

*Supply*

So we have to ask ourselves whether the allegations made by the Opposition were really unfounded. Why did the Minister resign? In doing so, he admitted that the facts are there. These are not just allegations, they are facts. There is the fact that Mrs. Stevens is vice-president of a company that is a branch of the company belonging to Mr. Stevens. It is a fact that the head of Magna International publicly acknowledges—to me and the press—that he met with Mrs. Stevens who wanted to borrow money and who eventually did get an interest-free one-year loan. I do not see how the Hon. Member for Charlevoix can fail to see there are very serious allegations which justify the Minister's resignation, much in the same way as the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) tendered his resignation as a result of allegations concerning his election campaign. In that case he was eventually cleared and went back to his Department. If the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion were really concerned about his ministerial responsibilities, he would have resigned at least a week ago.

**Mr. Hamelin:** First of all, Mr. Speaker, the parallel made by my colleague with a certain C.D. Howe, calling him a businessman with connections . . . As my colleague would have it, apparently, a poet should be appointed Minister of Finance, and a violin player given the Regional Industrial Expansion portfolio.

I for one can say I am quite pleased that we have financiers, businessmen, people with connections with the financial world, of course, who know what a balance sheet is. It is more interesting.

So for starters we agree that poets are better qualified to write poetry, and I might point out that I have several poets and painters in my riding, I admire and like them—

**Mr. Cassidy:** They must also be honest, mustn't they?

**An Hon. Member:** In Baie-Saint-Paul!

**Mr. Hamelin:** Yes, Baie-Saint-Paul is beautiful. Indeed I invite you to come and help the economy of my riding.

That being so, you are making statements and allegations, and turning this House into a court of justice.

**Mr. Gauthier:** This is a debate!

**Mr. Hamelin:** I am not making a judgment on the problem itself—

**Ms. Copps:** That is the problem!

**Mr. Hamelin:** The Minister decided, too late according to you, to resign this morning. He has done so, but he could have continued to take your accusations and allegations. As the Arab proverb says: "He has so many arrows in his side that they act as a shield against the others."

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, I have just listened to the Hon. Member for Charlevoix (Mr. Hamelin), who says that it is up to us to say good things in the

debate and always to remain gentlemen and gentle women. However, I think that he has missed the point.

I entered politics in the first place mostly to have an opportunity to make some change in the life of Canadian men and women. I grew up in politics because my father was mayor of our city for about 14 years. When he was mayor during my childhood, some of my good friends used to tell me: "Sheila, all politicians are thieves!"

• (1650)

[English]

"They're crooks, all politicians are crooks". I was raised believing that politics is an honourable profession and that it is the right and responsibility of every member of this House to uphold the honesty that is politics. I believe that that quest for honesty supercedes political Parties. It supercedes the Party label, whether it be Liberal, Conservative, or New Democratic. I believe that there are Members on all sides of the House who came to Parliament for what they could do for their country. As John Kennedy said: "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country".

In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, we have a blatant example of a Minister who, through his spouse, is using the interests of the country to serve his own family business. Throughout this debate today I have not heard a single Member on the government side of the House deny the fact that a \$2.6 million interest-free loan was given to a family business in which Mr. Sinclair Stevens is the majority shareholder or the fact that the company, which is in fact a major shareholder in the Hanil Bank, also benefited by decisions of the Government not to go ahead with the establishment of certain factories here in Canada at the same time as it had a \$775,000 outstanding loan. The question now—

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Minister is not the only one involved, because the Minister has resigned.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton):** Louder!

**Ms. Sheila Copps:** The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Carleton (Mr. Turner) tells me to speak louder. I shall do so. I shall speak louder because what is involved no longer affects only the Minister, but also the conduct of the Government and especially that of the Prime Minister who let this business go on for two weeks without having the courage to say anything to the Canadian people.

[English]

And then we see the incredible spectacle of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) sending a letter of exoneration telling the Minister what a wonderful job he did and shedding tears because he is leaving. He has not once had the courage to tell the people of Canada that what the Minister and his family did was wrong. We have seen the spectacle of Dominion Securities Pitfield, and Burns Fry being called into a meeting to bail out the Minister's private business. Those facts have