

Oral Questions

supplemented by the letter from the Prime Minister on September 9 last year? In that letter he is enjoined under his individual responsibility to avoid conflict of interest such as the conflict of interest which 25 million Canadians know exist in the case of the loan which his wife arranged with Magna, or through the intervention of Magna's chairman. What steps did the Minister take to avoid that conflict of interest by his spouse, and what action has he taken now since it became public knowledge that that conflict of interest exists?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a repeat of the questions which were put repeatedly last week and this week and it is answered—

Mr. de Jong: Cover up.

Mr. Nielsen: It is not a cover-up at all.

An Hon. Member: Sure it is.

Mr. de Jong: Absolutely.

Mr. Nielsen: It is answered—

Mr. de Jong: No answer.

Mr. Riis: No answer.

Mr. Nielsen: They don't like the answer, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Riis: Nixon lives on in this Chamber.

Mr. Nielsen:—but the answer is that the requirement is for the Minister to comply with the Code of Conduct. That is the responsibility of the ADRG who administers—

Mr. Orlikow: He has no authority.

Mr. Nielsen:—the Code. That compliance has been had.

Mr. Gauthier: How do you know?

Mr. Nielsen: The Hon. Member knows that because he has been in touch with the office of the ADRG himself.

CODE OF CONDUCT—CO-OWNER OF FARM

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. In his capacity as Minister he was required to sign a Code to which he put his signature on March 26, 1986 which states:

I own a 50 per cent interest in Kings Lynn Farms, Township of King, Regional Municipality of York. While I am subject to the Code, the management of the farm is entirely the responsibility of the co-owner.

Can the Minister tell us who the co-owner is?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Order.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member realizes, I think, that she is asking a question to the Minister in a personal capacity, not about his responsibilities as a Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Can the Hon. Member find a ministerial question, please.

Ms. Copps: I am asking about how the Minister has complied in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown. It is only a Minister of the Crown who is required to sign the Code. I believe in that respect it is a perfectly legitimate and applicable question and I would seek an answer from the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Copps:—with respect to the Minister's own responsibility as the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the Hon. Member have a supplementary question about the Minister's responsibility?

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL OF MINISTER FROM OFFICE

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Is it not true that the co-owner of the Kings Lynn Farms in fact happens to be one and the same Noreen Stevens, the wife of the Minister? In light of the fact that Mrs. Stevens has her finger in more than one business or subsidiary of York Centre, do you not think it's about time to remove the Minister and to make sure that this cloud which is hanging over the whole Mulroney Government is lifted?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is an expression of an opinion by the Hon. Member. But she is entitled to hold that opinion. I do not.

Mr. Andre: My wife owns half of my house, too.

Mr. Nielsen: In my responsibility to ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct, I am satisfied that that compliance has been had.

LOAN NEGOTIATED BY MINISTER'S WIFE

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It is quite straightforward. In his opinion, did the Minister, or will the Minister, receive any benefit from the loan which was negotiated by his wife?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): My answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is equally straightforward. The Minister is required, as are all Ministers of the Crown, to comply—

Mr. McCurdy: Come on. Yes or no?