

Oral Questions

of his caucus alleging a criminal offence against Magna yesterday without benefit of any evidence to back it up.

[*Translation*]

REQUEST FOR MORE COMPLETE ANSWERS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Davenport, put a question to the Government concerning the Opposition's right to put questions to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion about conflicts of interest. The Government House Leader gave the House the impression that we would be given an opportunity last night, before a committee where the Minister was to defend his Department's budget.

I therefore want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister how long this Government intends to refuse to give direct answers to questions about conflicts of interest. How long is it going to keep hiding the truth, as it did last night, before the Committee, whatever the Deputy Prime Minister may have claimed earlier?

[*English*]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): I have continuously answered questions with respect to conflict of interest, as it is my responsibility to do so. I can tell the Hon. Member one thing; never in my almost 30 years here have I leaped over chairs in an attempt to harass a witness appearing before one of our standing committees.

[*Translation*]

CONFORMITY TO GUIDELINES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, the only answer the Deputy Prime Minister gave on the subject of conflicts of interest was a single sentence, namely that the Minister had conformed to the guidelines. He never explained—and that's what I would like to know—how he could claim the Minister conformed to the guidelines when the rules released by the Prime Minister make the Minister responsible for the acts of his wife and children. Explain how you can claim the Minister conformed to the guidelines. Don't just say that he conformed, tell us how he did, according to you.

[*English*]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): The Hon. Member may choose not to believe what I have been telling the House; that is his option. However, I have spoken personally with the ADRG and the Minister. I have had occasion to study, word-by-word, the Code and compliance requirements. I am assured by the ADRG that there has been compliance. I am satisfied there has been compliance. I so reported to the Prime Minister, and I still maintain in the circumstances presented, distorted and twisted here, that there has been compliance with the Code of Conduct for public office holders.

APPROVAL OF GRANTS TO MAGNA CORPORATION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. It has been confirmed that the Minister personally approved some \$13.9 million in grants to the Magna Corporation from February 7 to June 20, 1985. It has also been confirmed that during this same period the Minister's wife was personally arranging with a close associate of Magna Corporation for a loan on very advantageous terms to her and the Minister of \$2.6 million. Is there anything wrong with that transaction in the Minister's view with reference to the Code of Conduct on conflict of interest? If not, then is there not something wrong with the Code of Conduct of this Government which permits such a transaction to take place?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentleman's question had terminated at its first part, it would have been the Minister's responsibility to respond. The Hon. Member having gone on deeply into the question of conflict of interest, it is my responsibility to respond.

I have told him repeatedly that there has been full compliance with the Code of Conduct. If the hon. gentleman wishes the first part of his question to be answered without cluttering it up with allegations of conflict of interest, I am sure the Minister would be very happy to oblige.

MINISTER'S APPROVAL OF GRANTS

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister personally approved some \$13.9 million worth of grants to Magna Corporation between February and June of 1985. At the same time his wife was personally negotiating with a close associate of Magna Corporation for a \$2.6 million loan for her and her husband on advantageous terms. Was there anything wrong with those transactions?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen:—again what the hon. gentleman is doing by way of camouflage is addressing a question relating to conflict of interest. However, he has added another dimension, one more unfounded, unwarranted allegation.

Mr. Cassidy: You said the Minister would answer and you would not let him answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[*Translation*]

CONFORMITY TO SECTION 16 OF CODE OF CONDUCT—
GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and concerns the administration of his department.