

Oral Questions

Mr. Nielsen:—with the Code of Conduct by a public office holder.

Mr. de Jong: Is that what you consider a straight answer?

Mr. Orlikow: Answer the question. What are you afraid of?

Mr. Nielsen: It is my responsibility to satisfy myself that it has been discharged. I have taken the necessary steps and compliance has been had.

Mr. Speaker: A supplementary question.

ACTING PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, can I assume that the Minister's answer, since he deigns not to answer directly, is, yes, the Minister did in fact, and will receive, benefit from the loan negotiated by his wife?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): My responsibility, Sir, is to ensure compliance with the Code—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Orlikow: Coward.

Mr. Nielsen:—with respect to ministerial compliance.

Mr. Broadbent: Is it the fifth amendment, Erik?

Mr. Riis: Who believes you?

Mr. de Jong: What a sham.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Erik, it's time for you to go, too.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Hon. Member: You're going to sink with Sinc.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ACTING PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. This is about his own competence to ensure compliance with the ministerial responsibility Code. The Acting Prime Minister has a record of standing up and defending the indefensible—

Mr. Crosbie: Order.

Mr. Kaplan:—then backing down and changing his mind.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: You premise your questions wrongly.

Mr. Kaplan:—the former Minister of National Defence, the former Solicitor General, the former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and himself on the question of wiretapping the Liberal Caucus. So I want to ask him how he can be expected to be taken seriously in his responsibility—

Mr. Crosbie: Order.

Mr. Kaplan:—to make judgments of other Ministers about the applicability of this Code?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, all I can do in response to that question is to observe that we have sunk to new lows in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): We sure have. Yes, we have.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Crosbie: Turner's back worse than ever. It's a disgrace. Go back to the hog farm.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ENFORCEMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): I want to direct my supplementary question to the Acting Prime Minister. With that kind of track record, should not the responsibility of presiding over the enforcement of that Code be given to some other Minister?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Andre: How can you allow that kind of question from that kind of slimy—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: Scumball.

Mr. Kaplan: It's a fact. It's on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Next question.

ACTIVITIES OF MINISTER'S WIFE—COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF CONDUCT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, we have asked the question of the Minister and the Acting Prime Minister which goes to the root of the question of whether the Minister's wife and therefore, the Minister, received benefit from this loan transaction. If the Acting Prime Minister is not going to answer and if the Minister is not going to answer, who is it who will respond to that simple, straightforward question?

An Hon. Member: We have to know.

An Hon. Member: Ask his wife.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question.

Mr. Broadbent: No, you've avoided it.

Mr. Nielsen: The Minister has answered a similar question yesterday.