

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the intent of the guidelines in question must be observed. However, there is no evidence that could lead us to believe there was an infringement of these guidelines. If the Hon. Member has some specific examples to give the House, let him do so. Yes, there are guidelines in this respect, and we believe they have been, and ought to be, observed.

[English]

USE OF GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT BY MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, with specific reference to the Minister of Justice, by Friday of this week he will have spent three and a quarter hours in three days on government business. According to his campaign committee, the rest of the time was spent meeting delegates to the Liberal leadership convention. That is his business, but when he uses government jets to meet delegates, that is taxpayers' business. Has the Acting Prime Minister satisfied himself, or will he satisfy himself, that it was strictly and essentially necessary for the Minister of Justice to be using government JetStars during his current trip to the Maritimes?

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice, as the Hon. Member acknowledged, had to use these planes to attend to Government business, namely that of his own Department. I asked the Hon. Member earlier to be more specific in his accusations, if he really has any, and to show how a Minister, in this case the Minister of Justice, could have made improper use of planes that are at the disposal of the Government. However, from his question it is clear that the Minister of Justice used the aircraft to deal with his own departmental business and to represent the Government. If on the same occasion he happened to meet delegates, it was probably a coincidence.

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Now that my colleague is the Acting Prime Minister, perhaps he will be put on the mailing list.

CHARTERING OF JETSTARS

Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, the Minister and the House will know that John Turner continues to fly as a corporate director of Canadian Pacific. Putting aside that conflict of interest, what steps will the Government take in the future to ensure that when Cabinet Ministers charter JetStars, they are really doing it on government business and are not just off on a frolic of their own, as my colleague in the legal profession will understand?

● (1420)

[Translation]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this is an allegation and a very vague one. I have challenged the Hon. Member to give us a specific example of abuse or infringement of the guidelines. The guidelines are clear, they exist and we follow them. Unless we have something definite about infringement of these guidelines, no comments are necessary at all. It is the Government's intention to enforce these guidelines, to see to it that they are observed, and we believe that to date, all Ministers have observed them.

If the Hon. Member has a specific accusation, if he has a blatant example, let him tell the House. In that case we will investigate.

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[English]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

PETRO-CANADA—PURCHASE OF FURNITURE BY EXECUTIVES

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on Monday I directed some questions to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. They dealt with possible conflict of interest, again involving a considerable amount of the taxpayers' money. In the absence of the Minister I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. Has the Deputy Minister of Energy had an opportunity to make inquiries with regard to my question and concerns and, if so, can he indicate the results of those inquiries? Also, can he indicate whether corrective action will be taken so that these perceived conflict of interest cases will not occur in the future?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am informed that the matter is still under investigation and that I can give no report at this stage.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST RULES

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. There is an obvious perception that some individuals are profiteering unnecessarily at the taxpayers' expense. Does the Prime Minister plan to come forward with concrete solutions to these concerns by implementing a firm set of rules dealing with conflict of interest, not only for those within the Public Service but also for those employed in federal Crown corporations?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, such rules exist. They exist within the Public Service, for Members of Parliament and, by extension, for anyone who works for the Crown. I repeat, this particular matter is under investigation. I cannot comment on it any further. In so far as promulgating conflict of interest guidelines in the future is concerned, the Hon. Member will know that just about a week ago we received the report on conflict of interest and the various guidelines, a report I asked of the committee chaired