

## INVESTIGATION OF MINISTER'S CONDUCT

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I accept the point just made by the Acting Prime Minister, and I agree with it. The allegations are part of the case, but when a cloud is thrown, as it has been thrown, over the conduct of a Minister, will the inquiry be free to examine all the conduct of the Minister, the appointments he has made and the decisions he has made as a Minister, which may have been affected by the conflict of interest we have put forward in the House?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think I have made it abundantly clear. I have said that I would expect the terms of reference to include all the allegations which have been made in the House by himself and others in the Opposition, all the newspaper allegations, and all the electronic media allegations. They have covered such broad ground that I cannot really imagine how an impartial person investigating the facts would fail to take into account all of the wide range of allegations which have been made.

## INQUIRY'S FINDINGS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary questions are on the same subject matter. In the past couple of days the Deputy Prime Minister has indicated, with reference to the letter of September 9 to Members of Parliament and Senators, that there would be an impartial inquiry into the facts. I think he used that phrase 14 times two days ago. He also indicated that factual allegations coming from this side of the House, the media and so on, will be considered. One thing he has not told us is if the inquiry will make a judgment on whether or not there has been, in the opinion of the inquirer, a conflict of interest. Is that part of the mandate?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party describes as fact allegations which he and others in the Opposition have been making. Surely the task of the impartial investigation is to establish what is fact and what is not, if there is any factual substance to the allegations which have been made. That, I would expect, would be totally open to the impartial investigation process by the impartial person to conduct it when that person is identified and named.

## MANDATE OF INQUIRY

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I will go back and ask the question again, and maybe I will get an answer. Will the Deputy Prime Minister answer the question? In terms of the mandate being given to this inquiry, will Members of Parliament, or whoever will see the recommendation when it comes, have the following question answered by the inquiry: was there or was there not a conflict of interest? Is a judgment to be passed as part of the mandate requirement for the inquiry?

## Oral Questions

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Well, of course, Mr. Speaker, that would be the purpose—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nielsen:** They say "Oh, oh!" That is the whole—

**Mr. de Jong:** Is it so hard to say yes or no?

**Mr. Nielsen:** The whole purpose of the impartial investigation of the facts in the context of the conflict of interest code applicable to public office holders is to determine whether or not there has been a breach, as has been alleged so many times, real or apparent.

● (1425)

## ROLE OF PARLIAMENT

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, that is the first time the Deputy Prime Minister has said he is going to make a judgment on whether or not there has been a conflict of interest. The Deputy Prime Minister is shaking his head. Is he aware that by going outside Parliament for an inquiry of this kind to make a judgment about conflict of interest he is, in fact, going outside the terms of reference of the letter from the Prime Minister of September 9 that makes no such reference, and is he aware that he is denying the whole parliamentary tradition of having the privileges and elections committee reach such decisions, and not an outsider?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, that is simply untrue.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Which is?

**Mr. Nielsen:** There have been instances in the past where this route has been followed. I will agree with the Member that in this instance the process that is being followed for the first time is different from past precedents, but it should come as no surprise to the Member because the possibility of that new process being invoked was tabled as part of the package last September, 1985.

**Mr. Broadbent:** No. Give us the reference for that.

**Mr. Nielsen:** It certainly was. That is the process being invoked now.

[Translation]

## GUIDELINES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In his answer to the previous question, he indicated to the House for the first time that this impartial person conducting the investigation will decide if there has been a breach of the guidelines. I wish I had before me the letter sent by the Prime Minister on September 9 in which he said that he had no intention of delegating his responsibility, and that the ultimate