

*Oral Questions*

● (1125)

[English]

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows very well that he has refused to answer directly questions about a conflict of interest. They are the questions he has refused to answer.

The Prime Minister has indicated for the first time that perhaps he is willing to answer such questions. I would, therefore, like to read to him what he said when he announced his conflict of interest guidelines. He said:

We have taken great pains to ensure that the new Code leaves no doubt that the ultimate responsibility for the ethical standards of the federal government rests with the Cabinet and, more particularly, with me.

I have a very direct question for the Prime Minister. When he had the conversations which he did have on Sunday morning about the former Minister he knew of the conflict of interest guidelines. Will he now accept his responsibility and tell the House whether he concluded at that time that the Minister was in a conflict of interest?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the information which was imparted to me was of sufficient importance for me to exercise immediately my right and duty in the circumstances to relieve the Minister of his responsibility, and to call in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and ask them to conduct a complete inquiry, irrespective of where it led. To me that is a Prime Minister fulfilling his responsibilities.

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

## PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that that is not the case. He knows that the RCMP deal with legal matters. Does he think it is proper for him, as the Prime Minister, to systematically refuse to accept his responsibility for conflict of interest while, at the same time, having officials in his office systematically leak to the media slanderous information about citizens of Canada on a selective basis? Why this double hypocritical standard by the Prime Minister?

● (1130)

**Mr. Speaker:** I hesitate to interrupt a lead question, but I would ask even Leaders to be very careful in the use of language in this very difficult situation. The very fact that the Leader of the New Democratic Party prefaced his question with concern about slanderous actions alleged by some people indicates that even the question is concerned about this. I would ask Hon. Members to be very careful.

I must say that during this week, in a very difficult and sensitive area of great importance to the country, Hon. Members have been extremely careful. As I said yesterday, the

Chair is very grateful for that, but I would ask that Hon. Members be careful. The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the obvious unfairness of the statement made by my hon. friend. He has asked me literally dozens of questions this week and I have responded completely to all of them in this regard. As the Speaker points out, it is an extremely sensitive and delicate matter where the rights of individuals are involved. However, the premise of his last question was based on the assumption that he stated that the RCMP only deals with legal or criminal matters. The implication is that because the RCMP only deals with those matters some other kind of inquiry is required. The statement, the premise is false.

The Commissioner of the RCMP says that:

—should we come across activity that might be considered unpropitious to good government, even though short of provable criminal conduct, on the part of senior officials, elected or otherwise, it is our responsibility to make our concerns known to—the Solicitor General.

The RCMP do not go in wearing blinkers; they go in to look after the possible prosecution of offences. If they find other violations en route they act upon those as well. That is why we have acted with the RCMP to ensure that justice is done.

## REQUEST THAT RCMP QUESTION ALL MINISTERS

**Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. As part of the RCMP investigation will the Prime Minister instruct the Commissioner of the RCMP to ask every Minister of the Crown and their staff when they first learned of any irregularities concerning the Oerlikon affair and what the Ministers of the Crown and their staff knew about those irregularities concerning the Oerlikon affair?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, when a matter is turned over to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Commissioner and his colleagues, who command the respect of the country, investigate and set the parameters of their own inquiry. They react to events and they investigate fully. When they are satisfied that they have exhaustively analysed a matter in the interests of Canadian justice, I suppose they either report to a Crown prosecutor and lay charges or report back to the Solicitor General. It is not for me or any member of the Government to interfere in any way with the conduct of that inquiry. I allow, quite properly, the Commissioner of the RCMP to exercise his judgment, as he should. He does not need any advice from any Member of the House of Commons as to how to conduct a police inquiry.

## REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER ADVISE MINISTERS TO BE AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONING

**Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury):** Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister then advise every Minister of the Crown in his Government, and their staff, to be available to the RCMP to answer questions as to when they first learned of the