

Ottawa Journal: Trudeau Under Investigation for Ethics Breach

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The Prime Minister is under investigation for a breach of ethics and conflict of interest.

As is now well known, but which the Prime Minister and his office were at great pains to keep secret, he and his family (along with a Liberal MP and the Liberal Party President) spent his holiday vacation on the private island in the Bahamas of the Aga Khan, the billionaire spiritual leader and philanthropist.

This shocking lapse in ethical behaviour is now being examined by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, Mary Dawson.

The Prime Minister is in trouble for at least two big mistakes. Firstly, taking the vacation on the island in the first place should have raised alarm bells all over the Prime Minister's office, since the Aga Khan's foundation is a registered federal lobbyist which receives millions in funding every year from the federal government. That alone should have precluded this trip.

Secondly, the Prime Minister, his family and his entourage travelled to the island using the Aga Khan's private helicopter, which is expressly prohibited without prior approval from the very same Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

Needless to say, he did not obtain that permission.

This is evidence of the full and shocking return to the culture of entitlement by the Liberals. But it is hardly surprising. The Prime Minister claims family friendship as his excuse, but anyone who takes even a sidelong glance at this situation must conclude that it reeks of bad judgment.

For someone who is currently trying to re-connect with Canadians by putting on a side show at various Tim Horton's across the land, this reminds those very same Canadians that this is a guy who thinks cavorting with billionaires on a private Bahamian island is normal.

He doesn't live in the same world as you and I.

The most egregious part of this escapade is that the Prime Minister and his office tried to keep it all secret, first by refusing to say where and his family were on vacation, and then only slowly releasing details as the media got wind of it. What happened to the Prime Minister's commitment to transparency and ethics? Those rules apparently do not apply to him ? do as I say, not as I do is his operating procedure.

Now that's he's been caught, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has a clear-cut case in front of her. The sanctions available to her are not large, but the damage to the Prime Minister's reputation when she inevitably finds him in breach of the rules will make up for that. He's broken the rules and he knows it. The sad part is that he doesn't seem to care.

Here's one prediction for 2017 that you can safely take to the bank: the Liberals unethical behaviour will continue. There will be more cash-for-access fundraisers with millionaires and billionaires. There will be more cozy dealing with lobbyists. There will be more reckless spending by Ministers. And there will be the Official Opposition, yours truly included, there in Ottawa holding them to account.