

MP's REPORT: SNC-Lavalin

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As with any scandal things are never as they appear on the surface and the SNC-Lavalin affair is no exception.

The Prime Minister is seeking to claim the moral high ground convincing us there is 'nothing to see here?'. We must not be taken in by this deception for this issue is as serious as they come.

In an attempt to argue their actions were within the law, the Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers, Prime Minister's Office staff, and the Clerk of the Privy Council have claimed they were acting to protect jobs. This couldn't be further from the truth. They have been unable to provide any evidence to support that SNC's failure to receive a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA) would affect any of the 9000 jobs. Additionally, they argue that if found guilty, SNC would be unable to bid on government contracts for 10 years ? but that too is false, as the Liberals could have easily changed the government procurement policy with the stroke of a pen, without the need for a legal solution.

If this Prime Minister were focussed on jobs he would have ensured a promised pipeline was built rather than standing idly by as Alberta lost over a 100,000 jobs - threatening our energy security and the future of our oil and gas industry. If it were about jobs, he would have fought to keep Sears in Canada and GM in Oshawa. He wouldn't have challenged Boeing only to end up with no new fighter aircraft for our military and the loss of the Bombardier CSeries aircraft being built in Canada.

It appears that the SNC-Lavalin scandal is about having friends in high places to use the full power of government, the Prime Minister included, to circumvent the law for mutual political and personal corporate gain. For the Prime Minister and the Liberals they have indicated it was to curry favour in Quebec and win a provincial election, a future federal election, and for the Prime Minister himself to be re-elected in his riding of Papineau. For SNC-Lavalin it could be to avoid a trial where other information about bribery and corruption would be revealed. A former SNC executive who spent 2.5 years in a Swiss jail for a similar offence is now a witness for the prosecution in the current SNC corruption charges. Perhaps he will provide information that SNC doesn't want the Canadian public to hear and a deferred prosecution agreement is the only way to ensure it never sees the light of day.

So, the SNC-Lavalin corporate power brokers including a former Clerk of the Privy Council and senior Bank of Montreal BMO board executive set to work (of note, the former Minister of the Treasury Board Scott Brison who resigned to spend more time with his family has now accepted the position of vice chair of investment and corporate banking at

BMO).

They mounted an unrelenting campaign of influence to first have the criminal code legislation changed to allow a DPA ? and then to be granted a DPA.

When they were denied access to this new legislation by the independent judiciary - SNC had over 80 meetings with top officials and Ministers at Global Affairs Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), the Privy Council Office, Export Development Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), Public Safety, Treasury Board, Natural Resources and Environment to discuss ?law enforcement and justice? including 18 with top officials in the Prime Minister's Office.

But even with all of that pressure ? SNC-Lavalin has not yet avoided proceeding to trial on corruption and bribery charges. For the moment Canada's rule of law is winning with a score of corporate power brokers and political influence - 0 and the former attorney general - 1 - but the game is not up.

The current Attorney General David Lametti has said he may still politically intervene and grant a DPA to SNC-Lavalin. SNC may still ?get out of jail free?; and that would be unfortunate.