact he had a blind trust under the direction of McLeod Young Weir which was managed by one Ross T. Montgomery. He should be aware that in fact Ross T. Montgomery has never been an official, nor has ever had any signing authority for McLeod Young Weir and therefore it would be impossible for him to individually process any transaction on behalf of McLeod Young Weir.

In fact, with respect to the Paine Webber statement, the Minister has stated that his so-called trustee asked that the statements, the secret documents coming from the United States, not go to his house when he became aware of it. In fact, we know from press reports that his so-called trustee, Mr. Montgomery—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Come on.

Mr. Mazankowski: Sit down.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask Hon. Members to leave the matter to the Chair. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Capps), who has raised questions in the House on this

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particular matter, has listened to the Minister. It may very well be that the Hon. Member for Hamilton East and other Members, in view of what the Minister has said, may want to ask questions which are deemed to be appropriate with respect to conflict of interests at another time, and there is, of course, procedures for doing so. However, the Chair feels it would not be appropriate to continue comments by Members at this time.

As I say, that does not preclude the Hon. Member or other Hon. Members from asking legitimate questions about the conflict of interest guidelines. But given the circumstances, and in keeping with the appropriate tradition of this place, the Minister made a public statement quickly after the matter became the subject of public discussion and immediately following questions in the Question Period, so I think it would not be appropriate to continue it now on either points of order or other points. The Hon. Member will have adequate opportunity to pursue the question of conflict of interest at another time.

● (1510)

Ms. Capps: Mr. Speaker, given that the Minister has said in the House that he is prepared to be completely open and to provide full disclosure on all matters surrounding his trust agreement, would it be appropriate, through the Chair, to seek the unanimous consent of the House to have this matter referred to the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedure?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: That is always something that can be done. There are, of course, appropriate ways of doing it.

As Hon. Members know, if there is a unanimous disposition in the House to make a move of that kind, or any other, it is sometimes helpful if there is discussion between House Leaders before that takes place.

I think that I will exercise the prerogative of the Chair and close off discussion on this issue at this time. As I have said, I leave it quite open to Hon. Members to raise the matter again. If there are questions that Members still have, there is of course Question Period tomorrow. Given that the questions are addressed to conflict of interest and to comments which the Minister may or may not have made, I will consider those questions when and if they are asked.

Mr. Nunziata: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I wish to ask the co-operation of all Hon. Members. The Chair has decided not to hear further points of order on this particular matter. I think that is in the interest of order and decorum at this time.

As I said, no Member will be closed off if there are appropriate questions asked at the appropriate time. We are getting into debate here and this is not the time for it.