

*Oral Questions*

position and pursue that position which he thinks is appropriate? That right is respected by all Canadians and should be respected by the Hon. Member.

With respect to the payment of legal fees, that was announced some time ago and is in accordance with precedent.

Finally, while it is a rather hypothetical question because I do not know the intentions of the Hon. Member for York—Peel, there is no intention to pay any further legal costs. Our commitment was with respect to the Royal Commission.

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, I accept the commitment by the Minister of Justice that no further legal bills will be paid in the former Minister's attempt to cloud this issue.

## STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO FORMER MINISTER

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he will repudiate Mr. Stevens' statement, quoted in this morning's *Globe and Mail*, in which he said he was a victim of an atmosphere of hysteria whipped up by the news media and Hamilton Liberal MP Sheila Copps?

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

**Ms. Copps:** Will the Prime Minister repudiate that statement by his former Minister?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I think that question is totally inappropriate and has nothing to do with the very important issue we are dealing with here today at great length.

## INTEREST-FREE LOAN QUERY

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The House knew and the former Minister admitted on April 29, 1986, that there was an interest-free loan. Since the Prime Minister knew about it then, why did he not act at that time?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have responded fully and completely to all matters relating to that question.

## ENFORCEMENT OF GUIDELINES IN FUTURE

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, if he has responded fully to all matters relating to that question, what confidence can the people of Canada have, when there is another situation like this in the future, that the Prime Minister will carry on a proper and full investigation and enforce the conflict of interest guidelines? What confidence can we have that this will not happen again?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the confidence my hon. friend seeks should be restored by the fact that he is looking at a Royal Commission report. He is a veteran Member of this House. Perhaps he can

tell us how often Prime Ministers in the past, when confronted with allegations of conflict of interest, have appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the matter fully? I think he will find they were few and far between. This report indicates we have absolutely nothing to hide and we did exactly the right thing on behalf of all Canadians.

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

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## CHILD CARE

## NATIONAL STRATEGY—CREATION OF DAY CARE SPACES

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that day care spaces have been growing at the rate of 19 per cent per year, and if that rate continued for the next seven years there would be almost one million day care spaces in Canada, why does the Minister's plan aim at only 400,000 spaces by 1994?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, we have 220,000 day care spaces now, approximately half of which are subsidized. There is a legitimate point of view that we need more subsidized day care spaces accessible to low-income families. The plan we put forward, keeping in mind the plans of provinces like Ontario and Quebec just to name two, was for a 200 per cent increase in subsidized spaces over seven years.

I am not saying for a minute that the Hon. Member is trying to play with the figures, and the percentage she uses is correct. However, that was outside the Canada Assistance Plan. She has to keep in mind that we are talking about subsidized spaces for low-income families. I believe very sincerely that, with the subsidies now available as the provinces decide, for profit spaces will grow possibly at the same percentage rate we have seen in the past. My obligation was to provide a mix, and to provide spaces for low-income families, because that was the requirement.

## MINISTER'S POSITION

**Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity):** Mr. Speaker, even accepting the Minister's explanation there is still a shortfall of numbers. With two and a half million children in single-parent families or families where both parents work, 200,000 new spaces over the next seven years do not begin to meet the need. Can the Minister say if he is trying to limit the natural growth, or if he has another plan which has not yet been made clear?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** No, Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to limit growth at all. I am trying to build in another factor to increase the growth. What I was trying to explain to the Hon. Member and the House was that we were not seeing a sufficient growth on the subsidized side. The committee very clearly pointed that out.