

Conflict of Interest

● (1040)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Athabasca.

Mr. Shields: That Member knows full well that you do not refer to Members in this House by name. You refer to them in this House by their riding, and she should know that. I know that she continually breaks the rules of this House, but I think that is deliberately—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Shields: It is reprehensible that she would continue to do this knowing full well she is breaking the rules of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Hamilton East is well aware—

An Hon. Member: What was your husband doing in this office? You forget about that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order.

An Hon. Member: Why don't you turkeys go home?

An Hon. Member: What is the history of your Party?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order. I wish all Hon. Members would refrain from throwing insults across the floor of the House of Commons. It is not helping the debate in any way. That goes for Members from all sides. As far as the Hon. Member for Hamilton East is concerned, she is well aware of how to proceed, after four years of the rule which says that all Hon. Members should be referred to by the name of their riding. I am sure that she will abide by that rule from now on and help the Chair.

Ms. Copps: Madam Speaker, I am sorry that I used the words "Sinc Stevens" in this House. I realize it is unparliamentary.

An Hon. Member: You just did it again.

An Hon. Member: A complete disgrace to this Chamber, day after day.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Chair is wondering why the Hon. Members would make life so difficult for everyone in the Chamber by willingly going against the rules.

Ms. Copps: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I can understand why the Members of the Conservative Party are so touchy on this issue. As far as I am concerned, the conflict of interest legislation that is before this House remains an absolute farce as long as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) refuses to accept his responsibilities—

[Translation]

—concerning the Hon. Member for York Simcoe.

[English]

—and all that anybody across Canada has to say. I did not say that you had an option. I did not set myself up as the patron goddess of purity, as did the Prime Minister in the debate in 1984. But in fact, it was not the Liberal Party; it was J.M.S. Careless, an eminent Canadian historian, who, when writing about the history of this Government over the last four years, said that it was the first time in the history of Canada that the tone of patronage had changed. In the past, he wrote, Members were trying to do things for their ridings. In this case, you have clear-cut situations of members of the Government, of the Conservative Party, using their parliamentary privilege to fatten their own pocket-books, to take advantage and to receive personal gain.

The Criminal Code does not stop anyone from robbing a bank. If the Criminal Code stopped everyone from robbing a bank, we would have no bank robbers in Canada. Anybody who expects the conflict of interest legislation that is currently before us to absolve this Government of a litany of corruption, a litany of scandals and a litany of self-aggrandizement and self-benefit, really does not understand, that to quote the words of the democratic candidate—

An Hon. Member: Run a business out of your office.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Order.

[Translation]

Mr. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Lévis (Mr. Fontaine) rises on a point of order.

Mr. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, I should like to find out whether it is proper for an employee or a Member of the House to provide his or her spouse with an office to carry out business of his or her own? Do the conflict of interest guidelines apply to that?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Lévis is well aware that he was not raising on a point of order to seek an information, but to interrupt the person who had the floor. What is unacceptable for one side of the House is also unacceptable for the other.

The Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Mrs. Copps) has the floor.

Ms. Copps: All I am asking, Madam Speaker, and I can understand why the Tories become very irritated whenever we refer to the issue which my friend the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) quite properly designated as the Gucci article . . .