



Window on V&E

Volume 1, Number 1

*Serving Canada with Honour,
Excellence and Integrity*

Between You and Me...

It's my pleasure to personally welcome you to the first edition of the Office of Public Service Values and Ethics' new electronic bulletin *Window on V&E*.

It will be published every three months as another important communication ...

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Ethics is a code of values which guide our choices and actions and determine the purpose and course of our lives.

Ayn Rand, Russian-American novelist and philosopher

Welcome

By Suzanne Charbonneau,
Director, Learning and Communications, OPSVE

Welcome to the first edition of *Window on V&E*, the e-newsletter of the Office of Public Service Values and Ethics (OPSVE). This newsletter is intended for the partners we have formed ties with over the years, both inside and outside the Public Service, and for anyone else interested in values and ethics within the Public Service.

Published quarterly, *Window on V&E* will tackle the following timely issues in the coming months: the impact of the Federal Accountability Act on public servants and Canadians, ethical challenges, wellness in the workplace, values needed for protecting the public interest, and many others.

In this first issue, Catherine MacQuarrie, OPSVE Vice-President, has contributed a short editorial on the new slogan of the Office of Public Service Values and Ethics. She urges us to celebrate the history of the men and women who have set themselves apart through their courage and their commitment to serving Canada's interests both within the Public Service and abroad.

In the same vein, the article on the Canadian Embassy in Kabul, which received the Public Service Award of Excellence in June 2006, provides a glimpse into the daily lives of our Canadian representatives abroad. This edition also includes a look at the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, and a portrait of the Defence Ethics Program prepared by the Department of National Defence.

Window on V&E is a publication designed especially for you, for the simple purpose of providing you with interesting and varied content on current topics and, above all, piquing your interest from issue to issue.

Happy reading!

Next Issue

The new president of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada, Nicole Jauvin, will pen the column “Between You and Me” in the next issue of *Window on V&E*. “Focus On” will spotlight Health Canada.

Questions or suggestions

If you have questions or suggestions about topics that you would like to see in the upcoming issues, please contact us at commentairesweb@hrma-agrh.gc.ca



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Between You and Me...

By Catherine MacQuarrie
Acting Vice-President Office of Public Service Values and Ethics

It's my pleasure to personally welcome you to the first edition of the Office of Public Service Values and Ethics' new electronic bulletin, *Window on V&E*. It will be published every three months as another important



communication forum with the federal public service values and ethics community, as well as a way to promote broader dialogue with anyone interested in these issues, and to nurture the valuable partnerships outside the public service that the Office has established over the years.

While *Window on V&E* will give all of us an extra way to share ideas and events, we also intend to use it to celebrate the many positive achievements of public servants striving to serve the public interest.

To that end, it also gives me great pleasure to unveil in this first issue, OPSVE'S new slogan: *Serving Canada with Honour, Excellence and Integrity*. This was developed in consultation with departmental colleagues and to us this

phrase represents in short form the spirit and content of the *Values and Ethics Code of the Public Service*. Honour stands for the important and special role that the public service plays within Canadian democracy and in service to Canadians. Excellence is our service standard and drives us to continually improve and innovate. Integrity represents the way in which we do the work we do: keeping our commitment to serve honestly, fairly and with respect for the democratic, professional, ethical and people values of the public service that we have a duty to uphold. We also felt this slogan best encapsulated the pride and commitment so many federal public servants feel about their work and their role.

In this issue we present the first of what I am sure will be many stories illustrating and celebrating the values of public service. We feature the 2006 Award of Excellence winners: the team at the Embassy in Kabul. I know you'll share in the pride of our colleagues' achievement. I also hope it will inspire you to share other stories with us – both big and small – of people and teams who represent public service values in action.

I hope you will find this new bulletin informative and engaging, and that you will come back regularly to check for information on new and exciting updates in the values and ethics field. If you have any comments or suggestions of topics you would like to see discussed in *Window on V&E*, all you have to do is send a note to: commentairesweb@hrma-agrh.gc.ca

Enjoy!





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In Perspective

Greater support for promotion of public sector integrity – the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act*

Federal public servants who witness potential wrongdoing in the workplace will soon have a legislated framework – the *Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act* (PSDPA) – that will encourage them to come forward and report it.

Although the PSDPA – commonly referred to as the whistleblowing legislation – received Royal Assent in late 2005, it was not proclaimed. Bill C-2, the proposed *Federal Accountability Act* was subsequently introduced and included several amendments to the PSDPA. Bill C-2 is currently being examined in the Senate.

The PSDPA will apply to departments, separate employers, parent Crown corporations¹ and the RCMP, and these organizations – particularly those not subject to the current Treasury Board policy that governs disclosure – must prepare for its coming into force. (Three organizations, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Communications Security Establishment and the Canadian Forces, are excluded, but must create comparable regimes.)

The PSDPA will strengthen the existing Treasury Board regime regarding disclosure of wrongdoing by providing legislated protection from reprisals against those making disclosures, while at the same time ensuring due process and fair treatment of those accused of misconduct.

¹A parent Crown corporation is one wholly owned directly by the Government of Canada.

Most notably, it establishes a fully independent Public Sector Integrity Commissioner (PSIC), an Agent of Parliament akin to the Auditor General, to whom public servants can make disclosures. Although most organizations must establish an internal disclosure process, public servants can go directly to the PSIC if they are not comfortable raising an issue internally.

The PSIC will receive, investigate and report to Parliament on disclosures of wrongdoing. Public servants can also turn to the PSIC should they face reprisals for making a disclosure. The PSIC will receive reprisal complaints, investigate them and, if warranted, refer them to a quasi-judicial tribunal with the power to determine whether reprisal has occurred and to order remedial and disciplinary action.

Other notable features include limited free legal advice to public sector employees considering making a disclosure, serving as a witness or alleging reprisal and to non-public servants considering providing information about wrongdoing, normally up to a maximum amount of \$1,500 per person.

While most of the media and parliamentary attention paid to the PSDPA has focused on these wrongdoing provisions, wrongdoing is only part of the story. The legislation will also be one of the government's strongest tools in supporting a positive public sector culture based on values and ethics.

The PSDPA's wrongdoing provisions are set within a much broader framework of "right-doing", of promoting strong values and ethical conduct and setting these as the norm. For example, the preamble to the legislation commits to establishing a Charter of Values of Public Service which would set out the values that should guide public servants – an ethical compass for their work and professional conduct.

Continued...



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In Perspective (continued from page 3)

The PSDPA also requires Treasury Board to establish a Code of Conduct for the federal public sector. As a testament to the importance of this Code, Treasury Board must consult with bargaining agents in its development and table the resulting Code in Parliament. Consultations on the Code are expected to begin this fall. It is too early to say what impact this new Code will have on the existing *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service*.

Finally, the PSDPA also requires the Minister responsible for the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada to promote ethical practices throughout the federal public sector. This will support and expand work on values and ethics that has already been underway for some time.

As noted above, chief executives – that is, deputy heads of departments and chief executive officers of Crown Corporations – need to prepare for the coming into force of the PSDPA. First, they must ensure their employees are aware of the Act and how it works.

They must also establish codes of conduct for their organizations. Though these codes should be tailored to meet their needs, they have to be consistent with the Code to be established by Treasury Board.

Organizations not yet subject to the current Treasury Board policy on internal disclosure need to put in place a Senior Officer – someone in the organization to whom employees can report wrongdoing – as well as mechanisms and procedures for internal disclosure. Chief executives also have a number of responsibilities around confidentiality, reporting and related issues.

But most importantly, chief executives of all organizations have the responsibility to provide personal leadership and proactive conduct to embed values and ethics in their organizations and throughout the public service. The goal is a positive climate that fosters right-doing as the norm and identifies and resolves any instances of wrongdoing quickly and fairly.

Future bulletins will provide more information on how the Office of Public Service Values and Ethics can help organizations prepare for the coming into force of the new Act by providing guidance, and other tools such as learning products, and communications tools. For more information on the PSDPA you are also invited to consult the Questions and Answers available on the website of the Office at www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/veo-bve.





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Focus On...

The Defence Ethics Program

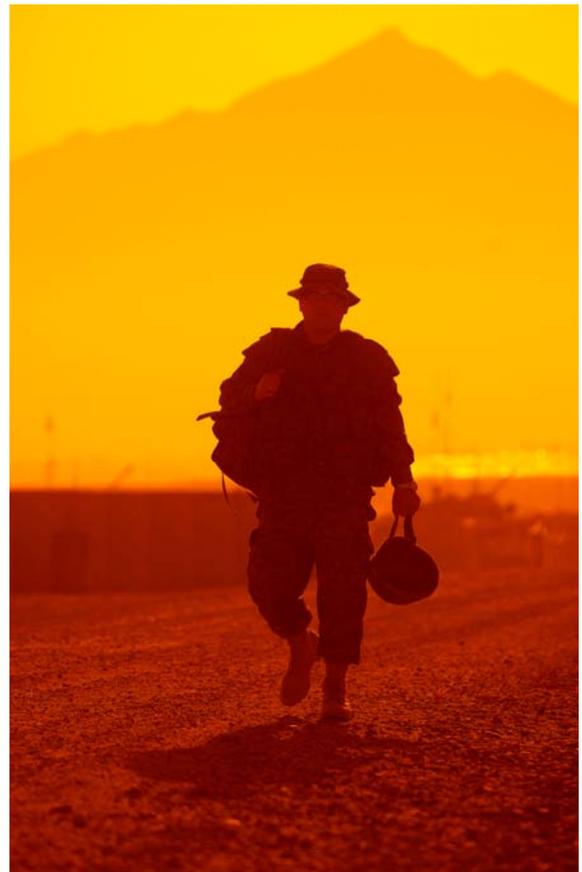
By Major Cynthia Allan

The Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Forces (CF) are composed of a mix of dedicated military members and civilian employees who share the values that exist in Canadian society. They are unique organizations for whom, given the nature of their role, it is important to establish the measures to maintain public confidence in their ability to accomplish their mission. The values-based Defence Ethics Program (DEP) encourages ethical behaviour in the working environment so that all members will perform their duties in the best possible way.

“The fundamental purpose of the military profession in Canada is the ordered and lawful application of force in accordance with the federal government’s policy and direction,” said Colonel Yvon Desjardins, the Director of the Defence Ethics Program. “Members of the CF and DND employees work side by side to protect Canada, to defend North America, and to contribute to international peace and security, such as the current operations in Afghanistan. As the Canadian public expects a very high standard of conduct from its military and from its civil servants, we must foster the conditions that will develop and maintain a healthy ethical culture in DND.”

The DEP was established in 1997, and is overseen by a staff of approximately one dozen civilian employees and military personnel. It is built on a Statement of Defence Ethics that lays out three core ethical principles stating the manner in which the Department wants its members to carry out their responsibilities. These principles are: respect the dignity of all persons, serve Canada before self, and obey and support lawful authority.

These are supported by six obligations pertaining to professional behaviour: integrity, loyalty, courage, honesty, fairness, and responsibility.



A Canadian soldier with the 3rd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment Battalion Group returns from patrol in Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo by Sergeant Frank Hudec

“The principles and obligations of the Statement of Defence Ethics go hand in hand with the *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service*,” said Colonel Desjardins. “Since the Code is a condition of employment for public servants, DND further increases the promotion of high standards that would result in improving ethical decision-making both at the individual and the collective levels.”

Continued...



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Focus On... (continued from page 5)

As DND and the CF are large and complex organizations, the implementation of the DEP is decentralized. As such, the Environmental Chiefs of Staff and Group Principals are responsible for promoting ethics within their respective organizations and for setting up, with the support of the DEP directorate, education, sensitization and training programs tailored to their specific areas of responsibility.

“It may be an old cliché, but leadership by example is the key to implementing the DEP”, said Colonel Desjardins. “We expect leaders at all levels to make ethical decisions in the complex and often contradictory defence environment, and to enable and encourage their people to make the right choices in turn. It is also very important to influence members of the organization so that they choose to make the right choices. We work in a unique federal department with a very diverse population. Without effective leadership, we run the risk of losing our professional credibility, our reputation, and our strong morale. We want to be respected for our expertise and our values. This can only make the Canadian Forces and the DND a better place, one that will make Canadians want to join our team.”

The ethical decision-making process that is practised at DND depends on each individual assessing the key aspects of a situation and considering the possible options. Generally, different options will result in different degrees of risk and benefit. The preferred option should, among other things, adhere to the ethical principles and obligations identified in the DEP.

Sometimes it's a difficult process because of competing values. Canadian Forces combat team leaders, some of whom were recently seen on television regarding the temporary detention of some alleged Taliban fighters, have been concerned in some instances for the personal safety of their detainees, once in the hands of the local Afghan security forces. According to the mandate of the coalition forces in Afghanistan, all detainees are to be transferred to the care of the authorities in that country. On at least two occasions, Canadian soldiers have made an ethical decision to protect the personal safety of the detainees by delivering them later to other officials.

“We want all our Defence Team members, military and civilian, to make ethical choices not only because they have to, but also because they choose to and they know it's the right thing to do,” concluded Colonel Desjardins.

More information on the DEP is available at www.forces.gc.ca/ethics.





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Heart and Soul at Work ...

A Public Service Award of Excellence for the Canadian Embassy in Kabul

On June 16, 2006, the Canadian Embassy in Kabul won the 2006 Public Service Award of Excellence in the category Exemplary Contribution under Extraordinary Circumstances. The work of the embassy staff and the professionalism they showed in carrying out their duties have helped Canada achieve recognition on the international scene as a leader in the efforts towards the reconstruction of a stable and democratic Afghanistan. On August 23, the *Window on Values & Ethics* (WVE) team was able to interview the Canadian Ambassador to Kabul, His Excellency David Sproule, during his trip to Ottawa.



Recipients Exemplary Contribution under Extraordinary Circumstances:

Chris Alexander, Stéphan Allard, Elizabeth Baldwin-Jones, Nipa Banerjee, Stephen John Bishop, Richard H. Bourassa, Todd Brohart, Alain Cacchione, Guy E. Chenel, Philippe E. Corneau, Stewart Dafoe, Jeff T.J. David, Daniel T. Dwyer, Jeffrey A. Eastabrook, Darcy S. Elder, Christina F. Green, Mike A. Hager, Ian Hape, Yannick Hingorani, Lola Lagler, Martin Lépine, Linda J. Libront, Brian D. MacInnis, Peter Marshall, Marcelo F.J. Mosquera, Eric O'Connor, Eileen Olexiuk, Sherman Organ, Stéphane B. Paiement, Mario Paradis, Daniel Parent, Vincent Peters, Daniel Peterson, Wayne J. Podolsky, Mario Poulin, Harry Rohde, Nathan S. Rutherford, David Sproule, Blair Tilley, Christopher W. Tracey, Philip Woodhead and Tommy Yeung.

WVE — Could you tell us a little about the conditions under which you and the Embassy staff have been working since the Canadian Embassy opened in Kabul in August 2003.

Ambassador Sproule — When we arrived in Afghanistan three years ago, Canada no longer had a presence in the country². First we had to find a place to stay.

During the first thirty months, the Embassy staff and I stayed in the same house, sharing our meals and what was, for all intents and purposes, a single bathroom. We were living cheek by jowl, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. We had very little free time and few opportunities for going out. Our professional and personal lives became indistinguishable.

The Embassy worked very hard to become an Embassy, as that term is generally understood. Little by little, our circumstances improved, starting with our accommodation conditions, establishment of a communications network with Ottawa, hiring of local personnel, etc.

WVE — And what is the situation today?

Ambassador Sproule — Even today, when we leave the secure grounds, commonly known as a “compound”, we have to travel in armoured vehicles. Very strict security measures are taken in regard to our movements. Nothing is left to chance. All our movements are the responsibility of the security people.

Continued...

² Canada opened its Embassy in Kabul in August 2003, after diplomatic relations with Afghanistan were reestablished in January 2002.



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Heart and Soul at Work ... (continued from page 7)

If we want to go to a restaurant, we have to inform them, and they will do a reconnaissance to check out the local situation. On weekends, our outings are just as limited. This is very different from other assignments abroad, where there are opportunities to visit and explore the country during our leisure time.

WVE — What do you and the staff of the Kabul Embassy find the most difficult in your living conditions in Afghanistan?

Ambassador Sproule — Essentially, there are four things. In the first place, I should say that, because of the living conditions that we face, we are subjected to more pressure than public servants generally.

Secondly, I would say that being separated from one's family is a sacrifice in itself. As far as I am concerned, I have five children.

Thirdly, there is, as it were, no social life.

Finally, there is the anxiety created by all the security issues that are everywhere and in everything that we do.

WVE — Why has the Canadian Embassy in Kabul received this recognition?

Ambassadeur Sproule — Afghanistan is a priority for this government. Our employees are very aware of the interest that the government and the Canadian people take in the Afghan question. The efforts that have to be made to meet the demands of the job require that employees work long hours.

As we know, Afghanistan lost a generation in war. Afghan ministers must rely on the support of a limited number of

public servants. The employees of the Embassy and I must work very closely with our counterparts in the Afghan government, and must sometimes personally make up for the lack of human resources or limited capabilities to implement programs.

This requires effort, patience and time. A lot of time.

We have to work with a large international community. Sixty or so countries are participating in development aid or are working in the security field.

Thirty-five countries are primarily involved in security. This entails enormous efforts of coordination and consultation, such as I have never seen before in my previous assignments. This also entails multiple interactions between the Afghan government, the international community and the Canadian Armed Forces.



We have also had to confront very difficult situations. To date, we have lost 27 soldiers³, primarily in Kandahar. In Kabul, we also lost a diplomat. Glyn R. Berry, the senior political director of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, who was killed in January, 2006, in a suicide attack against the convoy in which he was travelling. This loss has profoundly affected us.

This is the risk to which we are exposed in this assignment.

In spite of this, I would say that all the staff I work with regard an assignment to Kabul, in Afghanistan, as a privilege.

Continued...

³ As of October 10, 2006, we mourn the loss of 40 Canadian soldiers.



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Heart and Soul at Work ... (continued from page 8)

Every day, we have the feeling that we are making a difference, that we are not only helping the Afghan people, but also serving Canada's interests.

We also have the opportunity to spread Canadian values abroad. These Canadian values are the rule of law, human rights, establishment of democratic institutions, including legal institutions, raising the standard of living and mitigating poverty.

To meet these challenges, we receive the invaluable and unflagging support of Canadian government departments and agencies. I have never seen the like in my past experience.

When the military and we come back to Canada, we feel not only the weight of our responsibility to meet the expectations of the country, but also great support from members of the Canadian public. People spontaneously come up to us and thank us for the work we are doing in Afghanistan. They also urge us to be cautious.

WVE —How can integrity be preserved when day after day, the environment itself pushes against our limits in psychological, emotional and physical terms?

Ambassador Sproule — You have to show patience and understanding, primarily in the area of cultural sensitivities. You are in a relationship with your Afghan counterparts, who have not been exposed to the same influences as you. You have to show sensitivity, for example, towards the Embassy's locally engaged staff and towards the members of the government with whom you are working, all the while keeping in mind the objectives that you have to attain, and yet respecting the Afghan style and rhythm.

In other words, if something is going to work, it has to work for the Afghans. There can be no question of imposing anything from outside. If that is the perception, we are not going to succeed in Afghanistan.

Canada has changed in recent decades. We have acquired, in Canadian society, a greater facility to maintain relations with countries like Afghanistan, in particular because of our multiculturalism. Diversity is very much in evidence in our country. We now have mosques. We now have people from various cultural communities, and this makes it easier to interact with other groups.

To work in a place like Afghanistan you have to strike the right balance in regard to Canadian principles and values. Women's equality and minority rights, to mention only these two, are principles that cannot be set aside. The message we are sending to Afghans in this regard is unambiguous, and we occasionally have to remind those we deal with in the Afghan government of that message.



Let me give you an example. Afghan women come to the Embassy. Some of them are very ill at ease in the presence of a man. Some will insist on keeping their veil, while others will remove it as soon as they enter the gate of the Embassy. You then have to show some sensitivity and see to making the necessary accommodations.

Continued...



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Heart and Soul at Work ... (continued from page 9)

Many Afghans see their religious life as very important. Their religious practice obliges some of them to interrupt their work and withdraw to pray five times a day. This obviously can clash with your conception [which is entirely Western] of the efficient implementation of a program. You have to adjust to this type of situation.

Each side, whether military or civilian, thinks that its way of doing things is self-evident and part of the normal course of events. We both have to take the time to explain what we are doing, and above all why.

The same is true of development programs. We have experts who know how to implement development projects. We must leave them to do their work, which they are adapting to the local context. As far as security or politics are concerned, what we need in Afghanistan is to adjust and to consider the question of how we are going to effectively implement a particular program.

We have a responsibility towards taxpayers and the Canadian public to ensure that public monies are used judiciously.

I find that the principle of living in accordance with the rules stated in the code of conduct [*Values and Ethics Code for the Public Service*], which are extremely simple, is easy to apply here in Canada. For Afghans, however, attaining standards close to ours, which for us are self-evident, is quite an extraordinary thing.

For example, government executives and employees must not place themselves in a conflict of interest situation. However, a number of employees of the Afghan public service are looking for precisely this type of position in order to get personal benefit from it. This is not unfavourably regarded in Afghan society. This bending of

“professional ethics” allows a person to support the family — very often the extended family — especially since government employees are paid very low salaries, frequently on an irregular basis.

When we confront this type of situation, we try to introduce our values but in a manner that is skillful and not counter-productive. We need to show them that if we succeed in thwarting corruption, everyone becomes more effective and productive and that the values we are propagating are not foreign values, but indeed universal values.

WVE — On the basis of your personal experience in Afghanistan, what message would you like to give to your colleagues in the public service?

Ambassador Sproule — A number of us who are in Afghanistan could do many other things in professional terms. We are very far from our families, from positions that offer comfort and security — like those here in Ottawa — from jobs that are better paid.

There is, however, something that you really appreciate about being in the Canadian public service in a place like Kabul, because at the end of the day, you have the firm conviction that what you are doing is important.

There are of course days that bring their share of frustration, and progress is sometimes slow in coming. However, you are fully aware that you are changing the course of human lives. You are changing lives for the better, the lives of Afghans and, by reflection, the lives of Canadians as well.

In short, serving in Afghanistan is a privilege. There is not an individual serving in Afghanistan who would not be prepared to return there. They are all grateful for the excellent experience they are acquiring and equally for the challenges that this entails.





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Ethical Challenge

This is a hypothetical situation for illustrative purposes only.

Dear Window on V&E,

I am a term employee with the Department of Housing Canada. Two of the Senior Housing Officers in my work unit have been bragging about “padding” their travel expense claims. They claim that our boss is aware of this and is just turning a blind eye to it.

This makes me very angry! I think this is so wrong yet I am really scared to say anything to them or report them. I have been trying to get in with the federal public service for five years and do not want to blow my chances of becoming an indeterminate employee. I don’t want to go to my boss because he may very well be in on it as he is very tight with the two Senior Housing Officers.

I don’t have any “written” proof of their cheating however, I have been present on two different occasions where they were discussing how they claim mileage for visits they have not made since they were able to resolve the issue over the phone. I talked to the student that worked with us this summer about this as she too heard one of their conversations!! Her understanding is the same as mine.

This is really bothering me and I am finding it hard to work with people I no longer respect. Any words of advice?

Signed: U for Upset

Dear U,

I can certainly understand how this is difficult for you. You want to do the right thing but there is a lot at stake for you personally.

Padding of travel claims is indeed serious misconduct and perhaps even fraudulent. It is important for you to know that there are mechanisms in place in the public service to allow employees like you to bring forward information concerning wrongdoing, and to ensure that you are treated fairly and protected from reprisal when a disclosure is done in good faith. I strongly encourage you to read the attached Policy on the Internal Disclosure of Information Concerning Wrongdoing in the Workplace, which covers all of this. As provided for in the Policy, each department has a Senior Officer who is responsible for receiving disclosures and ensuring that prompt action is taken in all cases. At the Department of Housing Canada, that is Mr. H – I have enclosed his business card for you.

If however, you feel that your situation cannot be raised in confidence within the Department of Housing, you may make the disclosure of wrongdoing directly to the Public Service Integrity Officer, who provides an independent and neutral, external review of disclosures of wrongdoing in the workplace. The link to the Public Service Integrity Office web site is:
http://www.pso-bifp.gc.ca/index_e.php.

A word of caution though – remember that some things are not always as they seem. It is possible that there could be some logical explanation for the conversation that you have heard and that the travel expense claims are indeed legitimate. If you make the disclosure of wrongdoing in good faith and in confidence to the Senior Officer or the Public Service Integrity Officer, your conscience will be clear, you will be protected from reprisals and it will be up to others to look into the matter. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

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