Scheer exit opens door for reset, say members who welcome the chance ‘to spring clean’

Alberta businessman Rick Peterson also considering a run in what’s becoming a crowded field of potentials cautiously considering their options.

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

Outgoing Conservative Party Leader Andrew Scheer’s departure brings a chance for some necessary “spring cleaning,” says one Conservative Senator as party members call the pending race a chance for a party in need of a reset, rebranding, and bold centre-right ideas.

The party needs a new direction after outgoing Conservative Party Leader Andrew Scheer’s failed campaign, party members say. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Sajjan, Champagne charged with expanding Canada’s UN commitment, but will there be more troops on the ground?

But questions loom as to whether that will translate to more boots on the ground. “There’s very little they need to expand from,” said Walter Dorn, a defence studies professor at Kingston’s Royal Military College and Toronto’s Canadian Forces College specializing in peacekeeping, citing Canada’s historically low level of deployed troops.

“We should be doing something much more like in the mandate letters in 2015,” he said, but added those mandates weren’t met. Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan’s (Vancouver South, B.C.) and Francois-Philippe Champagne’s (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) new mandate letters direct the senior cabinet ministers to “expand Canada’s support for United Nations peace operations,” with reference to investment in the

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Senators to debate cutting ‘opposition,’ critics, out of Senate rules

The leader of the Senate’s largest group has proposed cutting references to “opposition” leaders and legislation “critics” out of the Senate rulebook, the latest step in a campaign to permanently entrench the independence project begun in the Senate by

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Canada should do more for refugees, displaced populations, says outgoing UNHCR representative

Outgoing UNHCR representative in Canada Jean-Nicolas Beuze, who came into the role two years after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed Canada was “back” on the world stage following the 2015 election, says there is a “strong argument to make that Canada should do more for refugees and displaced populations.”

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News

Senate rules
When Hill life resumes following the holiday break, some notable press gallery stalwarts won’t be around, including long-time CTV reporter Craig Oliver and veteran Maclean’s Ottawa bureau chief John Geddes.

A reporter since 1957, Mr. Oliver has been around the Hill since 1974, starting during Pierre Trudeau’s first Liberal government. Over the years, he served as the CTV Ottawa bureau chief and later was the host of the station’s flagship Sunday political morning show, Question Period.

Breaking countless news stories throughout his career, Mr. Oliver was the first to report in 1963 that then-prime minister Brian Mulroney was resigning after nine years in power. The report resulted in one of Mr. Oliver’s two Gemini award wins.

Outside of Ottawa, Mr. Oliver was CTV’s Washington bureau chief from 1981 to 1988, during which time he covered nearly the entirety of Ronald Reagan’s presidency.

Last year, he told The Hill Times about one of his favourite memories from his time inside the Beltway, when he was invited to dinner by Mr. Regan and his wife, Nancy. He noted that, at the time, he thought the invitation was odd, but went anyway. It was a few weeks later that he found out the invitation was actually meant for a PBS executive, also named Craig Oliver.

In a column to commemorate Mr. Oliver’s 80th birthday last year, CTV’s Don Martin, who is also retiring at the end of the year, called his fellow broadcaster’s longevity “unprecedented.”

“There’s the impeccable credibility he’s earned broadcasting six decades of Canadian and American political stories, scoops and analysis. Nobody can be better at weaving our history into current events than Craig because he’s seen it for himself as a bear-witness journalist,” Mr. Martin wrote.

Maclean’s Ottawa bureau chief since 2000 and with the magazine since 1997, Mr. Geddes has covered the governments of Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, Stephen Harper, and Justin Trudeau.

“The magazine literally hasn’t known the 21st century without John Geddes, but somehow we’ll have to figure it out. His are mega-sized shoes to fill,” tweeted Maclean’s reporter Jason Markusoff.

Journalists and politicians alike paid tribute to Mr. Geddes following the news of his departure from the Hill.

Strategist Rick Anderson tweeted that Mr. Geddes’ byline has been a “valued oasis of informed reflection amidst the tumult of global politics.”

“Having covered federal politics and policy for more than two decades, John Geddes has proven himself to be one of the most wise, insightful, and honourable journalists the industry has known,” tweeted Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna.

NDP MP Charlie Angus added: “ Ottowa will be a lesser place without him but I am sure he has an amazing life to embrace without the political swill of the Hill.”

Mr. Markusoff wrote that Mr. Geddes will continue to write a monthly column on arts and culture, but won’t be reporting on the Hill.

Mr. Geddes along with eight others were subject to the traditional “mugging” on Dec. 13, where Hill journalists receive a mug when departing the Parliamentary Press Gallery after three years, or more, of membership.

Mr. Geddes, who was “mugged” by Shannon Proudfoot, said he felt “very fortunate” to be in the press gallery where the traditions are “so wonderful.”

Also receiving their mugs on Dec. 13 were CBC’s Katie Simpson, former Globe and Mail reporters Gloria Galloway, Shawn McCarthy, and Barrie McKenna, past Hill Times managing editor Kristen Shane, former Hill Times deputy editor Bea Vongdouangchanh, as well as Mr. Martin, along with long-time CTV camera-men Dave Ellis and Tom Michalak, and his former producer, Alyson Fair.

Happy Trails: Craig Oliver and John Geddes bid adieu to the Hill

The Life, Death, and Life of A Mining Town about Cobalt, Ont., has written books on Northern Ontario, Indigenous apartheid and Shannen Koostachin’s fight for education, and one-time Toronto Maple Leaf player and founder of the Flying Fathers, Leo Costello, among other topics.

Mr. Angus has represented Timmins-James Bay, Ont., since 2004. He was re-elected in the riding in October with 40.5 per cent of the vote, defeating Conservative runner-up Kraymr Grenke by a margin of 13.5 percentage points.

Details of Mr. Angus’ new book are to come.

Patrick Brazeau calls for suicide prevention study

Independent Senator Patrick Brazeau is calling on the Senate Banking, Trade and Commerce Committee to hold a suicide prevention study.

“Studies and research on mental health and suicide prevention demonstrate that the most effective approach is a two-pronged approach. We have to be both reactive and proactive. There are so many Canadians who in their desperation have ended their own lives and I know too well that I was broken too,” Mr. Brazeau tweeted last year, that he took his own life.

“The many thousands of Canadians who deal with mental health issues and suicide, know that I was broken too, but I am broken no more,” Mr. Brazeau told his colleagues on the floor of the Senate on Dec. 12.

The former Conservative Senator, who was first appointed in 2009, attempted suicide twice following his expulsion from the Conservative caucus in the midst of a sexual assault charge, which the trial judge granted an absolute discharge.

Sen. Brazeau will be submitting a notice of motion in the Senate Chamber calling for the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology to launch such a study when the Red Chamber returns in the new year. The Senate returns on Feb. 4.

The motion calls for the committee to submit a final report by Dec. 31, 2020.

Patrick Brazeau first joined the Senate in 2009. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

The Heart of the City Doesn’t Get Any Closer!

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House of Commons spending to jump 16.6 per cent in 2020-21

The House legal and legislative branch is seeking $825,105, in part to help reduce delays in drafting private members’ bills and amendments, from 48 sitting days to 30.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The House of Commons’ Board of Internal Economy has given its stamp of approval for a 2.6 per cent increase in House spending, to total $516.4-million in the next fiscal year.

In exact dollars, it represents a nearly $13-million increase over the 2019-20 main estimates, which sought a total of $503.4-million for the House of Commons.

The powerful Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) approved the proposed 2020-21 main spending estimates for the House of Commons on Dec. 12 during an abbreviated meeting, cut short as a result of breaking news of Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer’s (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) decision to step down as leader.

A now nine-member body chaired by the House Speaker and member from each of the four recognized parties (those with at least 12 sitting Members), the BOIE is the governing body of the House of Commons and is responsible for the finances and administration of the Lower Chamber.

Of the requested $516.4-million, $380-million is in voted spending and $136.3-million is statutory—that is, spending set out in law. Within the almost $13-million increase is a boost of $3.1-million for MP and House officer travel expenses and office budgets; almost $1.3-million for parliamentary conferences, associations, and assemblies; $1.2-million for MP and House officer allowances and salaries; and $855,105 for legal and legislative services provided to MPs: $341,624 for salary raises for the House of Commons administration; $600,000 for MPs’ retirements expenses and compensation; and a $96,086 boost for the International and Interparliamentary Affairs directorate.

There’s also $3.4-million for initiatives previously approved by the Board, and an almost $1.7-million increase to House officials’ salaries it noted that the House now has four recognized parties, up from three last Parliament, and smaller counterparts, recognized parties receive parliamentary funding to support a leader’s office, a Whip, a House leader, and a research bureau.

The extra resources requested by the House of Commons’ legislative and legal services branch supports all MPs in drafting private members’ bills, provides legal opinions for opposition MPs, and more—would go towards four more full-time staff, and is a result of three “major changes,” explained Philippe Dufresne, House law clerk and parliamentary counsel.

For one thing, there’s been a 10 per cent increase in the number of MPs since January 2015, which has correspondingly increased “workload and requests for representation and notice” by an estimated 10 per cent, per Mr. Dufresne. There’s also been a “significant increase in the number of messages and amendments from the Senate, in addition to the adoption of bills by the House,” he said, which requires the branch’s support. In the 41st Parliament, two such messages were received from the Senate and in the 42nd Parliament there were 32—a 16-fold increase.

“That has resulted in delays, longer timelines for the processing of private members’ bills (PMBs) by my office, longer timelines for the preparation of amendments, and so that touches in terms of the time and in terms of potentially the quality of services,” said Mr. Dufresne.

Currently, private members’ bills take about 48 sitting days to prepare, he said. The aim is to bring that down to 30 sitting days, “if not better.” Mr. Dufresne also noted that four bills passed last Parliament—Bill C-58, on proactive disclosures through the Access to Information Act; C-65 on health, safety, and workplace harassment and violence; C-81 on accessibility; and C-86 on pay equity—were created new legal obligations for MPs and the House, adding to the branch’s increased workload.

In voicing his support for the spending, NDP House Leader Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, B.C.) noted that, particularly in a minority Parliament, “getting the legislation right … is of primary importance, as we’ve seen the cost of getting legislation wrong in court challenges that ultimately cost millions of dollars to the taxpayer.”

The additional $860,080 requested by the International and Interparliamentary Affairs joint directorate—which supports both the House and the Senate in organizing parliamentary associations, Speakers’ exchanges, protocol, and conferences—will go towards the addition of one new staff member, required, according to clerk assis tant and director general of the directorate, Dean Tannas, to help redistribute work in order to reduce rising overtime hours and sick leave among the directorate’s staff. Another $36,030 related to this will come from the Senate’s budget. This hiring would bring total full-time staff for the directorate to 55.

Mr. Labrecque-Riel said the main issue is the increased re organization of the directorate’s protocol team, which organizes important events on Parliament Hill, and how it now has to deliver “these types of events in two buildings,” which he said is “much more complex.”

Up until last April, when she began a redistribution of work in an effort to address over time and the like, this same team was also responsible for planning international conferences, and generally were “unable to do the long-term and medium-term plan for these conferences, other than doing it on evenings and weekend,” she said.

Review to question ‘were they leaving because of salary ranges or were they leaving because of other reasons?” says Sen. Lucie Moncion.

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

The costs of the Upper Chamber will continue to rise in the next fiscal year, after the committee responsible for managing the Senate’s finances approved a $1.4-million increase over the 2018-19 main spending estimates, bringing the total to $115.6-million.

While the Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee heard Dec. 12 that the 1.2 per cent increase is less than inflation, it marks a continuation of the rising costs to run the Senate since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) formed government, bringing in independent Senators with no formal party affiliations. It’s a $10-million jump estimated for 2020-21 over expenditures from 2017-18, when the Chamber was at, or close to, full capacity and well into its modernization effort and spent $105.9-million. The proposed 2020-21 increase of $13.9-million in 2010-11, when the Red Chamber still had most of its complement of 105 members before the Senate expenses scandal, which was partly behind former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper’s decision to stop appointing new Senators, took into account the changes in the Senate’s finances approved a 10 per cent increase in the Senate’s expenditures from 2017-18, when the Red Chamber was also responsible for planning a review to question “were they leaving because of other reasons?” says Sen. Lucie Moncion.

Some of the $601,865 increase to the budget went to the “ongoing modernization,” said Sen. Kim Pate (Grand Falls—Windsor, N.B.), the committee’s deputy chair.

The $1.4-million increase is mainly due to inflation indexed increases to Senator budgets and rising interparliamentary association activity—a combined $1.13-million that was included by the Senate administration’s budget going up $225,000. That’s levelled off slightly by a dip in the budget for employee benefits, down $140,000.

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Both compensation and work-life balance was identified in some cases, prompting the subcommittee to conclude that some positions may need to be re-evaluated.

She said the subcommittee took into account the changes taking place in the Senate, including the “ongoing modernization.” With the assumption the level of activity would mark a similar pace as the first half of 2019-20.

The budget also includes $451,000, previously approved by the committee, to add three staff for legal services.

CSG gets $120,000 to start work

The newly formed 13-member Canadian Senators Group (CSG) has $120,000 to work with until the end of the fiscal year.

CSG leader Scott Tannas (Alberta) said while there’s no plan to do anything quickly, two tasks are top of mind: setting up a “very basic” secretariat, and developing a model for the work of the group, which will be part of a research bureau, which will be “very much” a part of the Senate’s overall budget and the idea that united the group—they wanted to be “the best briefed Senators” through “good, solid, independent research,” he said in an interview by phone after the meeting.

He expects the secretariat will take about 1.5 staff to do the job, given the 13 members already have good office staff and need simple co-ordination.

The question of the CSG budget was passed to the leaders to make a decision at a November committee, where it was reported back that didn’t happen, mainly because of disagreement over how to fund the Progressive Senators Group. The rebranded Senate Liberals have lost their official status as they one member moved over to the CSG.

Under Senate rules, it was eligible for $111,000, a cap plan starting from the day the formation of the group was announced in early November, but Sen. Tannas said they felt that wasn’t necessary because they hadn’t been doing much in those first days. Their budget will be pulled from unused funding so that the Senate has more than $200,000 in February, he said.

Senators including: Michael Remis (Timmins—James Bay, Ont.); Peter Harder (Winnipeg, Man.); Senator Sabi Marwah (Ontario) and Senator Jean Fréchette (Charlemagne, Que.) also spoke.
Senators to debate cutting ‘opposition,’ critics, out of Senate rules

The leader of the Red Chamber’s largest group gave notice of a motion to delete references to the opposition throughout the rulebook.

Continued from page 1

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and carried on by many of the Senators he has appointed.

Senator Yuen Pau Woo (British Columbia) gave notice of a motion in the Senate on Dec. 11 to delete references to “opposition” and “leader of the opposition” throughout the Rules of the Senate, which guide proceedings in the Chamber. Instead, the Rules will use terms like “all the leaders and facilitators,” if Sen. Woo’s motion is passed.

The motion would also delete references to opposition “critics” for legislation, and replace them with references to a “spokesperson” for each bill in every group except the one that sponsors the legislation.

Sen. Woo was re-elected to a second two-year term as Independent Senators Group (ISG) leader last week, in an anonymous, secret ballot conducted by the group electronically. He was challenged by Independent Senator Murray Sinclair (Manitoba), the former head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The ISG is not releasing the results of the vote, beyond the fact that Sen. Woo was the winner.

ISG deputy leader Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.) was also acclaimed to the deputy leader role. The ISG leadership had some, but not all, of the same rights and powers as the government and opposition leaders in the Senate during the last session of Parliament. Those were provided only temporarily by an agreement that expired at the end of the session.

Sen. Woo’s motion would also eliminate the right to unlimited speaking time during debate currently enjoyed by the government and opposition Senate leaders, instead limiting them to 45 minutes, and would explicitize the ex-officio committee members—group leaders—from voting during committee meetings.

“Over the coming weeks, we are looking forward to consulting further with our Senate colleagues about changes in rules and practices that we will be pursing in the new year,” Sen. Woo said in a statement emailed to The Hill Times. “Most Senators agree with the broad objectives we are trying to achieve: a more open and accountable Senate; less partisan gamesmanship and time wasting; and the equality of all Senators and recognized Senate groups.”

Motion to ‘fix things that aren’t broken,’ says Tory leader

Sen. Woo told reporters last month that he wanted to change the Rules of the Senate so that the leaders of the government and opposition in the Chamber don’t have special powers that aren’t given to other groups, which includes the minority of the Senators in the Chamber.

The existing Rules “entrench this duopoly of power and privilege,” said Sen. Woo. Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett (Landmark, Man.) told The Hill Times in an interview last week that has not been surprised by the motion, but said the scale of proposed changes amounted to a motion “on steroids.”

He said Sen. Woo was “trying to undo what our founding fathers started 152 years ago when the Senate was established, and ‘fix things that aren’t broken.’”

“We need to have a government, and we need to have an official opposition in the Senate,” he said.

Sen. Plett said he did not believe the motion would take away any rights or powers in the Senate from his leadership group, but he said he needed more time to study the motion to be sure.

Debate has not yet begun on the motion, and the Senate is adjourned until Feb. 4. Sen. Plett said he would probably suggest that the motion be sent to the Senate Rules Committee for further study. The members of that committee have not yet been chosen. If Sen. Woo presses to have the motion dealt with in the Senate Chamber instead, and has support from other ISG Senators, that could represent an early flashpoint in the debate over the motion in the new year.

“This isn’t going to come to a vote for a while. There will be lots of debate,” said Sen. Plett.

Senator Scott Tannas (Alberta), the interim leader of the Canadian Senators Group—the Senate’s third largest, with 13 members—said he shares Sen. Woo’s objective to try and “bring parity amongst all the leaders.”

However, he also said he believes the Senate must have an “organic opposition … that gets up every day and figures out what holes they should be poking in the legislation that’s being proposed by the government.”

Sen. Tannas said he plans to examine each of the changes proposed in the motion individually, rather than viewing it as a package.

The Senate has changed dramatically in the past four years. Mr. Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) cut ties with the Senate Liberal caucus in 2014 and began appointing non-affiliated, non-partisan Senators after coming to power in 2015. The non-affiliated Independent Senators Group formed in 2016, has become dominated by Trudeau-appointed Senators, and holds far more seats than any other group. Last month, another non-affiliated group formed in the Senate when Senators left the ISG and Conservative Senate Caucus to form the Canadian Senators Group.

The motion to change the Rules of the Senate won’t likely be the last of the proposals to change the Red Chamber for Trudeau. Mr. Trudeau has promised to change the Parliament of Canada Act, including to provide higher salaries for leaders of Senate groups and the government opposition.

Both Government House Leader Pablo Rodriguez (Honore-Mercier, Que.) and Queen’s Privy Council President Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N. B.) have been tasked by Mr. Trudeau to do that work to update the legislation to “to reflect the Senate’s new non-partisan role.”

—with files from Samantha Wright Allen

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The Hill Times
Canada should do more for refugees, displaced populations, says outgoing UNHCR representative

Canada resettled 28,100 refugees in 2018. But a public policy expert cautions that increased irregular border crossings threaten both popular support for migration, as well as the international refugee protection system.

Continued from page 1 populations—and humanity in general.”

“The economy is doing well, it’s a strong society, despite all the discussion, it’s a very unified society, one that is very proud of who they are, and I think a lot of people expect the government to show even more leadership,” said Mr. Beuze. “It’s great what has been done over the last three or four years. More can be done.”

As he prepares for his next assignment as Yemen’s representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Beuze sat down for an interview with The Hill Times in his Alberta Street office Dec. 12. His last day on the job in Canada was Dec. 13 and he’ll be starting in his new post in January.

According to UNHCR’s most recent global trends report, 92,400 refugees were resettled to 25 countries in 2018—with Canada admitting more than any other country, at 28,100.

“It’s important to remind everyone that it’s a life-saving intervention,” said Mr. Beuze, referring to refugees coming to Canada from the global south through the government, through private sponsors, and through the UNHCR.

“Among the approximately 30,000 [refugees] that come, 10,000 are referred by UNHCR, the UN refugee agency,” said Mr. Beuze. “It’s also important [to note] that when they arrive here, they integrate, they become Canadian citizens, they have the highest intake of all the newcomers compared to those who come from economic reasons [and those who come for family reunification].”

Mr. Beuze noted two growing humanitarian situations with close geographic proximity to Canada in which the UNHCR has called on this and the previous government to do more: one in Venezuela, and the other in Mexico.

In Venezuela, he said, the number of refugees is “growing very fast.”

According to the UNHCR, more than four million Venezuelans have left their homes as of September, with the total number of people expected to reach five million by the end of this year as people fire violence, insecurity, and threats, as well as a lack of food, medicine, and essential services in the largest exodus in the region’s recent history.

“There’s also a situation which should come more to the fore of this government, [and that is] what’s happening in Mexico,” said Mr. Beuze. “You have hundreds of thousands of families, often women with children on their own, or children on their own, who are fleeing gang violence in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.”

Mr. Beuze told The Hill Times that he’s visited the region a number of times over the last three years and was struck by “the degree of violence, the degree of rape, the torture, [and the extortion] and the fact that it’s really targeting youth.”

“It’s a G20 country, so it’s not a country which is without means and resources to do the job, but when you have the numbers [of refugees] quite exponentially, it would be important that Canada give them support by providing them a bit more financial resources, perhaps technical co-operation,” said Mr. Beuze. “Ultimately, Canada is part of the Americas—and it’s absolutely essential that Canada continue helping Africa, the Middle East, or further west with the Rohingya—but there is also a particular duty, in my view, for Canada to look at its own neighbours.”

UNHCR looking ‘very closely’ at ‘humanitarian fatigue’

When asked his thoughts around potential “humanitarian fatigue” on the part of Canadians, following the resettlement of more than 40,000 Syrian refugees between 2015 and 2016, Mr. Beuze said it’s something “the UNHCR has been looking at very closely.”

“While there was a great enthusiasm at the time, many Canadian communities in 2015-2016 certainly, in part provoked by the events in Syria and the fact that Tim Maude, his aunt, was in Canada, we have seen a bit of a slowing down of the compassion attitude, the welcoming attitude,” said Mr. Beuze. “Just after the election, a number of polls have said that Canadians still [indicate] that they want to receive more refugees, they want to do more for refugees abroad.”

According to a recent Environics Institute poll conducted in the final weeks of the 2019 federal election campaign, many Canadians “continue to believe that some refugees are not legitimate, but continue to feel that they should have come over the last years, and remain well below levels recorded in the past.”

“Refugees make up a very small percentage of newcomers arriving each year, but their profile has risen dramatically due to the unprecedented influx of refugees from Syria and a record number of asylum seekers arriving at the southern border,” according to the poll’s final report. “These events have attracted greater public attention, but have not hardened public opinion toward the legitimacy of refugees, which remains much more positive than in previous decades.”

Just under four in 10 (39 per cent) Canadians agree with the statement that “most people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees,” up two percentage points from April 2018, according to the poll. “But well below levels recorded prior to 2016.”

The survey was based on telephone interviews conducted via landline and cellphones with 2,008 Canadians between October 7 and 20. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples.

“It goes up and down, and I think we should not be too worried about the short time frame,” said Mr. Beuze. “In the long run, Canadians remain very committed to do something for refugees.”

“Canada has a proud and long-standing tradition of responding to the needs of vulnerable people,” said Mr. Mendicino in the release. “But it varies a lot—[just] to do more for refugees abroad.”

“We are at the forefront of working with partners to advance innovative solutions for those who’ve been forced to flee their homes.”

Estimated 20,000 irregular migrants entering Canada per year since 2017

Christian Leuprecht, a Munk Senior Fellow and Queen’s University policy studies professor, recently authored a report with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute analyzing increases in irregular migration in Canada and their effects on our immigration and refugee system. The report cautions that the “cumulative effect of both regular and back-door immigration risks undermining fundamental support for migration altogether.”

Entitled, The End of the (Roxham) Road: Seeking coherence on Canada’s border-migration compact,” the report notes that since 2017, about 20,000 migrants a year have been entering Canada irregularly and that in 2018, 95.3 per cent of those crossed into Quebec “almost exclusively from New York state across the infamous Roxham Road.”

The report also found that a number of patterns prevail among irregular migrants to Canada, including the fact that they are often foreigners already in the United States at risk of deportation, are citizens of countries who obtain visas for the United States for the purpose of then crossing into Canada irregularly, and among them are some who cannot obtain either a Canadian or American visa.

“These patterns suggest that those who manage to find their way to Canada usually have sufficient economic means to cover the costs of doing so,” according to the report. “Yet the test for refugee status is fear of persecution—not economic means. However, the government has limited, to make it to Canada.”

The real problem behind this conversation is, how do you make sure we maintain a system that was set up to protect people who are genuinely vulnerable and who genuinely qualify for refugee or asylum status due to situations in their homeland that are simple, but making it untenable for them to stay—most likely because they’ll be killed?” said Prof. Leuprecht in an interview with The Hill Times.

“How do we return to the intent of the original system?”

The report also dispels the “narrative” that attributes the surge in irregular migration in Canada to U.S. President Donald Trump, noting that contrary to claims that most of those who are crossing are taking flight from the Trump regime, many asylum seekers cross irregularly into Canada by land actually enter the United States at a port of entry on a visa for the sole purpose of making their way to Canada.

“Rejection system said that, as a result of this irregular migration, the ‘global refugee system is being undermined,’ because those who really qualify for protection are going to have a more difficult time of making the claim because many countries are getting ever more strained on who they will accept.”

“The other is that it’s undermining our immigration system because people are saying, ‘well, this is becoming a back door to immigrating to our country and we’re losing control of our borders,’ said Prof. Leuprecht.

In turn, he said an informed discussion needs to happen.

“More informed discussion requires us to keep the emotions out of it and take time to understand how we got to the situation that we’re in, and how we establish a system that meets our international and domestic obligations, but at the same time, retains the integrity of our borders, our immigration system, as well as the international refugee protection system,” he said.

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The Hill Times
Confronting anxious workers and a divided country, Morneau rolls out update meant to reassure Canadians

Facing impressive obstacles on all sides, it’s not surprising the update sounded a lot like the rhetoric the Liberals penned to try to win over voters in the election campaign.

Les Whittington
Need to Know

OTTAWA—Nearly two months after the Liberals’ re-election, Finance Minister Bill Morneau used his first major public forum to try to break through the fog of gloom and division haunting the country.

While acknowledging the risks Canada faces in a global trading environment turning inwards for the first time in 70 years, Morneau sought to reassure Canadians that their economy and job growth trends remain relatively healthy. He reiterated that unemployment is at a 40-year low, with improving wages, and economic growth will stay in the 1.6 per cent-to-1.8 per cent range for the next two years—not breathtaking by any means, but not bad in this low-growth era.

Confronting those who claim the finance minister has put in place the conditions for a “made-in-Canada recession,” Morneau made a point of saying that not one of the 14 private-sector economists advising the government is predicting a recession here.

He also noted that, despite the sharp decline in employment in November that has bolstered political opposition attacks on the government’s policies, the economy, overall, has produced a net 400,000 new jobs so far in 2019.

As in the past four years, the Liberals are prioritizing economic pump-priming in the form of middle-class income tax cuts and government spending over concerns about the size of the federal budget deficit. Morneau’s expected budgetary shortfalls were already set to rise as a result of the tax reduction the finance minister introduced last week to fulfill a Liberal campaign promise.

He said on Dec. 16 that the budget deficit will expand to $26.6 billion for the current 2019-20 fiscal year, up from the $19.8 billion deficit forecast in the March budget. In the coming 2020-21 fiscal year, the federal government will record a $28.1 billion deficit, an increase from the $19.7 billion deficit predicted in the last budget. In 2024-25, there will be an $11.6 billion deficit.

Despite record-low unemployment and an economy that has shown some strength after the long slow recovery from the 2008-09 recession, Canadians continue to express widespread disenchantment with their financial prospects. This reflects both building wealth inequality, the rapid and ongoing decline of secure, well-paying manufacturing jobs, the info-tech upheaval, and the rise of the gig economy.

Explaining the government’s prioritization of spending programs and tax cuts over deficit-fighting, Morneau was unapologetic. “We think that this is an appropriate level of investment for us to ensure that Canadians still get the benefits of the strong economy; that we deal with some of the very real anxieties across the country, including in places that are not going to get the same level of growth that we are nationally,” he said, referring to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Morneau said he is open to hearing about ways the federal government can address issues being raised by Alberta and Saskatchewan, particularly its potential for enhancing hard-time stabilization payments to the two provinces through the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which already has 2,200 people at work on the initial construction.

As an export-dependent country, Canada more than ever faces long-term challenges at a time of historic shifts in the world trade picture. The uncertainty created by U.S. President Donald Trump’s protectionist fixation has taken on a new dimension with the landslide election victory in the United Kingdom of Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Conservative Party, a result that signals a final break between the U.K. and the European Union, with unpredictable fall-out internationally for years to come.

Morneau told reporters the current economic forecast takes into account the risks posed by global trade tensions. But he expressed optimism that the U.S. and China might have developed “some sense” of how to wind down their trade war and noted that the outlook for approval of the renegotiated NAFTA deal by U.S. lawmakers appears better.

“Hopefully that will have a positive impact on trade, but we’re standing with where we’ve put our [economic] estimates because it is important to make sure that we’re considering those challenges and dealing with them appropriately,” Morneau said.

Indeed, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government faces impressive obstacles on all sides—economically, regionally, and internationally. In that context, it’s not surprising the update sounded a lot like the rhetoric the Liberals penned to try to win over voters in the election campaign. Government spending (now always called investments) in infrastructure such as public transit, in child care, in skills training, and in post-secondary education will improve communities and give Canadians the tools they need to succeed,” the update boasted.

If he stepped fully away now, Scheer might discover a great appreciation will eventually develop for what he did achieve this past fall. Instead of being a lighting rod of discontent, he’ll potentially emerge as respected figure who put the party ahead of himself.

Tim Powers is vice-chairman of Strategic and managing director of Abacus Data. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leader Andrew Scheer.

The Hill Times
Christmas in Ortona was ‘just another day’

The recent commemorations are a reminder that in this still-dangerous world, there are Canadian soldiers, development workers, and diplomats working for us abroad for whom the season may be anything but peaceful.

In December 1914, there was a pause in the fighting, and the English and German soldiers approached one another in “No Man’s Land,” drank, shared chocolate, sang Christmas carols, and played soccer. It is a lovely story, and brings forth the essential humanity of people. That further truces were denied says a lot about the brutality of war.

Indeed, for the few remaining veterans of the Italian campaign of the Second World War, Christmas has a very different meaning.

In Ortona, in late December 1943, the Canadians fought one of their bloodiest battles ever. The town on the Adriatic was the gateway to the Liri Valley and Rome. To stop their advance, Hitler had ordered his crack paratroop division to defend the town. German snipers took out Canadian soldiers in the streets, tanks were blown up as they drove through barricades, and buildings were booby-trapped. The battle raged for more than a week inside the town, while outside other Canadians, like my father, were fighting the Germans in the field.

It gained the name “Little Stalingrad,” as the only way to fight house-to-house was to blow holes in the walls of each building and clear out the Germans inside. The Germans deserted the town, now rubble, a few days after Christmas. The victory carried an enormous cost: 1,300 civilians died, and Canadian and German combined dead numbered 1,000, with thousands of wounded.

In the midst of this carnage, the Canadians served a Christmas dinner before heading back out to fight again. In a bombed-out church, they ate whatever combination of rations and meat could be scrounged up. There was no truce, no pause, and many of the graves in the nearby Moro River cemetery carry the date December 25, 1943.

In early December, Veterans Affairs organized commemoration ceremonies for the 75th anniversary of the Italian campaign. Many of the 96,000 “D-Day Dodgers,” as they were known, have died in the last decade. Another 6,000 remain in graves across Italy.

Fifteen veterans of the campaign attended the ceremonies with Governor General Julie Payette and other dignitaries. I had the privilege of speaking to one, David Adlington. Sharp and articulate over the phone from his home near London, Ont., he celebrated his 100th birthday in September.

He enlisted in 1939 with the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) and soon went overseas. He says he had the “nine lives of a cat,” as he beat death on several occasions, escaping Nazi-held France in an overloaded ferry, in a torpedoed troop ship in the Mediterranean approaching Italy in 1943, and when knocked out by shrapnel outside Ortona.

After that close call, he was mustered into a role as a cook. He recalls that violent and dreary Dec. 25 as “just another day.” He points out the RCR had suffered significant casualties as it moved up Italy and was “down about 200 men.” Some of his friends had died or were wounded.

He says: “War is something you cannot explain to anyone, unless they have experienced it.” After the war, he had a successful career running a chain of bakeries, experienced it.”

Andrew Caddell retired from Global Affairs Canada, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and a principal of QIT Canada. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

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The deterioration of 24 Sussex is shameful

Re: “Some things are worth spending kron, and safety is one of them,” (The Hill Times, Dec. 11, p. 1). In this editorial, you refer, in part, to wondering why something has been done to date to commence the long overdue and much-needed upgrades to the prime minister’s official residence at 24 Sussex Dr. I’ve been wondering the same thing for a long time.

I think it is absolutely shameful that the current prime minister and many of his recent predecessors have refused to allow any of the necessary work to be done on the residence to make it safe and habitable for its intended inhabitants. In spite of the fact the National Capital Commission (NCC) has stated that the residence is in critical condition and that if proper repairs aren’t undertaken sooner rather than later, the residence will be beyond saving, successive occupants at 24 Sussex have only permitted the bare minimum of repairs to keep the place from falling down.

Let’s keep in mind that 24 Sussex is owned by Canada; the landlord is the NCC. Prime ministers of Canada are merely tenants, as are tenants, should not be allowed to interfere in the landlord’s obligations to make this official residence a safe, energy-efficient, and welcoming home for those who are privileged to occupy 24 Sussex from time to time.

When Justin Trudeau became prime minister in 2015, he rightfully refused to move into 24 Sussex due to its unsafe environment and another official residence was found for him. So why, then, wasn’t the NCC given the opportunity to immediately take the advantage of the fact that 24 Sussex was now vacant and get the remedial work done that is so badly needed and so overdue?

In any other similar situation, a landlord would be able to get away with allowing any tenant to occupy a dwelling with shoddy wiring, leaky windows, poor heating, asbestos, and crumbling foundations. Let’s get the politicians and the politicians out of this situation and let’s allow the National Capital Commission, as the owner and landlord of 24 Sussex to get into the residence as soon as possible to do all the work necessary to make this historic residence a safe and comfortable home for its present and future occupants.

Jae Edae
Winnipeg, Man.
Iraq presence is weakening Canada’s moral high ground

If we wish to maintain the moral high ground to chastise brutal regimes like Beijing and Tehran, Canada needs to stop propping up one in Baghdad.

Scott Taylor
Inside Defence

OTTAWA—The Western media reports of late have been quick to condemn authoritarian regimes for their excessive use of force against civilian protesters. For more than six months now, Hong Kong riot police have battled the pro-democracy mobs of this former British colony. The pro-democracy protesters have expressed their anger at the crooking control over Hong Kong by the Beijing China authorities, through a steady stream of violent riots.

Pro-democracy activists reported petting riot police with petrol bombs and even engaged them with bows and arrows. The world condemned the Hong Kong police for aggressively arresting these pro-democracy types, even when protestors shut down the Hong Kong airport for days and occupied a university campus.

Far more effective in making their case for democracy was the recent landslide victory for Hong Kong’s anti-Beijing security electorate in the civil election. Despite this clear message being sent to the Hong Kong administration that reform is necessary, the protests continue. While we are quick to condemn the Chinese for their ruthless response, I would hazard a guess that if U.S. rioters hurled petrol bombs at American police, there would be gunfire, and lots of it.

For weeks now, Iran has faced a widespread outbreak of civil unrest. Iranians are enraged at the suffering they must endure as a result of the U.S.-led embargo against the Tehran regime. That regime has not shown as much restraint in its security forces’ use of lethal force. It is estimated that hundreds of Iranian youth have been killed in the unrest with thousands more injured. So, a deserved condemnation is due to Iranian leadership for allowing their population to be so brutally oppressed in this manner. This brings us to the situation in Iraq, where we have a total of 700 military personnel deployed; some 250 of them working as trainers to the Iraqi security forces. Almost unreported in the Western media has been the fact that for the past two and a half months, Iraq too has been awash in violent unrest. The initial response from the Baghdad regime was to deploy the NATO-trained security forces to restore order. Like Iran, the Iraqi force did not show the restraint of the Hong Kong police, and escalated almost immediately to shooting protestors with live ammunition.

The genesis for the current upheaval stems from an almost universal fatigue on the part of Iraqi youth to cope with the intrinsic corruption of the Baghdad regime. Yes folks, that would be the same corrupt Baghdad regime that Canadian troops are deployed to support.

Unlike many of Iraq’s previous violent clashes, which involved sectarianarian violence between Sunni and Shiites—this time it is a unified front against corruption. To date, some estimates put the death toll at more than 1,000, with 10,000 injured.

In a rare move, Iraq’s Chaldean Christian Cardinal Louis Raphael Sako last week declared they were cancelling Christmas in Iraq to stand in solidarity with the Sunni and Shiite protestors.

Further complicating the matter earlier this month, Iraq’s Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi stepped down to appease the protestors, but all this accomplished was to leave this embattled country leaderless. In a bizarre understatement, Major-General Jennie Carignan, the current Canadian commander of the NATO mission in Iraq, told The Globe and Mail, “we can see there is some work to do on now [Iraqi officials] structure and organize themselves for crisis management.”

The security forces we trained are Governor protestors in the streets by the hundreds to prop up a vacant regime and Carignan’s observation is that there is room for improvement.

No crap, Sherlock! Canada should never have deployed to Iraq because our mission there was never clear and now it has lost all meaning, writes Scott Taylor.

DND photograph by Op. Ryan Mouton

Major-General Jennie Carignan officially assumes command of the NATO Mission Iraq from Major-General Dany Fortin at a Transfer of Authority Ceremony in Baghdad, Iraq, on Nov. 26, 2019. Canada should never have deployed to Iraq because our mission there was never clear and now it has lost all meaning, writes Scott Taylor.
Scheer exit opens door for reset, say members who welcome the chance to ‘spring clean’

Alberta businessman Rick Peterson also considering a run in what’s becoming a crowded field of potential Conservative candidates cautiously considering their options.

Alberta businessman Rick Peterson also considering a run in what’s becoming a crowded field of potential Conservative candidates cautiously considering their options.

The party desperately needed a leadership review said former Nova Scotia Conservative MP Gerald Keddy, who led the House in 2015 after six terms, and is frustrated by the direction the party went under Mr. Scheer, saying he catered to social conservative groups focused on single issues.

“We need to go back to the centre,” he said, and while all in the party don’t need to agree, the party can’t be ‘offside on every single issue’ in mainstream Canadian political thinking.

When it comes to regional divisions within Canada and fringe groups within the party, defeated Quebec candidate Richard Serour said the next leader “has to be a uniter” and should be socially progressive but fiscally conservative.

There are three things he said must be addressed by the next leader: a credible plan to tackle climate change that includes market-based solutions; “unconditionally and enthusiastically” supporting the LGBTQ community and tax reform.

To Mr. Keddy the “big picture” question is not about Mr. Scheer, but about the future of the party. “We will either change the direction [from] a few speculators,” he said.

The party is struggling in urban areas because people are serious about tackling climate change. They want to see parties try to do something about it,” but Conservatives have been “missing from the debate.”

The party has been “afraid to take stances” and offer right-of-centre solutions, he said, echoing the sentiment offered by Michelle Rempel Garner over the weekend on Twitter that the party “has been cowed into submission” and that “is the time for ideas, and a big tough conversation about what we want to do for Canada.”

In the absence of such stances, Canadians sometimes assume where the party lands, he said, raising the prospect of a “hidden agenda” that has “killed” Conservative ambitions, including in the last election.

The party has steered clear of clear positions on issues considered “liberal” to its detriment, said Mr. Baran, who was pushed for a strong environmental policy.

“You cannot ghetooise your policy pipeline,” he said, by shutting off a row of issues that happen to score really well among your most successful votes. That’s a very short-term, cheap way of approaching politics. That’s not national building,” said Mr. Baran, who said while the party may be in need of soul searching, it is not in an existential crisis and rather on an “upward track.”

Though the party won the popular vote on Oct. 21, and more seats than 2015, it lost vote share in Ontario and Quebec.

The party has to redefine what it means to Canadians, said Dean Tester, president of Tester Digital and a Conservative senior digital strategist prior to the 2015 election.

“Andrew Scheer had his flaws but there’s a bigger problem here. The Conservative Party has been running on the same platform basically since 2006,” said Mr. Tester. “Boutique tax credits and tough-on-crime platitudes are not going to get the job done anymore. It’s time to be bold and redefine what the Conservative Party means to Canadians.”
Two Griffon helicopters are pictured, five of which were deployed as part of Canada’s 13-month task force supporting the United Nation’s peacekeeping mission in Mali. Photograph courtesy of the Department of National Defence/Ken Beliwicz

Sajjan, Champagne charged with expanding Canada’s UN commitment, but will there be more troops on the ground?

Canada has yet to announce a pledged quick reaction force of 200. A spokesperson for Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan says the ‘appropriate mission’ is in the process of being identified.

Continued from page 1

Trudeau government’s women, peace, and security agenda, as well as conflict prevention and peace building.

Unlike the 2015 mandate letters, little specificity is offered on what expanded support for UN peace operations would look like.

Mr. Sajjan’s 2015 mandate letter referenced working with then-foreign affairs minister Stéphane Dion to make Canada’s “specialized capabilities,” like mobile medical teams, airlift transport, and engineering support available on a “case-by-case basis,” as well as to help the UN respond “more quickly” to “emerging and escalating conflicts,” and leading an effort to improve the training of military and civilian personnel deployed on peace operations.

Asked if the expanded UN commitment will include more boots on the ground, Todd Lane, a spokesperson for Mr. Sajjan, said in an email that Canada plays an important role in UN peacekeeping operations and will continue to do so.

“We believe that gender equality in peace operations is an important goal. We are working on implementing Canada’s National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which is focused on advancing the role of women and girls in peace operations around the globe. We also continue to work as part of the Elsie Initiative to overcome barriers to women’s representation in UN peace operations,” he said.

Since the conclusion of Canada’s contribution of 250 personnel and eight helicopters performing medical evacuation for the UN’s peacekeeping mission in Mali, its contribution to UN peacekeeping has hit a historic low.

According to the UN figures, Canada contributes 45 military and police personnel across six UN missions as of the end of October. The contribution is an increase of five peacekeepers deployed compared to May 2018, which is the smallest peacekeeping contribution since 1956, according to The Canadian Press.

“We are missing in action here,” said Jocelyn Coulon, a former policy adviser to Mr. Dion as foreign affairs minister and author of Canada Is Not Back: How Justin Trudeau is in Over His Head on Foreign Policy.

“Boots on the ground at least shows that you are serious about peace operations,” he said.

Mr. Coulon said when he was in Mr. Dion’s ministerial office in 2016, a much more ambitious peacekeeping plan was devised—but was ultimately rejected by Mr. Sajjan and then-new foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.)—which had included a three-year commitment to Mali, and a larger force.

The UN numbers don’t include Canada’s contributions of 20 members to UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Congo (MONUSCO). As part of Operation Presence, Canada has deployed a C-130J Hercules along with a crew of 20 to Uganda to provide tactical airlift capability for the two peacekeeping missions. The force is not part of a UN mission, but loaned to the multinational organization for five days per month, CP reported.

The tactical airlift in Uganda and medical evacuation capability in Mali were two of four commitments the Canadian government made during the Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial meetings in 2016 in London, England, and in 2017 in Vancouver. Left unfilled is a quick reaction force of 200 soldiers—which can be used as a rapid response to counter an escalating situation in one of the UN’s missions—and a government pledge to provide the UN with up to 600 peacekeepers.

Prof. Boulden said the government is in the process of identifying the “appropriate mission” for the quick reaction force.

“We need to have a sustained commitment to peacekeeping,” Prof. Dorn said. “We should be expecting to fulfill the pledges that we made to the United Nations and the international community at the London summit and the Vancouver summit. So, there’s still so much to be done.”

In order to have a competitive bid for the the temporary seat on the UN Security Council, experts told The Hill Times that an increased peacekeeping contribution—along with increased foreign aid—will be crucial to winning the June vote over Norway and Ireland.

The UN Charter dictates that for the 10 elected members of the 15-member Security Council, “due regard [is] being specifically paid to the contributions of the country to the ‘maintenance of international peace and security.’”

According to UN figures, Norway and Ireland both have larger peacekeeping presences than Canada, deploying 135 and 621 personnel, respectively. Ireland has 438 soldiers and eightstacles deployed to the UN’s peacekeeping mission in Lebanon alone.

“I think some major contributions can make a difference,” Prof. Dorn said. “We could take leadership of a UN peace operation. We did that seven times in the 1990s and we haven’t done it since.”

Mr. Coulon said if a country is seen to be doing nothing, they won’t get the support of other member nations.

“I don’t know why other countries would vote for a country that seems not to care about peacekeeping except in speeches,” he said.

“If you don’t show the flag, if you don’t have boots on the ground, people don’t see you and I imagine that they will look at Ireland and Norway,”

Jane Boulden, Canada Research Chair in International Relations and Security Studies at the Royal Military College, said contributions can come in many ways, not necessarily troops on the ground. But she added it’s a harder sell to connect those contributions to the campaign for the UN Security Council seat.

“It’s troops on the ground that is the most expensive, most needed, most obvious kind of contribution,” she said.

Canada spearheaded the Elsie Initiative, which was unveiled in the 2017 peacekeeping summit. The goal is to increase women’s participation in peace operations, having women comprise 15 percent per cent of police units by 2028.

Prof. Boulden said although there’s more Canada could do in UN peace operations, its commitments to NATO missions don’t leave much room for other big deployments.

 “[The] ability to project and send troops is relatively limited. And so, by deciding to go to Latvia was that a de facto decision to not go very big in terms of supporting the UN with boots on the ground,” she said, adding there are other ways that Canada can support UN peace operations, such as the tactical airlift.

But with nearly 100,000 members in the Canadian regular and reserve force, Prof. Dorn said Canada can definitely have more soldiers deployed than it currently has.

In a Dec. 17 CP report, Mr. Sajjan said Canada was exploring the potential for deploying military engineers to support peacekeeping missions, as well as having Canadian military trainers join other nations’ teams.

Outlining in Mr. Sajjan’s mandate letter from the prime minister is for him to ensure the “continued effectiveness of Canadian Armed Forces deployments,” including Operation Impact in the Middle East, which is part of the global fight against ISIS; Operation Neon in the Asia-Pacific, part of the implementation of UN sanctions on North Korea; the NATO mission in Latvia, which Canada is leading; and Operation Unifier in Ukraine, which supports the Ukrainian security forces.

Not listed in the letter is Operation Presence, which encompasses Canada’s contribution to UN peace operations, including its past task force in Mali and its current deployment in Uganda.

Prof. Boulden said a commitment to either NATO missions or UN peace operations had to be made.

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All cabinet chiefs of staff now named, 12 of 36 are former Trudeau PMO aides

Lucy Hargreaves is now chief of staff to Associate Finance Minister Mona Fortier. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Paul Moen is now chief of staff to Natural Resources Minister Seamus O’Regan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Laurence Deschamps-Laporte is now chief of staff to Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Vanessa Adams has joined Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Plus, PMO executive director of communications and planning Kate Purchase is leaving the Hill.

As 36 members of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s cabinet now have chiefs of staff in place to run their ministerial offices, and one-third of them are former aides in Mr. Trudeau’s office as prime minister. But first, some prime minister’s office staffing news: executive director of communications and planning Kate Purchase will soon be leaving the top office, and the Hill, for the private sector. She’s set to become a senior sector with Microsoft.

Ms. Purchase has led communications for Mr. Trudeau since he was elected as party leader in 2013, including acting as a lead party spokesperson during the 2015 campaign and as chief national content strategist during the 2019 race. After having been an early hire in Mr. Trudeau’s PMO as director of communications, Ms. Purchase was promoted to the title of executive director of communications and planning at the beginning of 2018, putting her in charge of the PM’s advance team as part of an internal re-organization in the wake of former operations director John Zerucelli’s exit.

Before becoming a member of Mr. Trudeau’s inner circle, she was also a spokesperson to then-Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff during the 2011 election, and later, worked as director of strategic planning to interim leader Bob Rae.

“Bitter sweet to announce that I’ll be leaving JustinTrudeau’s office next week for a new adventure. It’s been a wild and inspiring ride, but when you get the call to join @Microsoft to work for [Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella]—you jump!” tweeted Ms. Purchase on Dec. 11. Finance Minister Bill Morneau has landed Elder Marques as his chief of staff, as recently reported by The Hill Times. Mr. Marques arrives straight from the PMO, where he’s been a senior adviser since September 2017. Before then, he had been chief of staff to Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains since the beginning of 2016, having left his job as a litigation partner with law firm McCarthy Tétrault to work for the Trudeau government.

Dave in Middle Class Prosperity and Associate Finance Minister Mona Fortier’s new office, Lucy Hargreaves will be chief of staff. Ms. Hargreaves has spent roughly the last two years as director of operations to then-environment minister Catherine McKenna before which she was assistant to Ms. McKenna as the Liberal MP for Ottawa Centre, Ont. She’s also a former Ontario public servant, a former consultant with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and a former senior manager of programs for the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, among other past jobs.

National Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan’s office will be run by chief of staff George Young. A veteran staffer, Mr. Young has spent roughly the last three years working in the PMO as the liaison for ministers’ offices; earlier this year, he added on the title of caucus support officer amid controversy over SNC-Lavalin and tumultuous cabinet relations. A former senior adviser to Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson, he was also previously chief of staff to then-Indigenous minister Dominique LeBlanc and worked on the Hill under the Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin Liberal governments.

Speaking of Mr. LeBlanc, Jamie Innes has been confirmed as chief of staff to the minister, who’s been named President of the Queen’s Privy Council, a role that will see him in charge of the democratic institutions file.

Another longtime staffer, Mr. Innes was last working in the international trade minister’s office as director of parliamentary affairs and before then, from January 2016 until February 2017, filled the same role in then-foreign affairs minister Stéphane Dion’s office. He previously worked in Mr. Dion’s leader’s office and worked for various Liberal House leaders from 2009 until 2013. Mr. Innes is also a former director of organization for the federal Liberal Party, a policy adviser in the Liberal research bureau, and was a cabinet staffer under Paul Martin’s government.

Seniors Minister Deb Schulte has landed former science and sport minister Kirsty Duncan’s old chief of staff, Anne Dawson. A former executive director of one foundations for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Ms. Dawson had been Ms. Duncan’s chief of staff since March 2017. She’s also a former bureau chief for Sun Media at the Ontario provincial legislature, and spent four years as chief political correspondent for the National Post on the Hill, amongst other past roles. Ms. Duncan is now deputy House leader.

Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion Minister Carla Qualtrough has hired Iras Zalusky as her chief of staff. This past summer, Mr. Zalusky was promoted from director of procurement policy and parliamentary affairs to chief of staff in Ms. Qualtrough’s former office as public services minister. A former Chrisitan- and Martin-era cabinet staffer, Mr. Zalusky was executive director and CEO of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress from 2010 until joining Ms. Qualtrough’s office in February 2016.

In other office news, Annabelle St-Pierre Archambault, who’d been a senior communications adviser to former employment minister Patty Hajdu—who’s now the minister of health—exited the office in November. So, too, did director of policy Daniel McKenzie, who’d been in the office since January 2016, having started out as a special assistant for policy. Keep reading Hill Climbers for an update on where they land.

Natural Resources Minister Seamus O’Regan has hired Paul Moen as his chief of staff. Mr. Moen has spent the last 15 years working in the private sector, most recently as a principal with the Earsncliffe Strategy Group. In that capacity, he was a registered lobbyist for a number of groups, including the Canadian Coalition for Construction Steel, Spartan Biosciences, the Canadian Red Cross, Financing International Inc., and the Vancouver Art Gallery, among others. He’s also a former director of communications for the Merck Serono.

In political experience, Mr. Moen is a former senior policy adviser to then-trade minister Jim Peterson and a former legal counsel at Industry Canada.

In other office news, Carline Varyian has been confirmed as Ms. O’Regan’s new director of communications. Ms. Varyian was most recently communications director for then-public safety minister Ralph Goodale and filled the same role for Ms. Hajdu as employment minister before that. She’s also a former director of parliamentary affairs to Mr. Morneau as finance minister, among other past roles.

Tiara Folkes, who’d been an adviser for B.C. regional affairs and Indigenous relations in the natural resources minister’s office since September 2018, has exited, and is now working as a human resources recruitment adviser for the Department of Employment and Social Development.

Plus, press secretary Vanessa Adams has left the natural resources minister to join Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller’s office as a senior communications adviser and press secretary. Adams is the recent election communications director for now-hereditary minister Steven Guilbeault’s campaign in Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que., and is also a former Quebec and Atlantic regional affairs adviser to then-environment minister Catherine McKenna, and a former Hill assistant to Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau as the MP for Compton-Stanstead, Que.

In Mr. Miller’s office, Mike Burton has been confirmed as chief of staff. Until earlier this month, Mr. Burton had spent the last year as chief of staff to then-natural resources minister Amarjeet Sohi. He’s also a former director of parliamentary affairs and later senior adviser to Mr. Sohi as infrastructure minister.

Among other moves, still to be made by Mr. Miller is finding a new director of policy, as Jessica Hayden, who’d filled that role since March 2018, exited in November and is now associate director with the Martin Family Initiative, which is aimed at improving education outcome for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in Canada. A former Queen’s Park staffer, Ms. Hayden was also previously a senior policy and regional adviser to then-Indigenous and northern affairs minister Carolyn Bennett.

Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne has confirmed former Ontario University Rhodes scholar Laurence Deschamps-Laporte as his new chief of staff.
Ecuador's future is in mining, and Canada can play a big role, envoy says

With Canada as Ecuador's "main" direct investor through mines and the extractive industry, the Latin American country’s ambassador says he sees opportunity for growth and an increased "political will" to formalize trade relationships.

"We are giving them the best incentives in order to [show] that these new activities will have mutual benefit," he said during a Dec. 29 interview with Diplomatic Circles.

According to Ecuador's Central Bank, its office said during 2019’s first quarter Canadian investment in mining in the country was US$126.17-million, representing about 48 per cent of all investment in its mining sector.

"We see that the future's exports and a quarter of its revenues, which is "very attractive," he said, noting that the "biggest advantage" for investments and exports for both countries is "the big trade between the two totalled $528.5 million.

"We think that Ecuador can be also a investor through mines and the exportation of the mining products," he said, adding Mr. Moreno's choice to reverse the decision that prompted the riots has addressed the issue, though the country remains in significant debt.

Direct Air Canada routes start

Mr. Stacey said he’s proud of the new direct flights offered through Air Canada, announced earlier this month. When he started two years ago, the company had no such plans, but he said he spoke to the company and convinced Air Canada that there's a good business case.

"I thought it would be impossible," he said.

"It’s very difficult to widen our market here in Canada if we don’t have the capacity to bring products here," he said.

Ecuador has also applied to be part of the Pacific Alliance, a group of Latin American countries Canada has already partnered with. He said he thinks Ecuador will be able to join next year "for sure.

Ecuador create 'other channels' with Venezuela

Ecuador is not part of the Lima Group, a bloc that includes nations within the Western Hemisphere, including Canada, which has been active in response to the crisis in Venezuela and vocal in its opposition of embattled Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, and its support for opposition leader Juan Guaido.

Canadians, which is also a member of the bloc and has taken on many Venezuela-related refugees, is on Ecuador’s northern border.

Ecuador has the same position as Canada, said Mr. Stacey, but thinks it’s important to have "other channels" to speak about the current situation.

"We think that Ecuador can be also a facilitator if doesn’t take a firm [position] as a member of groups," and instead informally take part so it can "open dialogue" in other ways, he said.

We need new thinking and bold strokes if we are going to combat this contagion of gender-based violence that moves unarrested from one generation to the next.

This is just one of many gender-based health care gaps which women are at undue risk. Any action plan needs to begin to close those gaps, and soon.

We learned that economic disadvantage tends to place individuals at increased risk of gender-based violence. But the aftermath of incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment can also be devastating, leading to what I call economic traumas—a lot of undetermined outcomes.

So often, those who report abuses in the workplace are confronted by retaliation that forces them to quit their jobs. Blacklisting, which some bad actors and enabling organizations use to punish those who speak out (it was a favourite ploy of disgraced ex-senator Don Meredith, and refuses to take steps that would allow them to.

I still hear from staff and employees of current MPs and Senators, as well as their legal staff, constituents in the country, who share instances of bullying and harassment but are afraid to report them because of what happened to Meredith’s victims. It seems reasonable that my previous call in The Hill Times that all MPs and Senators receive mandatory trauma-informed training should be adopted in the federal government’s action plan.

We need new thinking and bold strokes if we are going to combat this contagion of gender-based violence that moves unarrested from one generation to the next. Which brings me to what should be the centerpiece of the government’s action plan: the creation of a federal gender-based violence prevention act.

Appropriately elevating the importance and urgency of the task at hand, the commissioner should be an officer of Parliament, armed with all the investigative and remedial powers the job requires.

Gender-based violence was behind the largest mass shooting in Canadian history. Thirty years after the tragedy at Ecole Polyvalente, the creation of a truly comprehensive national action plan, embracing realistic funding requirements, trauma-informed economic outreach, and bold, urgently needed, components like an anti-violence commissioner, is a fitting way to honour the lives of those victims.

It is a critical opportunity for us all to be part of the generation that finally brings an end to the scourge of gender-based violence.

Kathleen Finlay is a columnist with The Hill Times. She can be reached at kathleen@hilltimes.com
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Hill Climbers
by Laura Ryckwaert

Minister Guilbeault’s team takes shape

A long time Hill staffer, he’s also a for- mer senior policy adviser to Ms. Philpott as health minister, a former policy and re- gional affairs adviser to Carolyn Bennett in her old capacity as Indigenous and northern affairs minister, and a former senior adviser for First Nations and Métis relations with Hydro One, among other past jobs.

Mr. Guilbeault has made some head- way in staffing since confirming former

PMO senior adviser Mathieu Bouchard as his chief of staff.

First, the departures: communications director Louis Belanger is leaving the heritage minister’s office after just under a year. Mr. Belanger first joined the team under then-minister Pablo Rodriguez last March and before that was director of com- munications to then-international relations and development minister Marie-Claude Bibeau. A former communications director for The Malcolm Fund, Mr. Belanger spent a recent election as a communications manager for the Liberal Party. Stay tuned for an update on where he lands.

Patricia Beth, director of policy in the office since September 2018, has left the team. She previously worked as a legal officer with the Canadian Armed Forces’ Office of the Judge Advocate General and currently works with the Newfound- land and Labrador Legal Aid Commission.

Press secretary Simon Ross has also made his exit. Mr. Ross first joined the team in his role as senior adviser and issues manager to Mr. Rodriguez as both the new Government House Leader and as the minister for the federal riding of Quebec South—West.

A former Quebec Liberal staffers, among other past roles, Mr. Ross first joined the heritage minister’s office in October 2017 under then minister Mélanie Joly and stayed on after Mr. Rodriguez took over the portfolio in July 2018.

In Mr. Rodriguez’s office, where Rheed Lewis has been confirmed as chief of staff, special assistant Shahnaz Mousahou, who joined the team at the beginning of 2019, exited in September.

As reported by Hill Climbers earlier this week, senior policy adviser Faizel Gulam- bussien and policy adviser Jeremy Gault- hire have also exited the heritage minister’s office to lead the policy teams for National Revenue Minister Diane Lebouthillier and Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault.

 aims to replicate the excitement of Edinburgh’s world famous Royal Mile as the clock strikes midnight and we enter the New Year.

THURSDAY, JAN. 9, 2020

Unikkaatuit—In celebration of the world premiers of Unikkaatuit featuring a cross-cultural blending of circus arts, theatre, music, and video. Performed in a world of shadows and video projections, Unikkaatuit transports us to an ancient realm where life did not know death and days had not seen nights. Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020, 7:30 p.m., Babs Asper Theatre, National Arts Centre. Invitation only. Reception to follow in the Salon. A collaboration between The 7 Fingers, Artic, and Taqtiq Productions.

MONDAY, JAN. 13, 2020

Brexit and the Past, Present, and Future of the U.K. Constitution—A public lecture by Dr. Jeff King, professor of law, University College London and global advisor to the House of Commons on law and policy. Presented by the szUottawa Public Law Centre, Jan. 13, 2020, 9:30-7 p.m., Faubert Hall FX 302, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law, 57 Louis-Félix St., Ottawa. Free admission.

TUESDAY, JAN. 21, 2020

Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement: Orientation for the 2019 Newly Elected MPs—This is a two-day event beginning on Jan. 21, Gather at the Bank of Canada museum on Jan. 21, for an introduction to Ottawa and the National Capital Region followed by a presentation on the Bank of Canada’s functions as the federal central bank and its role in the economy. Lunch with Mayer Jim Tson, National Capital Commission CEO Tobi Nussbaum, and special guests. Tour the Supreme Court and engage in discussion with Chief Justice Richard Wagner and Justice Rosalie Abella on the responsibility and work of the Supreme Court. Discuss the role of the Governor General with Julie Payette, tour Rideau Hall and learn about honours, heraldry, and services to you and your constituents. Join British High Commissioner Susan le Jeune d'Alésiagheshique at Earlscliffe, the former home of Sir John A. Macdonald, for a reception and discussion on Members of Parliament as ‘ambassadors’ for Canada. The email to register is carletonisp@gmail.com.

TUESDAY, JAN. 28, 2020

Carleton Initiative for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Engagement: Orientation for the 2019 Newly Elected MPs—Meet at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building on Jan. 22 for a day of information you can use. Sessions include how Ottawa Works; How to Work Effectively in Ottawa; Canada—Challenges and Opportunities; and Personal and Professional Accountability. Eminent and diverse Canadians from across the country will join the Clerk of the Privy Council, the chief statistician and others for thought- provoking panels and briefings. Meet them and your new colleagues over meals and hospitality. A formal invitation will follow. This orientation complements the House of Commons procedural and administra- tive orientation and is supported by the House of Commons leadership and all three political parties.

Former prime minister Jean Chrétien will deliver the closing remarks at 4 p.m. on Jan. 22. The email to register is carletonisp@gmail.com.

MONDAY, JAN. 27, 2020

House Returns—The House is scheduled to return on Monday, Jan. 27, and will sit for a total of four weeks or 15 days or 15 days until it adjourns for the summer on June 23. It will sit on Monday, Jan. 27 for four weeks or 15 days until it adjourns again on Friday, Feb. 7 for one week. It will return on Monday, Feb. 10 and will sit until Friday, Feb. 28. It will take a one-week break and resume on March 9-March 13. It will adjourn again for one week and will sit from March 23-April 3. It will take a two-week break and will resume sitting again on April 20 and will sit for four straight weeks until May 15. It will take a one-week break and will resume again on May 25 and will sit straight through for the next four consecutive weeks, until it’s sched- uled to adjourn on June 23. The House adjourns again for three months and will return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks. It will adjourn for one week and will sit again from Nov. 19 until Nov. 6. It will break again for one week and will resume sitting from Nov. 16-Dec. 11. And that will be for 2020.

Cannexus20 by Ceric—Canada’s largest career services conference, Jan. 27-29, Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. For information, registration@ceric.ca.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020

Conservative Party National Convention—The Con- servatives will hold a convention in Toronto from April 16-19. For more information, please contact 1-866- 808-8407.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020

Politics & the Pen—Considered one of Ottawa’s most anticipated parties, the annual Politics & the Pen party celebrates Canadian political and literary cultures. The highlight of the night features the presentation of the $25,000 Shaughnessy Prize for Political Writing, named in honour of the late and spirited, inde- pendent MP. It happens May 13, 2020, Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel, 1 Rideau St. Ottawa. For more information, contact Julia Yu, events manager, jyu@writerstrust.ca or 613-504-8222, ext. 24.
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