

Monday, April 14, 2003.

Rt. Hon. Jean Chrétien
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2 Via fax, e-mail and post

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you today on behalf of the 65,000 supporters of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) with respect to the "perceived" and "real" conflict of interest that is now occurring with Ministers of the Crown continuing to maintain their positions while campaigning for the leadership of the Liberal Party. This is the second time this issue has been brought to your attention in the last nine months. The first instance was a letter to your office from the CTF dated August 27, 2002, which remains unanswered.

Ministers Manley and Copps both occupy influential positions at the Cabinet table with considerable taxpayer provided resources at their disposal. Serving as a Minister of the Crown and as a Member of Parliament is difficult enough task at the best of times. Participating in the campaign to become leader of the Liberal Party severely limits Mr. Manley's and Ms. Copps' ability to effectively serve as Ministers of the Crown with respect to time and activity pressures not to mention the real conflict of interest inherent in using government resources for private partisan pursuits.

The Saskatchewan NDP leadership campaign in 2000/2001 and the more recent Ontario PC leadership campaign in the spring of 2002 provide ample evidence of the ease with which private partisan pursuits can masquerade as public business thus resulting in the misappropriation of public resources.

Mr. Prime Minister your course of action is simple and straightforward. You must insist on the resignations from any and all Cabinet Ministers who wish to pursue your party's leadership. If they do not voluntarily resign, you must strip them of their responsibilities. Ethical and honest government demands no less. Leadership is about action, not position. I anxiously await your response and pronouncements on this issue in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Walter Robinson
Federal Director