

Oral Questions

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES TO OFFICIALS

Since these humiliating investigations are probably illegal and unconstitutional, is the Prime Minister prepared to pay a contribution to the common front that intends to attack this practice by the Quebec Liberal Government before the courts?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think in the area of where a province administers social benefits we have to recognize that, within reasonable limits, provinces have a responsibility both to the provincial taxpayer and to the federal taxpayer to see that those people who genuinely need help and need social assistance receive it. That is the bottom line for the federal Government.

What I think we have to keep in mind is that these systems are jeopardized by a very small number and percentage of people who try to rip off the system. If that is what Quebec is going after, I think it is right in that respect.

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GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

AUTHORIZED TRAVEL EXPENDITURE REGULATIONS OF OFFICIALS

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the Prime Minister on the question of this grotesque spending on travel which he indicated is justified on the basis of the hard work he did and the success that he achieved. I want to ask the Prime Minister about the guidelines of the Department of Supply and Services which limit other Canadian officials to a per diem of \$55 Canadian in New York—these are current Supply and Services *per diems*—and \$60 Canadian in Paris, for meals and incidentals. The guidelines recommend hotels of under \$100. Although the Prime Minister has worked hard and been successful, other Canadian officials work hard and seek to be successful—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Has the Hon. Member a question, please?

Mr. Kaplan: What kind of an example does the grotesque luxurious lifestyles of the rich and famous that have been revealed show for his officials and for the officials of the Government of Canada, Mr. Speaker?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, while in New York for the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I stayed at the Pierre Hotel for two reasons. First, it is Canadian owned. Second, Mr. Trudeau used to stay there all the time.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister telling us that these guidelines set by his Government for Canadian officials no longer apply and that they are also eligible to live the lifestyles of the rich and famous?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the guidelines are there. They apply to whomever pursuant to objective facts set down by the Public Service. I can just tell my hon. friend that, for example, in Paris we were placed by the French Government in a given hotel for security reasons. I stayed in exactly the same hotel, I ate exactly the same food as the Liberal Member, the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis, who was part of our official delegation.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CREDENTIALS PRESENTED BY FORMER AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR, KURT WALDHEIM

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In light of the report compiled by Professor Irwin Cotler and released yesterday it is becoming increasingly apparent that the Conservative Government in 1958, and Liberal Governments during the decade before that, knew about the war crimes allegations against Kurt Waldheim. Is the Prime Minister prepared to launch an immediate investigation into the question of Kurt Waldheim's credentials, first, as Minister and then as Ambassador to Canada? Why were those credentials accepted without question?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs is en route to a memorial service in Ireland and is presently securing the information. I will be happy to be in touch with him as quickly as possible and provide what information I can to my hon. friend.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION OF WARTIME ACTIVITY REGULATIONS

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, given the very serious nature of these allegations, would the Prime Minister consider having Canada encourage the establishment of an international tribunal, of which Canada should be a member, to investigate fully the war crimes charges against Mr. Waldheim?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the commitment of the Government of Canada in this area or the sincerity of our commitment ought