

*Oral Questions*

considered to be in the public interest should be permitted charitable status to encourage that. It has resulted in substantial improvements in Canadian living standards, in health and in all sorts of other areas.

I am afraid, however, with respect to the specifics of the hon. member's question I do not have in my hand the number he gave out. If he would like to give it to me I could check out that number.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Brien (Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister of National Revenue justify that big businesses get a tax deduction for their contributions to the Council for Canadian Unity, when charitable status is usually granted on the basis of the following criteria: relief of poverty, promotion of education or religion and other efforts to the benefit of the community like the relief of suffering or sickness?

[English]

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again with respect to companies as opposed to individuals the rules are quite clear. A company can make expenditures and provide money to organizations but the final line in terms of determining this, which again is in the courts and not in the hands of the department, is whether it advances the business interests of the company involved.

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#### MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the government cannot seem to get its story straight over the heritage minister's contract for dollars dinner.

Yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister stated there was no breach of ethics and therefore there was no need for the ethics counsellor to investigate this paid access to the minister. However, today we learn the ethics counsellor is investigating the matter. It appears Mr. Wilson feels there is more to this affair than meets the government's eye.

Is the ethics counsellor conducting an open investigation into the minister of heritage's dinner? Will Mr. Wilson's report be made public?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister informed the House two days ago that he had consulted Mr. Wilson about the question. I spoke to the Prime Minister at approximately 10.45 a.m. and he advised me, as he has stated publicly in the House many times, that if there are questions about the ethics of the government the ultimate arbiter of those questions is not a bureaucrat, it is the Prime Minister of Canada.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I guess that is a question mark.

The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the heritage minister have suggested all the information on this matter has been made public. However, the heritage minister refuses to provide the House with a list of the people invited and those who contributed to the dinner.

• (1125)

With the latest revelation that Guylaine Saucier donated \$1,000 to the minister's debt fund and was appointed chairman of the CBC six months later, we have to wonder who did not get a contract from the minister's private dinner.

When the Prime Minister appointed Guylaine Saucier as chairman of the CBC, did he know she had contributed \$1,000 to the heritage minister's debt fund?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Guylaine Saucier happens to be the first woman to be president of the Quebec Chamber of Commerce. She has served on several boards including the board of the Bank of Montreal, the board of Bell Canada, the board of Petro-Canada. She has been active in a number of community events including the University of Montreal, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal. She was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1989 by a government that was not Liberal.

Madam Saucier has said she has contributed to numerous political parties. She is a federalist and supports the role of federal political parties in Canada.

If the member has a problem with the appointment of Madam Saucier, then let him so state in the House because her credentials speak for themselves.

**Mr. Ed Harper (Simcoe Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, her credentials were not questioned in any way. I asked if the Prime Minister was aware that a donation had been made to that fund before the appointment was made. The question was not answered.

Canadians want ethical and honest government. The success of Mike Harris' populous grassroots campaign proves that. Instead of honesty and ethics, the Liberals are giving Canadians the same old Mulroney style government they had from the Progressive Conservatives.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage specifically targeted clients of his department, invited them to a dinner to pay off his campaign debts and then rewarded all of them, every single one, with grants, contracts and chairmanships. This is a direct conflict of interest and it is about time the government recognized this.

What is this government afraid of? Why will it not release the invitation list of those who contributed to the dinner? Why will the Minister of Canadian Heritage not do the honourable thing and resign?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I challenge the member to review his first question. Implicit in the question was the