

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

## PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF NEW ZEALAND MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND MINISTER OF HOUSING

**Mr. Speaker:** May I draw to the attention of Members the presence in our gallery of the Hon. Phil Goff, Minister of the Environment and Minister of Housing for New Zealand.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF INDONESIAN MINISTER OF TRADE

**Mr. Speaker:** I would also like to draw to the attention of the House the presence of Dr. Rachmat Saleh, the Minister of Trade for Indonesia.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## THE ADMINISTRATION

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES—GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. In the September 9, 1985, letter to MPs it says: “—circumstances may arise that call for an impartial investigation of conduct as it pertains to fact.” It says further that: “—making use of these instruments will not relieve the Government of its responsibility to decide and to stand accountable before Parliament”.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us today what made him and the Prime Minister change their minds as to that particular sentence in the declaration of September 9, 1985?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that misquoted portion of the letter to which the hon. gentleman has just referred. When he was quoting the letter, he inserted words which are not in the letter in the order which he has outlined.

**Mr. Boudria:** Oh, yeah? Which ones?

**Mr. Nielsen:** There has been no change of policy. The open letter to Members and Senators from the Prime Minister provided that there may be circumstances which would require the appointment of an impartial person to conduct an investigation as to facts. If the hon. gentleman reviews the “blues”, he will see that he inserted words which were not in that letter.

[Translation]

## INQUIRY WHY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PERMIT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES TO CONDUCT INQUIRY

**Mr. Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not the case, and as my supplementary, since in the same letter the Prime Minister says that the responsibility

## Oral Questions

for the standards of conduct of the federal Government and Cabinet lies ultimately with the Prime Minister, I would like to ask whether the Prime Minister has also dissociated himself from this part of his letter? If not, why won't he let the House, through the Standing Committee on Elections, Privileges and Procedures, investigate this question and draw its own conclusions instead of having a so-called independent enquirer who, as far as we and most people can see, will try to cover up the truth?

[English]

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the allegation imbedded in the question of the hon. gentleman is utterly false. The Prime Minister fully stands by the conflict of interest code which was tabled in September, 1985. He fully stands by the letter of September 9 to his Ministers. He fully stands by the open letter to Members and Senators, which was tabled as part of the package, and every other part of the conflict of interest package which was tabled in September, 1985.

**Mr. Boudria:** Why are you not doing it?

**Mr. Nielsen:** He says: “Why are you not doing it?” The Prime Minister is doing it as quickly as possible. An impartial person will be identified as quickly as possible. The investigation will proceed as quickly as possible. It will report as quickly as possible.

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

## PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister indicated that the Prime Minister fully stands by his letter. I would like the Deputy Prime Minister to explain to me and to the House where in the letter there is reference to the right of an independent investigator to find that there is or is not a conflict of interest.

**Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** That's a new addendum to the letter.

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, surely the purpose of the investigation as to facts would be—

**Mr. Broadbent:** That's not the question.

**Mr. Nielsen:** —to see whether or not there was an actual or apparent breach of the Code of Conduct. I cannot put it more simply or clearly than that—

**Mr. Broadbent:** Or inaccurately.

**Mr. Nielsen:** It is not inaccurate.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Sure it is.

**Mr. Nielsen:** —as being the role of an impartial investigation as to facts. It must do two things: one, investigate; two, report.