

The Law Society of British Columbia
In the matter of the *Legal Profession Act*, SBC 1998, c.9
and a s. 39 proceeding concerning

Crawford Grant Edwards

Respondent

Decision of Three Benchers

Hearing date: September 14, 2005

Panel: G. Glen Ridgway, QC, Chair, Michael Falkins, Robert C. Brun, QC

Counsel for the Law Society: Jean Whittow, QC and Brian McKinley

Appearing on his own behalf: C. Grant Edwards

[1] The Law Society seeks to have this Panel suspend the Respondent. This is an application pursuant to Section 39 of the *Legal Profession Act* and Rule 4-17(1) of the Law Society Rules.

[2] Rule 4-17(1) provides, in part:

If there has been a direction under Rule 4-13(1) to issue a citation, any three Benchers may do one or more of the following with or without notice to the respondent:

- (a) suspend the lawyer, if the three Benchers consider, on the balance of probabilities, that the continued practice of the lawyer will be dangerous or harmful to the public or the lawyer's clients;

[3] The Respondent was called to the Bar in 1972. At the time of the conduct subject to this application, the Respondent was practising under an undertaking that he be required to have a second signatory, who was a practising lawyer, on any trust account.

[4] The complaint respecting the conduct of the Respondent relates to circumstances involving a retired resident of Red Deer, Mr. S. Mr. S. heard of an investment opportunity from the Respondent's uncle. As described by the Respondent, this investment opportunity was a project involving the Bank of Canada, which would result in Mr. S. doubling his money within forty-five days.

[5] The Respondent is also an investor in the project and is receiving a commission from the proponents of the project of 10 or 20 percent.

[6] The Respondent advised Mr. S. to forward the investment funds, some \$500,000.00 (U.S.) to the Respondent. The Respondent assured Mr. S. that his funds would be safe and that if the project did not go through, the funds would be returned to Mr. S. The funds came in two installments. The first of these installments was placed into the trust account of the firm with which the Respondent was associated, while the second installment went into the firm's general account.

[7] These funds were paid out to the bank account of George Pousoulidis, who the Respondent describes as the nominee, or some like function, for the Bank of Canada. The Respondent further stated that there

was another individual involved who has a similar name, namely, Georges Pousoulidis.

[8] The Respondent gave no details of the project and would not fully name certain of the individuals involved, due to what he described as the confidential nature of the transaction.

[9] No documentation was produced at the hearing describing the nature of this investment or the role of the Bank of Canada, and in particular, no documentation regarding the investment of Mr. S. or security for the investment of Mr. S.

[10] As of Friday, September 6, 2005, the funds were no longer in the bank account of George Pousoulidis, the alleged Bank of Canada nominee. The Respondent indicated that he had been advised that the funds were in another bank account controlled by the Bank of Canada or an affiliate corporation of the Bank of Canada.

[11] Of grave concern to this Panel is that the Respondent remains convinced that the funds of Mr. S. are "safe" as he trusts the word of a proponent of this project, a Mr. Bilbrey, who is a client of the Respondent.

[12] On the totality of the evidence, this Panel agrees that the Law Society has established, on a balance of probabilities, that allowing the Respondent to continue in the practice of law would be dangerous or harmful to the public or the Respondent's clients. Accordingly, this Panel orders the Respondent suspended, effective September 16, 2005, until final disposition of the Citation or further order pursuant to Rule 4-19.