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Ottawa Journal: the paradise papers

By David Tilson

Canadians are increasingly (and quite rightfully) questioning the integrity and trustworthiness of the current Liberal government, as another scandal recently emerged where Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's top fundraiser was mentioned in the Paradise Papers. This is Liberal hypocrisy at its best. For months now, the Prime Minister and his government have been effectively calling small business operators tax cheats and continuing to tax hardworking, ordinary Canadians, while their well-connected friends have been avoiding paying taxes here in Canada. This is not fair and Canadians know it.

Earlier this month, the Paradise Papers exposed Prime Minister Trudeau's chief political fundraiser and close friend stashing $60 million away in a tax-free account in the Cayman Islands. To put this into perspective, if this same $60 million were to be placed in a passive investment account by a small business person here in Canada, this would amount to a tax bill of $43 million.

The Paradise Papers also exposed that former Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin's family business has moved its assets into zero tax Bermuda and he is advising the current Prime Minister as part of a Liberal economic team. This is the same Paul Martin, who when he was the Finance Minister of Canada, placed foreign flags on his ships to avoid the very taxes he was imposing on everyone else. Canadians are asking if the current Finance Minister, the Honourable Bill Morneau, will fire Paul Martin from his economic team, given this significant conflict of interest.

This is another scandal for the current Liberal government following that of the current Finance Minister earlier this fall. The pattern to date seems to be nothing happens until the Liberals are caught. The Prime Minister has gone to great lengths to protect the interests of his wealthy, well-connected Liberal friends. However, he went out of his way during the summer to explain that hard-working fishers, farmers, and small business owners weren't really paying their fair share and were, in fact, tax cheats. The Finance Minister has been looking for additional tax money, as it's needed to pay for the Prime Minister's out-of-control spending. They have not only been targeting small businesses for that tax money, but also Canadians with type 1 Diabetes, mental health issues, and autism. Somehow though, the Prime Minister's wealthy friends have been overlooked. The Prime Minister's approach has been to force ordinary, hardworking Canadians to pay the bill instead of cracking down on the tax-avoidance schemes used by his wealthy friends.

Canadians can only be left to conclude that there is one set of rules for the Prime Minister and his wealthy friends and another set of rules for everybody else. This is completely unacceptable. We, the Conservative Official Opposition, will continue to stand up for Canadians by holding the current Liberal government accountable for the revelations emerging from the Paradise Papers and for their unfair taxing of ordinary, hardworking (and taxpaying) Canadians.