

*Oral Questions*

opportunities for entrepreneurs in Newfoundland, simply will not wash.

● (1415)

The Government ought to get its act together, come clean with the people of Newfoundland and put its money where its mouth is. The propaganda will not carry any longer.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### THE ADMINISTRATION

RESIGNATION OF FORMER MINISTER OF REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION—ESTABLISHMENT OF INQUIRY

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister assured Canadians that an inquiry into the dealings of the former Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion would be launched without delay. If there has been a delay, is it because the Government is having some difficulty finding someone willing to undertake the inquiry now that the Prime Minister has poisoned the atmosphere of impartiality?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the last unworthy comment made by the right hon. gentleman, if there has been any poisoning of the atmosphere, something which I refuse to believe, it has been by that kind of question that has been asked since last Monday.

The short answer to the question is that active efforts are currently under way to identify an impartial person to undertake the investigation as to facts. It is the Prime Minister's intention that the identification of the impartial person to head that investigation should get under way just as quickly as possible.

### INQUIRY'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the reason for the delay might also be that the terms of reference are proving difficult to draft. I recall to the Deputy Prime Minister that the Prime Minister said in the House on September 9 that any such inquiry should deal simply with the facts. Is the Government attempting to draft terms of reference that are so wide and that deal with the general issue of conflict of interest guidelines so as to obscure the real issue which is the conduct of the former Minister?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Not at all, Mr. Speaker. Quite the contrary. As I have assured the House on Monday, Tuesday, and again today, the terms of reference will take into account the allegations made in the House of Commons, both temperate and intemperate. They will take into account the allegations made in the newspapers, both temperate and intemperate. They will take into account the allegations made in the electronic media, both temperate and

intemperate. It will be in the context of the conflict of interest Code of Conduct for public office holders, in addition to the Prime Minister's letter of September 9 to the former Minister and other members of his Ministry.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, you know the terms of reference will be very vague.

My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Why not have an inquiry before a parliamentary committee, so that the former Minister can be judged by his peers in the House, instead of a judicial inquiry that will deal with a purely political question?

[English]

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have answered that question before as well. I am sure that the hon. gentleman, by his own questioning and by that of his colleagues since Monday, should recognize the fact that the atmosphere in the House and in its committees is now so bitterly partisan that it would be very difficult to apply oneself to an investigation of the facts with impartiality.

I might say that the process is nothing new. It was exposed on September 9, 1985, and indeed has been followed in the past. I remind the Right Hon. Member that this is the course that was requested—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The question was short.

### EXAMINATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, to be absolutely clear, the House is interested in whether or not the Minister has violated these guidelines. I ask the Acting Prime Minister for his assurance that the Government will not throw up another diversionary tactic by asking the commission also to examine the question of revisions to the guidelines and other guidelines. It is these guidelines that we allege have been violated.

● (1420)

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I am totally familiar with the allegations of the hon. gentleman, of other members of his Party, of those in the New Democratic Party, and those in the newspapers and the electronic media. I can assure him that the conflict of interest Code of Conduct which was tabled September 9, 1985, will be the code that is looked at. I would not wish, as I am sure he would not, the impartial person investigating the facts in these circumstances to confine himself to the 1985 package tabled because it may well be that the circumstances might relate to the guidelines which were in place under the former Government, and which were in place until September, 1985, so there are two there.