

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Or founded.

**Mr. Nielsen:**—that have come from opposition Members and, I might add, from the media.

[*Translation*]

EXAMINATION OF ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, since the guidelines and the Code have no legal clout, and since Canadians have to rely on the honour of those who hold these positions, will the Prime Minister agree that only Parliament or one of its committees may examine the behaviour and actions of one of its Members, and not an outside agency?

[*English*]

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have already stated in response to questions by his Leader that, in my judgment, there can be no impartiality in the investigation of the facts in these circumstances if for no other reason—

**Mr. Tobin:** You have a majority.

**Mr. Nielsen:**—than that we have an overwhelming majority in the House and in its committees. Given a favourable report, I can just see them calling it a whitewash because of our majority. Surely we must seek a degree of impartiality in this investigation of the facts that will be conducted impeccably.

## INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has acknowledged the concern of millions of Canadians in accepting the resignation of the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and also in agreeing to set up an inquiry into the very serious allegations which have been made regarding conflict of interest, beginning some 11 or 12 days ago. Will the Deputy Prime Minister say what he did over the course of that time in order to carry out any investigations, since he now alleges that he did more than simply make a call to the Assistant Deputy Registrar General? Is he also not aware of the very serious disquietude among Canadians about his actions in this affair in stonewalling for two weeks rather than taking action—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that accusation by the hon. gentleman is totally false and again is evidence that impartiality is not going to be found in Parliament in ascertaining the facts in these circumstances. The Minister himself was here all last week answering questions. That did not satisfy the Opposition. Nor were they satisfied in committee. Nor, in the view of the Government, has public opinion been satisfied through the media and editorial writings. Therefore, it seems to me that honourable

gentlemen and honourable ladies opposite would be welcoming—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. A supplementary question.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S DUTIES

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister should be aware that public opinion was not satisfied a week and a half ago. It is not something that just occurred this weekend.

The Prime Minister assigned the Deputy Prime Minister responsibility for the conflict of interest code. Does the Deputy Prime Minister believe that he has performed his official duties in such a manner that public confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Government have been conserved and enhanced? Has the Minister's stonewalling impaired public trust and the integrity of Government?

• (1430)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that is a statement of opinion by the hon. gentleman which I do not share and it is further indication to me that he would, along with his colleagues, welcome an impartial investigation of the facts.

## ACCEPTANCE OF MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Acting Prime Minister. Does he now understand that the issue has become a question of the moral leadership of his Government, in particular, his Prime Minister? In light of the "Dear Sinc" letter the Prime Minister sent out today in which he lauds the work of the former Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion—

**Some Hon. Members:** Order.

**Ms. Copps:**—does he not realize that he is sending the signal to all Canadians that it is perfectly all right for a Cabinet Minister's family to use his influence to gain loans for the family?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Order.

**Ms. Copps:** The only thing that went wrong was the public outcry.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, no, I do not believe that, and anyone who is at all familiar with the dedication and selfless manner in which the former Minister went about his tasks to achieve economic renewal in this country would not say that sort of unworthy thing about him.

One thing the Hon. Member's question does indicate to me is that she is coming to her own conclusions, and I would