

Privilege—Mr. Jelinek

on the questions raised in the House yesterday. I must say that I regret some of the comments he made here because, when I raised the question, I thought the question was legitimate in relation to the conflict of interest and Code of Conduct guidelines issued by the Government for cabinet Ministers and other senior officials in September, 1985, by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

I will not read all the questions, but in view of the comments made by the Minister who is suggesting that he has been slandered, and he has used a number of other fairly substantial words, accusing me also of irresponsible conduct, I will read the question I put yesterday to the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski). My first question was the following:

In view of the risky nature of this investment can the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House whether speculative commercial mortgage lending is a permitted activity under the Government's Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown?

My second question recalled that section of the code, Section 29, that said Ministers shall not, outside their official duties, actively manage or operate a business or commercial activity. I pointed out that it appeared that the properties in question were grossly over-mortgaged, except in light of a speculative effort by the new owner, Mr. Gibson or Mr. Gibson and his partners, to redevelop them.

Then I asked the following question:

When a cabinet Minister makes a \$354,000 second or third mortgage loan, is that not a commercial activity which is in fact prohibited by the code? What action does the Government intend to take to enforce the code with respect to the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport?

The Minister has indicated that he did consult with the Assistant Deputy Registrar General. In fact, I have not seen a copy of the purchase agreement. I want to tell the House that I did inform the Minister's office that I would be raising this matter yesterday and, albeit with short notice, I also gave the necessary documents to the Deputy Prime Minister prior to asking the question.

I would point out that the documents which I communicated to the Deputy Prime Minister included the filings the Minister had made with the Assistant Deputy Registrar General in 1984 and 1985, and more recently in February of 1987. As the Minister states, he did disclose, as he is permitted to do, the holding of the 50 per cent interest in the property on Albert Street in his submissions in 1984 to 1986. In 1987, that disclosure was not there because he had by that time sold the property in question.

I accept the statement of the Minister that he consulted with the Assistant Deputy Registrar General and was assured that in the opinion of the Assistant Deputy Registrar General there was compliance with the Code of Conduct. However, the Assistant Deputy Registrar General has been known to give advice at other times with which people in my Party have disagreed. In fact, some of the rulings of the ADRG have been subjected to lengthy judicial review, with what result we do not yet know. But nonetheless it is not necessarily the case that

just because the official in question made a ruling, therefore members of every Party will agree with that particular ruling.

Mr. Mazankowski: Are we going to listen to you?

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I would say to the Deputy Prime Minister that I am trying to treat this issue with the seriousness which I think it deserves.

Perhaps I can share with you, Mr. Speaker, the reasons for my concerns which initially were brought to me by constituents who were concerned about speculation for redevelopment purposes in properties in downtown Ottawa which the local advisory committee on architectural conservation had sought to designate as heritage properties. Downtown Ottawa is within my constituency. In fact, the matter happens to be before a City Council committee today.

Is the loan which was granted by the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport a speculative loan? There is an agreement that he will receive \$354,000 in August. In the first place, it is a loan whether or not interest is charged. I think that is quite clear. It is a promise to pay at some future date. In the second place—

Mr. Speaker: I have been listening carefully to the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) but I am getting a little concerned that what started off to be a series of questions, which the Hon. Member of course has a right to put, is getting dangerously close to being an assertion. I do not know if the Hon. Member intends that. I would ask the Hon. Member to consider it.

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, I cite this because the Hon. Minister has accused me of irresponsible conduct, of distortion, of using unsubstantiated information and of slander. From what I can see in the *Hansard* record, this is because I referred to the transaction in which he was involved as a speculative transaction and as a commercial activity. This is why I am speaking on this particular matter. I will, however, try to be brief.

The facts as registered in the Registry Office—

Mr. Speaker: I will hear from the Hon. Member. I am not closing him off at all. However, I would ask that the Hon. Member, and any other Hon. Member who speaks, address the direct question of whether or not the questions that were asked yesterday amount to, directly or indirectly, whatever way it may be, a breach of the privilege of the Hon. Minister.

What other things may be going on with regard to property in the neighbourhood are interesting, of course, and may have a lot to do with why the Hon. Member asked the question, but I would ask the Hon. Member to concentrate solely on that particular point. The Hon. Minister has said that those questions had the effect of carrying what we lawyers call an innuendo, an innuendo of wrongful conduct, and that is basically what the Hon. Minister is pleading before the Chair. Therefore, I would ask the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre to address that point. I know I can count on his co-operation.