

convention, will he withdraw Bill C-69 from the Senate today?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member's credentials to give legal opinions are about comparable to mine. I do not know what sort of legal advice he got with regard to the provision of the convention if he says that there is no reason whatsoever to believe that that is the case.

What I can indicate to the hon. member is that significant progress has been made with regard to child care under this government. Almost \$1 billion is being spent each year on child care in Canada by the federal government, a significant increase since we came to office. We are committed to having a full program in place during the life of this Parliament. There would have been one in place by now if it had not been for the Liberal senators.

Finally, when the hon. member talks about provisions relating to children, it should be kept in mind that this socialist party is the one that takes the position that family benefits should be provided to rich families instead of being concentrated for poorer families. The vast majority of Canadians disagree with his party on that.

* * *

HAMILTON HARBOUR COMMISSION

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport who is now fully aware that Peter Lush received a \$400,000 commission on the sale of land to the harbour commission of which he is chairman. The minister is also probably aware of the Prime Minister's own conflict of interest guidelines which say, and I quote: "Public office holders shall not solicit or accept transfers of economic benefit".

Given that Mr. Lush personally negotiated first and then accepted a \$400,000 payment as a commission contingent upon the sale of the land to the harbour commission of which he is chairman, will the minister now relieve the harbour commissioner of his duties?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish to read a letter, which I received this after-

noon. It is addressed to me as Minister of Transport. It reads:

Dear Sir:

It is with regret and personal reluctance that I tender my resignation to you as Chairman of the Hamilton Harbour Commission.

In undertaking my duties with the Hamilton Harbour Commission I have sought the best available advice, including a legal opinion, as to how I might strictly follow all relevant guidelines. As I have repeatedly said, I believe that I have always maintained an appropriate separation between my public and private activities. However, with the recent allegations made against me, it is clear that both my own reputation and that of the Harbour Commission will be subject to continued assault. I am not willing to subject the Harbour Commission to this situation.

Minister, in stepping down from the Commission, I would ask that you move as soon as possible to establish an independent review of these circumstances in order to set the record straight. I would welcome such a review and assure you that I will co-operate in every way possible.

I want to thank you, Minister, for the honour of serving on the Commission and I look forward to having this matter resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I will be naming an independent law firm to conduct this review, in the very near future.

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Yesterday, the Minister of Transport said: "I bet the allegations are untrue". Well, he lost the bet. What was the wager? What is this minister now going to do? He says he is going to set up an inquiry by a law firm.

We want to know, is the bet, first, a return of the \$400,000 commission to the Canadian taxpayer? Is it, second, an independent audit and impartial inquiry into this entire matter or is it, third, the resignation of the Minister of Transport who did not know what was going on in his department six months ago when I raised this issue?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in relation to six months ago, my hon. friend raised a different issue at that time vis-à-vis conflict of interest. At that time the following took place. Mr. Lush wrote to me and said:

I have taken the appropriate steps to dissociate my group of companies as to any consulting, planning, engineering, marketing and/or agency relationship with the J. I. Case lands in Hamilton as from March 13, 1990, until such time as the Case company and the Harbour Commission have finalized one way or another, any purchase and sales arrangements on their surplus lands—