

● (1440)

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): This matter has been raised in the House a number of times and I must admit I am not personally familiar with it. I understand the Senator has made a statement with regard to it in the other place and I should like to read that statement.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I might point out that the statement bore striking resemblance to the statement made some time ago by Senator Giguere. I know the minister will read it and make his own interpretation. In a confidential letter dated October 18, 1976, written by the Prime Minister to the President of the Privy Council the Prime Minister included an appendix which laid out principles governing the activities of holders of public office. One of those principles, as stated in appendix one, reads as follows:

Current and former holders of public office must ensure by their actions that the objectivity and impartiality of government service are not cast in doubt and that the people of Canada are given no cause to believe that preferential treatment is being accorded or will be duly accorded to any person or organization.

Does the Minister of Justice not feel that the fact reported that Senator Davey had set up meetings with Mr. Syd Pratt, the director of parimutuel betting and the federal Department of Agriculture and had also set up other meetings in the department contradicts the principle laid down by the Prime Minister in his letter?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I find the innuendo contained in the beginning of the hon. member's question totally reprehensible.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Basford: For a party which does so much prattling about the Bill of Rights, which provides for due process, they are the largest group in the country which consciously every day in this House disobeys and ignores the basic tenets of the Bill of Rights.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Basford: With regard to the latter part of the question, as I indicated earlier, I should like to read the Senator's statement.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The Minister of Justice need not lecture the House in view of the government's failure to provide any sort of inquiry and its ability to stonewall every important issue we have brought up. I think that as a member of parliament I have the right to ask these questions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: On two occasions ministers have stressed that the Senator made no money on the Blue Water Racing venture and, to date, the amount of Hydroculture Luwasa's business with the government has been relatively small. Without offending the minister's sensibility, might I ask him this question: Could he tell the House whether we can take it to be

Oral Questions

the policy of the government that failure to reap large rewards from potential conflict is somehow a defence against the charge of conflict of interest?

Mr. Basford: No, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

POSSIBILITY SENATOR DAVEY VIOLATED SECTION 110 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): In the absence of the Prime Minister I should like to direct a further question to the Minister of Justice, one which also concerns Senator Keith Davey, Liberal Party campaign director, advisor, and close confidant of the Prime Minister. Has the minister undertaken, or will he undertake, to investigate whether or not Senator Keith Davey has violated section 110 of the Criminal Code of Canada which provides a maximum jail sentence of five years for those who use influence for private benefit on behalf of themselves or of their associates in connection with commercial enterprises?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): No, Mr. Speaker, and I will not do so until first reading the statement made in the other place to see whether such action is warranted.

Mr. Cossitt: Will the minister advise the House whether he has received from the RCMP or from the Solicitor General who from time to time seems to accept responsibility for the RCMP, any indication or recommendation that an investigation should be made of any of the activities of Senator Davey and, particularly, whether or not charges should be laid under section 110 or under any other section of the Criminal Code?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, it has been clear in this House for many years that neither the Minister of Justice nor the Solicitor General ever indicated at any time who may or may not be under investigation. That is the essence of the protection of innocent persons. However, in this case, because of the innuendos which have been spread around, I will answer the question and say, no.

Mr. Cossitt: I should like to direct a final supplementary to the Solicitor General. Would the hon. gentleman tell us whether he has had any communication of any kind on this subject with the RCMP, whether or not he has dealt with the Minister of Justice at any time on this same subject and, finally, whether as a result of any investigation which has been completed or which is in process he is considering recommending to the Minister of Justice that charges be laid against Senator Davey?

Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General): The question is exactly the same as that addressed to the Minister of Justice and the answer is exactly the same as the Minister of Justice gave. The answer is, no.