

Oral Questions

REQUEST FOR AMENDMENT TO GUIDELINES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what he has just said, and setting aside what I regard to be the inadequacy of his answers, I have a further supplementary question. Considering that the previous Conservative Government of the Right Hon. Member for Yellowhead had much more stringent guidelines that were more carefully spelled out, would the Minister agree that if they had been in force we would not be in the mess we are now in? If he agrees with that, why does the Government not bring in those guidelines and toughen them up so we can get on with the business of this country that the people of Canada want?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree that the previous guidelines were more stringent and tougher because the existing guidelines—more accurately, the Code of Conduct—that were tabled on September 9, 1985, are more strict and more stringent. Furthermore, the Prime Minister wrote to the hon. gentleman with respect to his input concerning that Code of Conduct—

Mr. Broadbent: He got my proposal.

Mr. Nielsen: The Hon. Member has yet to reply to that letter of September, 1985.

Mr. Cassidy: That is not true.

Mr. Nielsen: If he or any other Member have—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Nielsen:—ideas with respect to improvement, of course they will be considered.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

PRIVATIZATION OF CANADAIR—MINISTER'S ROLE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the real victim of the Minister's action is public confidence in Government. My question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. It concerns public confidence in the Government in relation to Magna's bid for Canadair. If Magna's bid for Canadair is accepted it will be perceived as a pay-off; if Magna's bid for Canadair is not accepted it will be perceived as being a result of the close relationship between Magna and—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the Hon. Member has a question.

Mr. Nunziata: Does the Acting Prime Minister not realize that the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion is unable to carry on his public duty in a manner that is perceived by the public as being fair, objective and above board?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman very cleverly smuggles in two or three

empty hypotheses preceding his question, when he reaches into the future to ask what if something happens.

An Hon. Member: That is the issue. No confidence in the Government.

Mr. Nielsen: I explained last week and again this week the process that is in place for privatization. There are four very distinct steps and we are not even through the first one.

PERFORMANCE OF MINISTERIAL DUTIES

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, the industry Minister is drowning in conflict and he knows it. He is showing utter contempt for the anti-corruption guidelines.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Just a supplementary question.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, there has to be some integrity to conflict of interest guidelines. My supplementary question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. How can the Minister of Industry carry on his official public duty, having full knowledge of the personal benefits he has received from Hyundai and Magna corporations?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responded to that kind of question yesterday. I have no problem with my integrity, unlike the hon. gentleman. The Minister for Regional Industrial Expansion does not have any problem with his integrity. The only problem which exists is this constant leap-frogging distortion in which the Hon. Member and his colleagues in the opposition are engaging.

● (1430)

ACTIVITIES OF MINISTER'S SPOUSE—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is properly directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion in view of the Prime Minister's letter of last September 9 which stated that Ministers have an individual responsibility to prevent conflicts of interest, including those which might arise out of the activities of their spouses. What steps did the Minister take to avoid conflicts of interest involving his spouse last year, and what steps has he taken to eliminate the conflict of interest involving his wife since it became public knowledge last week?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Once again, Mr. Speaker, I can simply assure the Hon. Member, and all Hon. Members of the House, that I have applied the Code of Conduct fully. The blind trust is established and that, as I understand it, is the full purport of the Prime Minister's letter to which the Hon. Member referred.

PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that the Code of Conduct is augmented and