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Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

ORAL QUESTIONS

Government Accountability

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the government continues to pay lip service to accountability. It is time to put its money where its mouth is.

There is clear evidence that the Minister of Natural Resources violated the Conflict of Interest Code. The Ethics Commissioner has written that the evidence clearly shows an inquiry is warranted.

Will the government stop covering up the minister's misconduct and ensure that a full investigation is conducted without government obstruction?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, this matter is currently before independent officers of this House. I think it is best to allow them to do their work independently, free from political interference.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives seem to think that they are above the law. Transparency, honesty and accountability are words that they do not seem to understand.

Will the minister step down while officials try to get to the bottom of this? That would be the proper thing to do.

If the minister refuses, will the Prime Minister assume his responsibilities and relieve her of her duties?

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, this government has brought forward the most comprehensive anti-corruption legislation in Canadian history.

We raised the ethical bar. We banned big money from politics and political campaigns, and eliminated entirely the role of corporations and unions in donating to political parties. We gave added independence to the independent officers of Parliament so they can properly and independently do their job, and we will allow them to continue to do that.