

Trade and Commerce and others who could help in the revitalization of this important industry?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. That, of course, is a clear representation as opposed to a question.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

#### ALLEGATION MR. TERON SPOKESMAN FOR URBANETICS— GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and is following up earlier questions I have asked in regard to the judgment rendered by Mr. Justice O'Driscoll of the Ontario Supreme Court in regard to Mr. Rudnicki and Mr. Teron. My question today concerns a statement made by Mr. Teron, chairman of the board of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and deputy minister of urban affairs as reported in the press on October 27, 1976. In that statement Mr. Teron presented himself as spokesman for Urbanetics, a firm involved in a major way in urban development. Can the Prime Minister tell the House whether the action and behaviour of Mr. Teron is in conformity with his conflict of interest guidelines and in conformity with section 44 of the Central Mortgage and Housing Act?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. This is clearly not the place to find out the Prime Minister's opinion on a legal matter. If the hon. member has a question he should put it.

**Mr. Oberle:** Mr. Speaker, my question was whether the behaviour of this senior civil servant is in conformity with the guidelines and policies that the Prime Minister has established and in conformity with section 44 of the Central Mortgage and Housing Act?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would have to take cognizance of the statement Mr. Teron is alleged to have made. I do not know what he said nor what the hon. member is alleging. I can say that when Mr. Teron was hired by the civil service he did of his own volition divest himself and arranged his business to ensure that he would not be in a conflict of interest situation. I looked at the arrangements and found he had taken the right course. Only some months, perhaps even years later, did we announce specific conflict of interest guidelines. I understand that Mr. Teron has had to make certain re-arrangements in order to adhere to the later published conflict of interest guidelines. There was obviously a movement from one position to another; but the first one, I repeat, was established before firm, written guidelines had been known. Mr. Teron at that point had put himself in the position not to be in conflict of interest, but he could not guess what the guidelines later to be published would say.

### Oral Questions

● (1500)

**Mr. Oberle:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I briefly quote Mr. Teron's response to the reporter's question. He said, as reported:

Let's set something straight right away... Urbanetics is not going out of business.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member wishes to ask a supplementary question. Perhaps he will put it shortly.

**Mr. Oberle:** Since the Prime Minister promised previously to study the matter and apprise this House of his opinion on it, can he now indicate when we may expect that investigation to take place and expect a report to this House concerning the propriety of this gentleman's conduct?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I do not recall that the previous question was framed in those words; I will ask for a report on the subject now, Mr. Speaker, and hope I will get it very soon.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to the question period which has just concluded. It is not a pleasant or an easy task to deal with decisions that are made by the Chair with respect to the question period, and I think that in this instance I would be happier not to. But you will recall that in the context of today's question period I was seeking to obtain from the Prime Minister specific information with respect to a major shift in policy concerning an event which took place in one of our provinces this week.

The Prime Minister initially refused to answer the question. It was only after the first supplementary that the Prime Minister began to respond to this very important question. Mr. Speaker, you made a judgment at that point that there should be no further discussion of that important subject. One of the difficulties we are under with respect to the present system of rules introduced on a temporary basis is that in previous parliaments, when the Speaker made a judgment without indicating the nature of that judgment, there was opportunity for the member, either by way of point of order or question of privilege, to clarify the situation and perhaps rephrase his question. In this instance, Mr. Speaker, there was no clarification from yourself and there was no opportunity for me to put a further supplementary question. I feel that while all questions are important in this House, it is obvious that, given the nature of the question and the need to give the Prime Minister the opportunity to clarify if some subtle brand of blackmail is to be practiced by the federal government with respect to the province of Quebec, some clarification of that matter should have taken place during the question period.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** If I may say so, sir, your judgment on that matter I regarded as improper and incorrect. It leads one to believe that you are unduly shielding either the Prime Minister or the minister—

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