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# THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FIRST YEAR, NO. 1730

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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**News** House of Commons

## 'Doing democracy by Zoom meetings is just not the same as being there in the House'

BY ABBAS RANA

Some of the 98 rookie MPs  
elected in the last election say  
they're missing out on the cut-

and-thrust of Ottawa's parlia-  
mentary experience as Canada's  
federal lawmakers, and a Conser-  
vative MP says if there's an early  
election this could become "the

forgotten Parliament," the one  
during the global pandemic.  
Because of COVID-19, which  
the World Health Organization  
officially declared a pandemic on

March 11, Parliament has only sat  
for about six weeks since the last  
federal election on Oct. 21, 2019.  
The House was suspended on  
March 13.

The rookie MPs interviewed  
for this article acknowledge  
the importance of suspending

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**News** III of III-Part Series: Transparency, Trust & Transition

## In move from crisis management to transition, Parliament will require a 'different manner' and an 'adaptive response,' say experts

'It's in the government's interest and in the country's interest to make the management of COVID an important priority, but not to set aside the other priorities,' says former Tory Senator Hugh Segal.

BY NEIL MOSS & MIKE LAPOINTE

As the federal government  
prepares to transition to a  
new normal in the fight against  
COVID-19, experts say the priori-  
ties the Liberals spotlighted in the  
last election will change, that the  
government could outline its new  
approach in a Throne Speech in the  
fall, and that the next phase of transition  
will require a "different man-  
ner of Parliament" and an "adaptive  
response" to the new world.

Over the last three months  
many central policy plans of the  
Liberal government have been  
put on pause as all attention has  
been centralized to deal with the  
coronavirus pandemic.

The federal government is  
going to be dealing with COVID-

Continued on page 6



Prime Minister Justin  
Trudeau, pictured  
May 20, 2020,  
arriving at the West  
Block on the Hill. *The  
Hill Times* photograph  
by Andrew Meade

**News** Senate

## Revival of Upper Chamber's Progressive Group will 'weaken' Senate leaders, says Sen. Pierre Dalphond

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

The Progressive Senate Group's  
reclamation of official status  
last week will give more freedom  
to Senators unhappy with their  
affiliation, and weaken the lead-  
ership teams in the Red Chamber,  
says Sen. Pierre Dalphond, who  
left the Independent Senators  
Group that dominates the Senate  
last week to join the PSG.

Sen. Dalphond (De Lorimier,  
Que.) was the third Senator to  
join the group this month, follow-  
ing formerly non-affiliated Sen.  
Peter Harder (Ottawa, Ont.), the  
previous government represen-  
tative, and Sen. Patricia Bovey  
(Manitoba), who also joined after  
leaving the ISG. Sen. Dalphond  
became the PSG's ninth member,  
giving it enough bodies to qualify  
for recognized status in the Sen-  
ate for the first time since last  
November.

Sen. Dalphond left the ISG the  
day after publishing an op-ed in  
*The Hill Times* that criticized the  
leaders of the ISG and Senate  
Conservative Caucus, alleging  
that they were trying to exercise

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## HEARD ON THE HILL

by Neil Moss

# ‘More Canadians are starting to get it’: outgoing Don Kelly reflects on two decades at Assembly of First Nations

Don Kelly first started working at the Assembly of First Nations in 1999, he later became the organizations communications director in the early 2000s, but last week started a new gig as lead program communications and public affairs at MasterCard Foundation where he will work supporting Indigenous youth and education driven by Indigenous communities. He's also a stand-up comedian. *Photograph courtesy of Don Kelly*



Mr. Kelly has worked for four different national chiefs (and one interim chief) as the director of communications at AFN, including **Phil Fontaine**, **Matthew Coon Come**, **Shawn Atleo**, and current AFN National Chief **Perry Bellegarde**.

A communications director at the AFN since the early 2000s, Mr. Kelly was with the organization as the federal government reached the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2006

with nearly 90,000 Indigenous people who were enrolled in residential schools receiving compensation in the largest class-action settlement in Canada's history for the treatment they had to endure, and, more than a decade later, he held the same post as the Indigenous Languages Act and the

A fixture in the Parliamentary Precinct for years, departing Assembly of First Nations (AFN) spokesperson **Don Kelly** says since he started at the advocacy organization back in 1999 more Canadians understand the work that is needed on reconciliation, but also says more progress needs to be made.

Indigenous Child Welfare Act passed just before Parliament was adjourned as the last election quickly approached.

“I was there in 2006 for the Indian Residential School Settlement, which was about some measure of healing and justice for the federal government taking our children away and, in doing so, trying to take our languages and cultures. And in 2019 ... we had these two pieces of legislation that were about Canada working with Indigenous people to support and promote and strengthen and revitalize our languages, and put responsibility for First Nations children back where it belongs with First Nations families,” Mr. Kelly told *The Hill Times*.

“It's far from full circle because there's still a long ways to go, but those really stand out as major accomplishments,” the departing Mr. Kelly said.

On the flip side, Mr. Kelly said there are still outstanding issues to be addressed, highlighting the need for progress on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two Spirit People, as well as forwarding legislation on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Bill C-262 to align Canadian federal law with the UN declaration died on the Order Paper in the Senate before the last election.

“That will really create ... a framework for moving forward, that will help the entire country move forward,” Mr. Kelly said.

He said that since he first joined the AFN in the late 1990s, there has been a recognition over time among Canadians of the importance to advance Indigenous issues.

“I think more Canadians are starting to get it. They're starting to understand why acting on these priorities is good for Canada [and] why not acting on them is holding us back in so many ways—whether it's economically [or] whether it's as a fair and just country.”

“I am seeing more positive change,” Mr. Kelly said. “Understanding there's a long road ahead, I do think more people are understanding we need to walk that road together and then we'll move forward a lot more quickly if we walk together.”

Mr. Kelly had two hiatuses from the AFN from 2006 to 2008 and 2010 to 2013 to pursue other projects, during those periods he wasn't far from the organization as he continued to do contract work for the assembly.

On many days the life of a communications director may not be a laughing matter, but Mr. Kelly's has a different side gig than many of the spokespeople in the Parliamentary Precinct as he moonlights as a stand-up comic.

“It's all communication,” he said. “It's about connecting with people on a real level.”

He was the host of APTN's *Fish Out of Water*, which spotlighted Mr. Kelly who grew up in Winnipeg, Man., travelling outside his comfort zone to traditional lands to learn the skills Indigenous people had to have to survive far from many modern luxuries.

“[Comedy is] a great way to get people listening,” he said. “People who won't go into a lecture on Indigenous history or Indigenous culture will come into a comedy club. So if you can sneak in a few points and make them in a way that everyone can relate to then that's a good thing.”

Mr. Kelly started his new gig as lead program communications and public affairs at MasterCard Foundation last week where he will work supporting Indigenous youth and education driven by Indigenous communities.

## Former NDP staffer Carole Saab named new CEO of Federation of Canadian Municipalities

**Carole Saab** was named the next CEO of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) last week, becoming the first female CEO in the organizations 119-year history.

Ms. Saab has been with FCM since 2010, before that she worked on Parliament Hill as a press secretary to the NDP caucus.



Carole Saab was a press secretary to the NDP caucus when she worked on the Hill a decade ago. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter/Carole Saab*

“Carole's ability to generate success for municipalities and FCM is evident from her record, which includes her pivotal roles in negotiating and securing historic investments in national infrastructure, municipal programming, capacity building and more,” said FCM president **Bill Karsten** in a statement.

Ms. Saab received congratulations from many across the political spectrum on her new position, including Infrastructure Minister **Catherine McKenna**.

“Looking forward to continue working together with municipalities to make positive investments that benefit Canadians, grow our economy, create jobs and build cleaner and more resilient communities,” Ms. McKenna tweeted.

## Red Chamber and University of Victoria partner to bring virtual forum on bridging divides

As the world charts a path of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, a national forum will connect academics, business leaders, and policy makers to chart a road to bridge divides that have been highlighted by the health crisis.



Independent Senator Yuen Pau Woo, the leader of the ISG, sits on the Victoria Forum's external advisory board with fellow Red Chamber members Yonah Martin and Jim Munson. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The 2020 Victoria Forum will be the result of a partnership between the University of Victoria and the Senate.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a spotlight on societal divisions in Canada and around the world,” said Senate Speaker **George J. Furey** in a statement. “As these rifts increase in scale, so too does the responsibility of policy-makers to bridge the gaps. Together with governments, institutions and communities, the Senate of Canada looks forward to contributing to solutions to address these complex issues.”

The Victoria Forum will be held virtually on November 13 and 14. Topics include the pandemic's impact on economic divides, social divides, and environmental divides.

“With the world facing growing polarization, a forum like this sets the stage for much-needed conversations and the opportunity to devise and recommend real-world solutions to global challenges,” Victoria Forum chair **Saul Klein** said in a press release.

The Senate will also partner with the University of Victoria to bring the Victoria Forum in 2021.

Senators **Yonah Martin**, **Jim Munson**, and **Yuen Pau Woo** sit on the Victoria Forum's external advisory board.

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*The Hill Times*

**Substance Use and COVID-19**

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# Let's build a more resilient Canada

**COVID-19 has disrupted our way of life, and immediate relief has rightfully been the priority of governments. But as the conversation in Canada evolves to one of economic recovery, important questions arise.**

What does recovery look like? How can we deliver a cleaner, innovative and diverse economy? **How do we ensure recovery measures aren't just shovel-ready but shovel-worthy?**

Federal and provincial government stimulus and recovery efforts can create jobs, encourage economic diversification and equity, spur cleantech innovation, cut both carbon pollution and illness-causing air pollution, and make Canada more resilient.

We ask Canadian governments to commit to a three-part recovery and resilience plan:

**1. Invest** stimulus into Canada's fast-growing clean energy and cleantech sectors and businesses committed to the local production and export of world-leading low- and zero-carbon commodities;

**2. Act** quickly to support clean energy and cleantech solutions and businesses by expanding existing initiatives and programs; and

**3. Share** loud and clear that Canada will continue and expand on its best-in-class climate and environmental policies.

We can't leave any sector or region behind. That means training and retraining for Canadians whose past jobs may not return, in programs that can and should start now while unemployed workers are sitting at home.

**The clean energy sector employs 298,000 Canadians** in a wide range of jobs: insulating homes, developing clean technologies and energy storage solu-

tions, manufacturing electric vehicles and deploying charging infrastructure, building and maintaining wind, solar and hydro projects, producing renewable fuels and more.

Climate leadership is also enhancing competitiveness and creating new opportunities in other sectors of the economy. These include present and future jobs in **low-carbon concrete, steel and aluminum**, the auto sector, sustainably produced mass timber, agriculture, and **mining or supplying the metals and minerals used in many clean technologies.**

A resilient recovery creates winners across the country. The time is now to invest in people and projects that will diversify our economy and improve our health and wellbeing.

**It's how we build a more resilient Canada.**

Over **200 signatories** representing over **2,000 Canadian companies** have signed on to support a resilient recovery. Add your organization at [resilientrecovery.ca](https://resilientrecovery.ca)



Acquire Industries Ltd., AddÉnergie, AES, Ameresco Canada Inc., American Clean Energy Solutions Inc., Arterran Renewables Ltd., Atticus Financial Group, Autochargers.ca Corporation, Avalon Mechanical Consultants Ltd., Ayur Financial Strategies Inc., Barkley Project Group, BayWa r.e Solar Systems Inc., BC Bioenergy Network, Black Current, Bonlook, Building Future, Innovation, Business on Camera, C Returns Inc, Canada Clean Fuels, Canadian Association of, Physicians for the Environment, Canadian Council of Canadians, CAPSolar, Carbon Axion, Carbon Busters Inc., Carbon Free Group, Carboniq, Cellufuel, ChargeHub - MogileTechnologies Inc., ChargeLab, Chinook Power Corp., Citoyen concerné, City Green, Clean Foundation, CoEnergy Co-operative, Collected Conscience, Consolidated Biofuels, Eavor Technologies Inc., EcoGen Energy & Build, EcoSafe Zero Waste, EH2 Solar, energyhub.org, EnergyX Solutions Inc., Enersion, Enliten, Ensyn Technologies, Envigour Policy Consulting, EnviroCentre, envision SYNERGY, Equilibrium Engineering, Es design, Exactus Energy, Firefly GHG Consulting, Fluent Energy Consulting, Fort Capital Partners, Fulcrum Projects Ltd., Geotab Inc., Go Wild Solar Solutions, GOOD Company, Great Canadian Solar Ltd., Great Canadian Solar, Halton Environmental Network, Huron Clean Energy, IAQ Inc, Impact Engineering, Innoltek, InnovÉE, Institut du véhicule innovant (IVI), iSun Energy, JE&M CONSULTING LTD., Jupiter Hydro Inc., Konnecta, Kootenay Solar Corp., L & A Energy Consulting Ltd., LanzaTech Inc., Letenda, Light house, LINCit, Maison du développement durable des Laurentides, MANTLE314, Melka Consulting, MKB & Co., MKI, Montroc Consulting Inc., Naked Snacks, Nergica, Nerva Energy Group Inc., New Power Post, NISP Canada, Noventa Energy, Nutana Power, Okanagan Solar, Okos Smart Homes Inc., Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-operative, Pacific Rim Engineered Products, Pantero, Passmore Group Inc., Pisces RPM, Polaris Strategy, Posterity Group, Provencher Roy Design Intérieur, PyroGenesis Canada Inc., R & G Stategic Communications, RainGrid Inc., rareEarth Project, Marketing Ltd., Recharge Véhicule Électrique, ReFeed Canada, Renewable Energy Group, RESCo Energy Inc., Saskatchewan Electric Vehicle Association, SES Consulting, Signature Electric Ltd., Sketch Nanotechnologies, Sol Power Projects, Solaires Entreprises Inc., SolarShare, Soluna Energy Inc., Somerset Foundation, Spark Charging Solutions Inc., Spectergy, Steeper Energy, Sustainable Hamilton Burlington, Sustainable Marine Energy, Sustainable Resources Management Inc., S.W.E.B, SWTCH, TBL Communications, Trotter Family Foundation, United Chargers Inc., Upswing Solutions, VadimUS, Verbio, Volta Technique, Waste to Energy Generating Inc., Water Rangers, Waterfall Group and more at [resilientrecovery.ca](https://resilientrecovery.ca)

## News

# Party conventions, venue for preaching to ‘the converted,’ could be in for revamp as parties plan for coronavirus contingencies

Even as party brass plan for different scenarios, some say that a virtual convention can't compensate for the hobnobbing, spontaneous dialogues, and networking that typically happen at national conventions.

BY BEATRICE PAEZ

The barnstorming of far-flung ridings, posing for grip-and-grin photo-ops, and holding glitzy fundraisers have all been abandoned in the face of the coronavirus. Large-scale party conventions could be next, as some parties are either working to prepare for scaled-back, virtual events, or choosing to delay their initial plans.

The Green Party, which is in the midst of a leadership race, is likely to delay its Charlottetown, P.E.I., convention, slated for October, when its federal council convenes at the end of the month, said interim leader Jo-Ann Roberts in a phone interview with *The Hill Times*. The party still intends to name a new leader in October, with votes to be cast by mail-in ballots.

"It has, officially, not yet been postponed; it has to be the decision of our federal council, which has [just] gone through elections," Ms. Roberts said. "It's highly unlikely it will happen in October. P.E.I. still has its border closed. To get there, it would be very hard for a lot of members."

Prince Edward Island, which is working to prevent the importation of the virus, has among the lowest rates of infection in the country. It has signalled that measures to turn away non-residents at its border will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Ms. Roberts said the party is "in talks" with the venue to figure out possible options for a future convention, which could take place next spring, so the council can decide how to proceed. She said the party could opt for a hybrid event, a virtual gathering combined with an assembly

of smaller, in-person gatherings of 30 or 40 people across the country.

There's one upside to likely putting off its Charlottetown convention, she said. The party had planned to pare back its policy debates, to give time for the new leader to introduce himself or herself to the party faithful, but with a later convention, that wouldn't be necessary.

certain policies that might shape the party's future platform.

"An even bigger implication at this moment is bringing members together to create a sense of excitement and energy heading into the next election," Ms. Harrison said.

The party has already had to scrap its June leadership convention, reschedule debates, and opt for virtual fundraisers and events, which some politicians, including

delegates per riding could convene in one location and votes on resolutions would be held remotely, if the threat of the pandemic hasn't receded by next year.

"You could have a structured debate, [have people vote] yay or nay, similar to what the House of Commons is doing," he said.

## Conventions help build incremental support for policies

The Liberal Party is still on track to hold its national convention in Ottawa in November. In an email response to questions about its contingency plans, the party's senior communications director Braeden Caley said the team is preparing "for a wide range of scenarios for how it is hosted in ways that are both safe and engaging, including ways to facilitate greater virtual participation in our policy process." He said the party's decisions on the future of all in-person events will be informed by public health guidance.

Even as party brass plan for different scenarios, some said that a virtual convention can't

He said they can also be pivotal in building incremental support over time for policies that may have been dismissed as only supported by those on the fringes of the party. After decades of being laughed at for pushing for marijuana legalization, he said, in 2012, young Liberals were able to build significant support for the passage of a resolution to legalize marijuana. Less than a quarter of those who voted opposed the resolution. The Trudeau Liberals, when they came to power in 2015, had recreational marijuana legalization as one of its signature campaign promises.

For the Conservatives, one significant moment in its recent convention history was when the party voted in 2016 to take its opposition against same-sex marriage off of its official policy books.

"That was an important step forward for the party," he said. "Those are some issues that conventions have been useful in coalescing people to [support a policy]."

The NDP, meanwhile, delayed its national convention and leader Jagmeet Singh's (Burnaby South, B.C.) leadership review in January, long before the coronavirus forced Canada to power down its economy. It cited the need to pay off its debts and build its war chest for the next election as among the reasons to not hold its big meeting later this year.

In an email statement attributed to NDP national director Anne McGrath, the party said it still plans to host a convention in 2021. "However, we know that large gatherings, even a year from now, may not be possible." Ms. McGrath said there are "internal discussions on how we can replicate a convention experience and fulfill our constitutional obligations if large gatherings are not possible." Those discussions "include various forms of virtual engagement that range in scope and complexity."

South of the border, the Republican Party is planning to plow ahead with its national convention in August, though they are considering a pared-down event, including limiting attendances to delegates, in the face of lingering concerns about the coronavirus, according to *The New York Times*. The Democratic Party, meanwhile, is prepping for three scenarios, including a full-scale remote convention, which hinge on how severe the outbreak is at the time and delegates' willingness to attend in person.

Those two conventions might help provide a playbook for how other parties approach their events in the future, with the pandemic likely to remain a hurdle to holding mass gatherings.

Mr. Delacourt said that parties will have to grapple with how to engage with members to ensure there's as much of an open forum as possible, if a virtual or hybrid format becomes the default choice.

"Policy conventions are really kind of quite literally churches where you preach to the converted, but so much of it is about bringing everybody in under one tent," said Mr. Delacourt.

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured with wife, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, and his youngest child, Hadrien, at the Liberal Party's national convention in Halifax in 2018. The Liberals are still on track to hold their convention in Ottawa in November, but are bracing for the possibility of holding a virtual gathering. *The Hill Times* photograph by Cynthia Münster

"What we've shown is we're pretty adaptable to the circumstances, and the party has been very engaged," Ms. Roberts said of how the race has played out. She pointed to candidates' use of video and social media to connect with supporters in powering their campaigns.

The Greens aren't the only ones regrouping.

The Conservative Party earlier this month shelved its plans to hold a policy convention in November in Quebec City, delaying it to 2021. In a press statement from party president Scott Lamb, the party cited several reasons for the postponement, including the "significant expense" members would have to incur and the logistical challenges in holding delegate selection meetings, as staff would be preoccupied with counting ballots for the leadership race.

Kate Harrison, vice-president at Summa Strategies and a former Conservative staffer, said that ideally, the Conservatives would be able to hold a policy convention ahead of the next general election, as these events provide a "testing" ground for gauging members' support for

HuffPost Canada's Althia Raj, have said contributed in part to an insular, sluggish race.

"The policy convention will be an important moment, first and last moment for the leader to actually get the pulse of the membership, and put themselves out there for the next election," she said.

Ms. Harrison said another consideration that may have played into the Conservatives' decision to delay the convention is that it tends to draw an older crowd—a demographic that is more vulnerable to the virus.

There are practical considerations in postponing the convention, said Garry Keller, vice-president at StrategyCorp, who noted that "even the most dedicated party activist" would likely be unwilling to make the trip.

Mr. Keller, former chief of staff to then-interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose, said while he hasn't missed a convention in 25 years, he "isn't in a great rush to hang out with thousands of people in close quarters, in hospitality suites, or in bars."

Like Ms. Roberts, he raised the possibility of parties opting for a model in which small groups of

compensate for the hobnobbing, spontaneous dialogues, and networking that typically happen at these gatherings.

"So much of what conventions are about is the networking on the floor," said John Delacourt, vice-president of public affairs at Hill and Knowlton Strategies and former Liberal staffer. "There's inherent value in that kind of free flow of conversation in that group dialogue on policy issues."

Discussions that would have organically brought a collision of ideas and perspectives from different regions of the country, he said, have now shifted online to platforms such as Zoom, which can be time-limited and regimented. "One of the challenges we all face is there's an inherent structure to our conversation now—the formalization of dialogue we're all contending with," he added.

While the incoming leader will have his or her own policy preferences, and the "nitty gritty" of setting the policy direction of the party is often happening within caucus, rather than on the convention floor, Mr. Keller said, these gatherings also serve as a "safety valve" for contentious issues like supply management.

# COVID and beyond: can we think big?

The COVID-19 epidemic is highlighting some real strengths and weaknesses in Canadian society, especially in government and public policy. The year 2020 is a rotten one in many respects for the whole world, but it can also be a good year for reimagining and redirecting the ship of state.



Andrew Cardozo

Opinion

OTTAWA—This changes everything! That's what they're all saying. But, seriously, how much will this change? This is the time for Canadians to think about what kind of society we want and what kind of clear vision we want to articulate. We now know that big changes can be made and made quickly when the need exists. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's daily announcements are unprecedented in their magnitude, their imagination, and their wide public support.

Well, we have the biggest debt in Canadian history and normally that should hamstring governments from doing anything interesting, but these are not normal times.

The debate between a progressive vision of caring versus a conservative vision of austerity is only just beginning. While outgoing Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer is often criticized for being negative, he is in fact setting the groundwork for that austerity vision.

The COVID-19 pandemic is highlighting some real strengths and weaknesses in Canadian society, especially in government and public policy. The year 2020 is a rotten one in many respects for the whole world, but it can also be a good year for reimagining and redirecting the ship of state.

Our biggest strength lies in our public health-care system, a strong economy, a strong private sector, our general safety, and a lawful society.

But here are some of the things that we need to address and to change: the standard of living for seniors, whether in long-term care, retirement residences or in independent living; the "she-cession" and how this pandemic affects women more than men, which points to their general lower wages and lesser job security; the status of vulnerable communities—Indigenous peoples, First Nations reserves, and low-income people; and systemic discrimination—are women, minorities, and new Canadians working in greater danger of catching the coronavirus, and at lower wages and in more precarious working conditions?

While Canada has not wilfully determined that women and minorities are to be



People, pictured walking in downtown Ottawa on Sept. 16, 2019. This is the time for Canadians to think about what kind of society we want and what kind of clear vision we want to articulate. We now know that big changes can be made and made quickly when the need exists, writes Andrew Cardozo. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

relegated to lower-income jobs, they just are. For a series of reasons, which can best be described as systemic, our system is clearly stratified by demographics—that's the euphemism for saying we have a sexist and racist system. And a funny thing happened along the way—we suddenly realized these are the workers who we need the most—to take care of our loved ones in seniors' homes; to stock our grocery store shelves so we can get Clorox wipes, flour, and toilet paper; to make our cappuccinos and pizzas; and to keep the gas stations open. They are also our childcare workers and early childhood teachers. All this time, we have been fine paying them the least and giving them the least job security; it's just part of the system.

But here's the thing, we can only change this if the rest of us are willing to pay more; pay an extra quarter for our coffee, and an extra quarter for each item at the grocery store, and so on.

It does start with governments and preferably the federal and all provincial governments establishing a \$15 or \$16 minimum wage, set to increase by inflation going forward. But it's more than wages. It's about the option for full-time hours, health benefits, paid leave, and pensions. It's about the growing gig economy and discussing whether it should be growing or shrinking.

Various governments have studied a basic income system and indeed we have such a system for seniors which works well. It is time to consider the various models seriously, one that ensures a minimum respectable standard of living for all Canadians, but is yet affordable and viable.

The COVID era also warrants a national discussion on: food production—the role of foreign workers on farms, food production, and meat processing; manufacturing of essential goods when global supply chains break down, and, by extension, the status of manufacturing in Canada, and how we as a society should think a bit more about "buying Canadian"; the public service—the essential role public servants are playing these days and will do so as the workplace changes; the green economy—how can infrastructure help; the future of green sources of energy; the future of the oil and gas sector in the short and long term; the future of the tourism, restaurant and travel sectors which have been reduced to zero per cent activity in order to fight COVID; the future of federal-provincial relations which have reached a high-water mark in

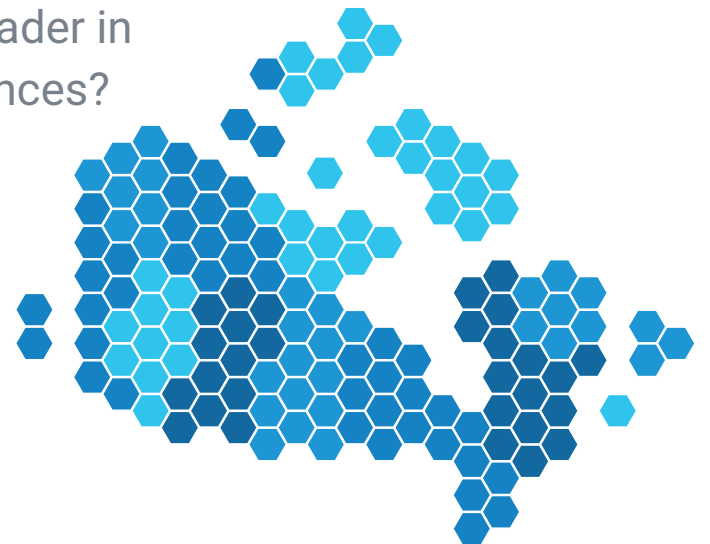
recent weeks, something we should demand of all governments going forward; Canada-U.S. relations, as COVID affects our countries differently—the movements of people, good, and services across the border; and the status of developing countries and of the movement of refugees around the world.

These are also some the key issues that the Pearson Centre is focusing on in the

months ahead. The list of public policy challenges is not short, nor simple. The silver lining to this tragic pandemic is we get to redesign our society, or return to the same old, same old, if and when normal comes back.

Andrew Cardozo is president of the Pearson Centre in Ottawa.  
*The Hill Times*

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# In move from crisis management to transition, Parliament will require a 'different manner' and an 'adaptive response,' say experts

'It's in the government's interest and in the country's interest to make the management of COVID an important priority, but not to set aside the other priorities,' says former Tory Senator Hugh Segal.

Continued from page 1

19-related effects for the next two to three years, but there is still a need to tackle other important issues, said Hugh Segal, a former Conservative Senator and past chief of staff to former Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney.

"It's in the government's interest and in the country's interest to make the management of COVID an important priority, but not to set aside the other priorities," he said, adding that Canada should still make First Nations reconciliation, climate change, defence, and foreign policy among its top priorities.

"The notion that we can take COVID off the agenda at some point and say, 'Okay, that's done. Let's get back to what is normal,' is probably not realistic, because what COVID produced ... will be part of federal and provincial politics and economics for some time to come," Mr. Segal said in a phone interview with *The Hill Times*.

Making COVID-19 one of Canada's national priorities, and not the sole national priority, will contribute to the country's economic recovery, said Mr. Segal.

But he added that time has not yet come.

"You can't pull the goalie out of the net in the second period. You have to leave the goalie in the net until you really get a sense of where the game is going," Mr. Segal said.

On May 22, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) warned Canadians that "we are not out of the woods yet" as provinces begin reopening their economies, a day after he and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) held their tenth first ministers' call with premiers regarding the pandemic. During the call they spoke about coordinated

actions being taken by all levels of government to support workers and businesses and protect people's health and safety.

As the government adjusts its priorities, it could come forward with a new Throne Speech in the fall, Mr. Segal said, adding that a fiscal update shouldn't be rushed and could come in the fall as well.

He also said there could also be an opportunity for a "modest" cabinet shuffle to rearrange those ministers who have performed well during the pandemic and those who have not.

A Throne Speech has the "added virtue" of requiring a vote of confidence in the government, he said.

"[It will] force all the parties—not just the government—to figure out what the right balance is going forward," he said. "The notion of a Throne Speech and then a fiscal update in the fall, I think, would strike most Canadians as making a fair amount of sense."

"My own view," said Senator Peter Harder (Ontario), a member of the Progressive Senate Group, "is that the government of Canada is going to have to do a rethink of its priorities—taking into account the expectations and the requirements of a post-COVID reality as well as the fiscal capacity and priorities that the government will have to adjust to."

Sen. Harder, the previous government representative in the Chamber, told *The Hill Times* that the transition to normal operations of governance will be defined by the virus, adding there won't be a single transition but several.

"We will go through a series of transitions, some of which are already apparent—that is to say, the opening up of some sectors—but I think there will not be a broad and clear definition to this until we have a better understanding of the virus," he said.

As the government prepares to change its priorities for a post-pandemic world, Mr. Segal also said a foreign policy update could be helpful.

"The relationship between China, the United States, Europe, and

Canada's foreign policy is going to be affected by what happened during COVID," he said, highlighting that there hasn't been such a statement from the government about Canada's foreign policy since 2017, when Ms. Freeland, the then-foreign affairs minister, laid out her vision of Canada in the world.

"It was a great statement when it was made, but events have overtaken it. So—a fresh foreign policy statement about what we have now learned, and what we think should change in

response to a current crisis," said Mr. Cappe. "What's the adaptive response to the new world? Is it going to go back to the way it was, or are we going to build new relationships that allow us to manage through?"

"What we need is to have a re-think of all this social programming and how it all hangs together," said Mr. Cappe. "How does EI work with social assistance and work with municipal services in kind? That's a big job—maybe what we need [is] a royal commission in a post-

COVID world to rethink social service programming." Mr. Cappe also mentioned that one of the things that happened post-9/11 and that hasn't happened

now, is that opposition party leaders were sworn in as privy councillors, so they could receive confidential briefings on security and intelligence matters.

"We didn't do that for COVID, so they weren't brought inside the tent," said Mr. Cappe. "They were kept outside, and that may have been appropriate—but therefore, we need to think about that, we need to think about whether we need a different way of operating with Parliament."

"What's the role of committees? How open should the executive be to those committees? You don't want them to play a second-guessing role as an alternative minister," said Mr. Cappe.

As the transition takes place, Mr. Segal said there is a place to involve Parliament more extensively than it has been, but added that he thinks the government has done an "excellent job" so far handling the crisis.

While he praised the work of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, Mr. Segal said the Conservatives have yet to find the right balance to their role of holding the government to account, and their role as Parliamentarians serving the broad public interest without the overuse of partisanship.

He added that the Conservatives' focus on austerity is "pretty destructive," saying that guaranteeing that the marketplace has

the needed liquidity is the right approach.

Mr. Segal said the government should be going through a "lessons learned" process to bring together Parliamentarians, as well as experts in industry and the scientific community, to assess what has been effective in countering the pandemic, what could be done better in the future, and how the government can plan for the next pandemic.

"I don't think a process that is focused on who can we blame—that kind of accountability—will be seen by most Canadians as constructive or helpful," he said.

## 'We are at that inflection point'

Rick Anderson, a principal at Earncliffe Strategy Group and former chief adviser to Reform leader Preston Manning, told *The Hill Times* that the provinces have tended to be "keener than Ottawa" to proceed towards what they cast as an economic recovery.

"The federal government tends to still see the health-care crisis as the dominant characteristic, but I think we really are at an inflection point about that," said Mr. Anderson, who noted there is now attention being paid to the next phase of the crisis, which has two characteristics.

"One is that there is an expectation that there will be other waves of outbreaks, the size of those, the frequency of them, how long we would be in that situation—there is a kind of accepted wisdom that this was not a one-and-done outbreak," said Mr. Anderson. "There will be future outbreaks and they will possibly continue until such time there are better treatments, or more optimistically, a vaccine."

"We are at that inflection point, and governments are making a transition—how do we move from what we did to deal with the health care and economic emergencies, to something that's more sustainable for, let's say, the balance of this year for starters, the next six months," said Mr. Anderson.

From a political point of view, when asked what the prime minister should do in the upcoming weeks and months, Mr. Anderson said what Mr. Trudeau should do "is more or less what he has been doing."

"My advice to him would be that he should look a bit more enthusiastic about the transition to the next phase," said Mr. Anderson—one in which people can safely get back to work.

"Not only emphasize the income support programs, whether they're for business or for individuals, but also emphasize—because I think it's his nature—that the income supports are going to remain in place."

"He's sending a message there, that these things are in for the longer term, but he should also be messaging that where it's possible, where cases are low, are staying low, and people can go back to work safely, retail outlets can open safely, that we want to help make that happen, and we welcome it," said Mr. Anderson.

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Senator Peter Harder, left, former Conservative Senator Hugh Segal, former clerk of the Privy Council Mel Cappe, and principal at Earncliffe Strategy Group Rick Anderson. *The Hill Times* file photographs

our foreign policy with respect to perhaps China [and] how we protect our own national interests with respect to the United States," he said.

## 'What's the role of Parliament in a new equilibrium?'

Mel Cappe, a former top bureaucrat who served as clerk of the Privy Council Office from 1999 until 2002, told *The Hill Times* that "in terms of the institutions that are both helpful and hurtful, think about Parliament."

"How do we get out of this? It's going to require a different manner of Parliament and playing off the trust that government has," said Mr. Cappe.

He argued that the current trust the public feels in government is for executives, and not for elected representatives.

"Therefore, what's the role of Parliament in a new equilibrium? Parliament, I argue, did its job and did it well in the acute phase, because it stopped the government from overreaching," said Mr. Cappe. "But by the same token, it didn't impede it from passing legislation within two days, so that was a different model of operation of Parliament than what we saw in the pre-COVID period."

"But that was an adaptive



Peter MacKay, left, and Erin O'Toole are the two front-runners in the race to replace Andrew Scheer as the leader of Canada's Conservative Party. The race will be decided on Aug. 21. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade, file photograph

# O'Toole campaign attacks MacKay in new online ads

Peter MacKay's new upbeat ad, meanwhile, has racked up more than 300,000 views.

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

Erin O'Toole's Conservative Party leadership campaign released two digital ads attacking rival Peter MacKay last week, proclaiming that he can't beat Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in a federal election.

"He just can't handle the pressure," quips a male voiceover in one of the ads, which features clips of Mr. MacKay reacting to questions from CBC *Power and Politics* host Vassy Kapelos during a live interview in March, and cutting short another interview with CTV reporter Heather Wright in February.

A second ad features a clip of Mr. MacKay being grilled in March by CTV *Question Period* host Evan Solomon over his decision to press for the leadership race to be accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. It says the Liberals will "remind Canadians over and over again," and that the next election "is already lost" if Mr. MacKay wins the leadership vote set for Aug. 21.

The O'Toole campaign paid to show three variations of those two ads to targeted audiences on Facebook, and the ads had been viewed more than 65,000 times as of Friday morning.

Mr. MacKay's campaign released its own ad on Facebook last week with a much different tone. That ad runs for nearly two minutes, and features clips of Mr. MacKay campaigning, while he thanks those who have volunteered on the campaign, and talks about his success raising money.

"We have the momentum," he proclaims.

"The real prize is when we defeat Justin Trudeau and his Lib-

eral government, that are causing great damage and harm to our country, and then together put the country back on track."

"Thank you to my fellow candidates and their teams," he says in the ad.

Mr. MacKay's ad was viewed more than 300,000 times as of Friday morning.

Mr. MacKay and Mr. O'Toole are widely viewed as the front

runners in the contest to replace outgoing party leader Andrew Scheer. Toronto lawyer Leslyn Lewis and MP Derek Sloan (Hastings-Lennox and Addington, Ont.) are also running for the party leadership, but so far neither has run a campaign ad.

The new ads from Mr. MacKay and Mr. O'Toole were the first to be released after the May 15 deadline to sign up new members to the party who can vote in the leadership election passed.

The O'Toole team has adjusted its strategy with that milestone behind it, said Jeff Ballingall, the campaign's digital director, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

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The O'Toole team has adjusted its strategy with that milestone behind it, said Jeff Ballingall, the campaign's digital director, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

"Obviously, we're more into the persuasion part of the cam-

paign, and so we're going to have to show that we have the best plan for the Conservative Party of Canada and for Canadians," he said.

"It's less about data collection and more about reaching the people that need to be reached."

MacKay spokesperson Jordan Paquet said in a written statement about the ads that, "There's going to be a lot of noise designed to

distract in this campaign. We're not going to get distracted. "The stark contrast in tones speaks volumes and we are focused on two goals. Unite Conservatives from across the spectrum under Peter MacKay's positive vision for the Party. And then, and more importantly, defeat Justin Trudeau's Liberal government and get Canada back on track."

during the campaign, and roughly \$5,500 in the week before May 19.

However, Mr. O'Toole's campaign has generated far more user activity. Mr. O'Toole's Facebook page generated roughly 416,000 "engagements"—a figure tracked by Facebook that includes likes, shares, and comments by users—in the week leading up to May 22. Mr. MacKay's page generated just more than 118,000 over the same period, according to publicly available data.

Both the MacKay and O'Toole campaigns have been recruiting volunteers to like, share, and comment on their social media posts.

## O'Toole ad goes after MacKay's front-runner narrative: Allan Gates

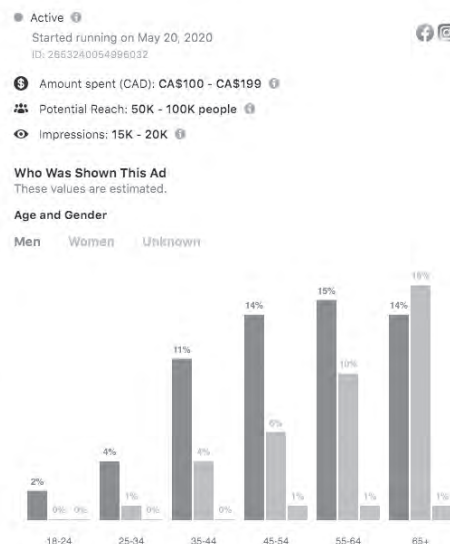
Both campaigns will have to overcome the challenge of getting the attention of party members while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to paralyze Canadian society, said Allan Gates, the lead strategist for New Brunswick-based Bonfire Communications, a branding and advertising firm.

The MacKay ad "felt like a bit of a victory lap before the votes were cast and counted," said Mr. Gates, who watched the new ads from both campaigns.

"It's kind of a corporate video. If the intent is to reach the people who are already supporting MacKay, it does the job very well," he said. "It might not be as effective to the average person on Facebook."

"It's safe and positive; it's kind of a classic front-runner

Erin O'Toole's leadership campaign began running two different attack ads on Facebook last week aimed at rival Peter MacKay. *Screenshot from Facebook's ad library*



Jeff Ballingall is the digital director for Erin O'Toole's Conservative Party leadership campaign. *The Hill Times* file photograph

of MacKay's leadership directly, flipping it around and making it a negative," said Mr. Gates.

## 'The Liberal war room would eat him alive': Ballingall

The O'Toole campaign will run digital ads on a variety of issues through the rest of the campaign, and "contrasting Erin with other candidates is just one way we're going to do that," said Mr. Ballingall.

"We're trying to reflect what Canadians care about, and Conservatives in particular are very worried about losing another election to Justin Trudeau. That's why Conservative Party members need to know about the risks of electing Peter Mackay as leader," he said.

"I think the Liberal war room would eat him alive, and it's essential that Conservatives know who would be the best leader to beat the Liberals."

Mr. Ballingall also runs the Canada Proud network of conservative websites and Facebook pages, which collectively boast several hundred thousand followers. Those sites feature a steady stream of posts that are harshly critical and sometimes mocking of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. They also include regular posts that are critical of Mr. MacKay's campaign for the leadership, or positive posts about Mr. O'Toole's campaign.

The Proud sites also regularly share content from The Post Millennial, a conservative media website for which Mr. Ballingall works as the chief marketing officer.

Mr. Ballingall told *The Hill Times* that he advises The Post Millennial about social-media best practices, but does not have a say over the content produced by the site. He said his company, Mobilize Media Group, is a paid vendor for Mr. O'Toole's campaign, but said Canada Proud is not being compensated by the O'Toole campaign.

Mr. Ballingall declined to say who chooses the posts that are put up on the Canada Proud sites. [peter@hilltimes.com](mailto:peter@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*

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## Editorial

# Political leaders shouldn't squander rare opportunity for big, positive changes

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed thousands of Canadian lives, and thrown millions out of work. It has also presented Canada's political leaders with a rare opportunity to make big changes to the way the country is run, and that opportunity shouldn't be wasted.

Canadians are nearly all paying close attention to the same issue: the pandemic, and the shortcomings it has exposed in Canadian society, including governance. That kind of national focus is rare.

Political leaders across jurisdictions and ideological lines are, with a few exceptions, willing to work together to manage the crisis. Partisanship, and the public's appetite for it, have temporarily subsided.

Governments at all levels are being encouraged to spend large sums of money to keep the economy on track, even by fiscal conservatives. Low interest rates will make the debt accumulated by that spending manageable, if the taps are turned off when the economy stabilizes. A green light for big spending is another rare opportunity.

Most of that spending and political will must be focused on curtailing the spread of the virus, and keeping people employed. However, there will be an opportunity when the end is in sight to start fixing some of the flaws that the pandemic has exposed.

Canada's long term care homes house some of the most vulnerable people in the country. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ontario Premier Doug Ford, and many advocates for the sector agree that the

residents of these homes have been failed during the pandemic by a system that can barely care for them during normal times. That has to be fixed. Requiring more staff, better pay and training, and more spaces to isolate sick residents is one place to start, and that will cost money, one way or another.

Canada's top public health officials seriously underestimated the danger posed by COVID-19 in the early days of what became a pandemic, and advised Canada's political leaders accordingly. Rather than caving to calls for our top experts to be fired, our political leaders must have some frank conversations with experts and advisers in and outside of government to find out what can be done to ensure that doesn't happen again.

The federal government's Canada Emergency Response Benefit program is serving as a pilot-project of sorts for creating a larger social safety net. A truly universal basic income likely is not feasible or affordable in this country; however, this could be the time for a mature national conversation about doing more to keep unemployed and underemployed Canadians out of poverty—which levies its own costs on society, and on taxpayers, in ways that are often ignored when rhetoric is pared down to talking points.

The political leaders in office now may never again see a chance like the one on the horizon to make big, legacy defining changes in Canada. They shouldn't waste it.

*The Hill Times*

## Letters to the Editor

# Treatments and vaccines to coronavirus, once developed, should be accessible to all

The COVID-19 pandemic hits people of all income levels, however, not necessarily in an equal way. There is inequality when it comes to the privilege of preventing and treating illness. In Canada, low-income households constitute an especially vulnerable population in terms of contracting the coronavirus and having limited access to testing and treatment. Thankfully, Canada does provide the CERB, but its eligibility requirements are restrictive, leading many workers to risk their lives as they continue to work in vulnerable work settings; otherwise, they will be ineligible for CERB and make no money at all. At the same time, in low-income countries around the world, quarantine efforts are not as rigorous as they should be, leading many citizens to continue working in order to sustain themselves and their families due to lack

of adequate government support and benefits.

Again, here is the effect of poverty on illness. But it doesn't stop here: the fact of the matter is, being sick is expensive. It means being unable to continue working and having difficult access to testing, treatment, and affordable medicine. Thus, people around the world are in situations where they continue to work to keep up with the cost of living which ironically, they do so at the cost of potentially getting sick or dying. This is why it is so important that Canada invests its support in making treatments and vaccines to the coronavirus (once developed) accessible to all by strengthening its global health-care system so that no one is left behind, regardless of income status.

**Dena Sharafdin**  
 Newmarket, Ont.

# Happy to see that Canada cares, writes reader

I am thrilled with the announcement by the federal government of support to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. If there is something that we have learned from the COVID crisis, it is the need to come up with global solutions to challenges such as pandemics.

Let's face it, global health and economic impact are clearly connected. Now, more than ever, it is important to strengthen the organizations with existing infrastructure and concrete game

plans to reach the most remote and difficult places on our shrinking planet.

I am proud to hail from a country with a world vision. Perhaps while we wait with bated breath for the development of a COVID vaccine, we can develop a sense of empathy for people who still await vaccines for tuberculosis and polio. Anything is possible with political will. Let us leave no one behind.

**Connie Lebeau**  
 Victoria, B.C.

# Why not call Old Age Security the Elder Support Program, asks regular reader

In this COVID-19 pandemic stage in my retirement, I am most thankful for the supplementary financial assistance announced by the federal government. This action indeed is practical and a symbolic recognition to assist the varied seniors.

By this support action, I am well reminded how I am now in my "elderly" stage in life, to be active with my daily contributions and, to pass on the family heritage, as it evolves. In that context, I prefer my dear family to view me as being "elderly" rather than "old." In that spirit, the Old Age Security Fund may be changed to be called the Elder Support Program.

We all are called to be a joint and cooperative force to stop the virus, in thought and in action. The word "old" has a negative connotation and sounds like "past," "inactive," or "shelved." In this critical period, we may try to place more emphasis on the active "elders" in society, including those who deserve being cared for and respected by due action. Yes, just one word can make a grand difference which is why I would so wish to deal with the minister of elder support and cooperation. With that, I again thank the government for the financial assistance to the "elders."

**Roman Mukerjee**  
 Ottawa, Ont.



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# Why do some retirement homes have zero infections while others are rampant?

The problem is the absolute patchwork of oversight when it comes to long-term care facilities. That problem should be solved with a national strategy. One of the after-effects of the pandemic will be a genuine interest in working collectively to upgrade the level of seniors' care across the country.



Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner

OTTAWA—The latest post-mortem theory on Canada's COVID deaths is that beefing up hospital resources fuelled the death rate in nursing homes.

That appeared to be the dubious conclusion in a front-page story last week in *The Globe and Mail*.

An elderly patient was transferred from an Oshawa hospital into a long-term care home, where she died three weeks later.

The inference in the article is that the transfer caused her death.

But the context reflected a superficial, and misguided critique, of the current triage system in Canadian hospitals.

For the past 40 years, critics have been pointing out that up to one-third of acute care hospital beds are being taken up by long-term patients who would be better served in a retirement facility setting.

The COVID crisis prompted a long-overdue transfer of patients from hospitals to nursing homes to free up acute care beds to treat patients in acute, current distress.

It appears more likely the reason this unfortunate death happened was entirely because the long-term care home to which she was transferred to was a COVID-19 hotbed, with 77 deaths.

But the journalists fail to ask the key question. Why do some

retirement homes have zero infections while others are rampant?

The issue is not patients' transfer, but rather the level of hygiene and best practices in nursing homes.

In a good home, infection isolation strategies were in place long before the pandemic struck. In a retirement home, if a flu bug is not properly managed by isolation and hygiene practices, it can and will spread like wildfire.

Proper medical practices, employed by medical staff and personal care workers, prevent the virus affecting a patient in one room from spreading to the rest of the facility.

Appropriate lockdown strategies, early in the game, while difficult for families, have also kept the virus out of some facilities.

So, the problem is not caused by moving chronic patients out of acute care hospitals. The problem is caused by lack of oversight of the chronic-care facilities that house our seniors.

*The Globe* report said that most patients have a preferred list of long-term care homes. Families aren't stupid and when it comes to checking the quality of care in a retirement facility, you only have to look at the waiting list.

The longer the wait-list, the better the care.

The best long-term care facilities have not been hotbeds of infection.

*The Globe* goes on to reveal another shocking headline that "nobody is tracking deaths inside seniors' facilities at a national level."

That should surprise no one because health data is collected and managed by provincial governments.

Each province tracks its own seniors' facilities deaths.

But the real questions were not asked by the reporters.

Why are there some facilities with vulnerable patients who have managed to completely avoid COVID-19 infections while others are hotbeds?

What is the infection correlation between publicly run facilities versus privately provided care homes?

What impact did the reduction in inspections of Ontario nursing homes have on the infection rates?

What is the influence of differing labour laws in different jurisdictions?

British Columbia moved immediately to restrict health-care workers from working in more than one facility. Quebec waited until mid-cycle to do the same thing.

What is the correlation between salary scales in individual facilities and infection rates?

Some of the largest companies in the private elder care business had zero national strategy to secure sufficient personal protective

equipment for their patients and employees.

They left the decisions on equipping homes and health-care staff up to each retirement facility. Some obviously did not do a very good job.

Contrary to *The Globe* claim, the move of chronic care patients out of hospital is actually key to saving and supporting health care.

The problem is the absolute patchwork of oversight when it comes to long-term care facilities.

That problem should be solved with a national strategy. One of the after-effects of the pandemic will be a genuine interest in working collectively to upgrade the level of seniors' care across the country.

Let's not just throw money at the problem. We need to ensure proper accreditation and real consequences when homes fail to meet the basic statutory requirements. When was the last time a home was shut down because of improper eldercare, bedsores, and infection spread, all signs of a poorly managed facility?

Let's tackle the real problem. We need an end to the patchwork of oversight currently governing Canadian nursing homes.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister and a former deputy prime minister.

*The Hill Times*

# Get ready for the politics of misery

Both the right and the left can justify their policies by saying 'We all need to make tough sacrifices for the common good.'



Gerry Nicholls

Post-Partisan Pundit

OKAVILLE, ONT.—You're probably aware of the expression, "misery loves company."

But did you know that old ad-

age can actually provide the basis for an entire political ideology?

Yup, it's true.

After all, if politicians can't alleviate the suffering of a population that's under distress, the next best thing they can do is promise that everyone will at least suffer equally.

It's a kind of an egalitarianism of misfortune.

And right now, with the COVID-19 pandemic economic lockdown firmly in place, there's lots of misfortune out there, which means politicians will have plenty of opportunities in the near future to make sure the pain is shared.

For instance, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern recently scored a masterful public relations victory when she announced that she and her cabinet ministers would take a 20 per cent pay cut lasting six months to show solidarity with those affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

Such a bold action helps to create a "We're all in this together" mindset.

Mind you, here in Canada, our politicians have been slow to pick up on this idea.

Indeed, some of them are coming under fire precisely because they're not sharing the pain.

Most notably, Ontario Premier Doug Ford recently received flak after he admitted that, on Mother's Day, two of his daughters, who don't live with him, visited his home, an act which seems to contradict the province's strict social distancing rules.

And Ford is not the only politician to land in hot water over seemingly skirting social distancing rules.

Recall that during the Easter Weekend, after urging Canadians to stay home and not visit their families, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did just that, i.e., he left his home and he visited his family, who were staying at a cottage in Quebec.

Clearly these actions of Ford and Trudeau will cause many Canadians to wonder why they should make sacrifices to stop the virus, if their leaders won't?

It's a good way to get people frustrated and angry.

Plus, this feeling of frustration and anger can go even deeper if people get the sense that they're enduring hardships, while other seemingly more privileged segments of the population are spared.

For example, it's more than possible that Canadians who are struggling right now to make ends meet or who have lost their jobs or seen their businesses fail, will react angrily when they see how other Canadians are still receiving full salaries while working comfortably from home, or worse, how some are not working at all and still getting paycheques.

To a lot of people this will seem unfair; this will generate resentment.

And I predict it won't be long before an opportunistic politician out there capitalizes on the rise of this negative emotion for political gain.

Certainly, I can foresee how a conservative politician, in the

name of equity, might soon push for an agenda that includes either a pay cut or a freeze in salaries not only for Members of Parliament, but also for all public servants.

Meanwhile, the political left can play this game too, but with different targets.

That's to say, socialists can now push for massive tax hikes on "the rich" so that more money can be redistributed to Canadians who are suffering economically.

My point is, both the right and the left can justify their policies by saying "We all need to make tough sacrifices for the common good."

Believe me, during these scary times, that's an emotional argument which will resonate.

So, if you're feeling miserable, don't worry, it's likely our politicians will try to make sure you soon have plenty of company.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

*The Hill Times*

# Opinion

## A healthy dose of Canadian content

Now is not the time to turn the lights off on one of our country's greatest accomplishments, the creation of a homegrown, diverse and internationally recognized film and TV industry. It's the time to look forward to a day when we can once again say, 'Lights, camera, action!' and 'Coming soon to a theatre near you.'

BY VALERIE CREIGHTON,  
CHRISTA DICKENSON,  
& CATHERINE TAIT

It has been nine weeks since the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to retreat into our homes, where the days blur from one to the next to the next. It's easy to be worn down by the negatives, and there are many.

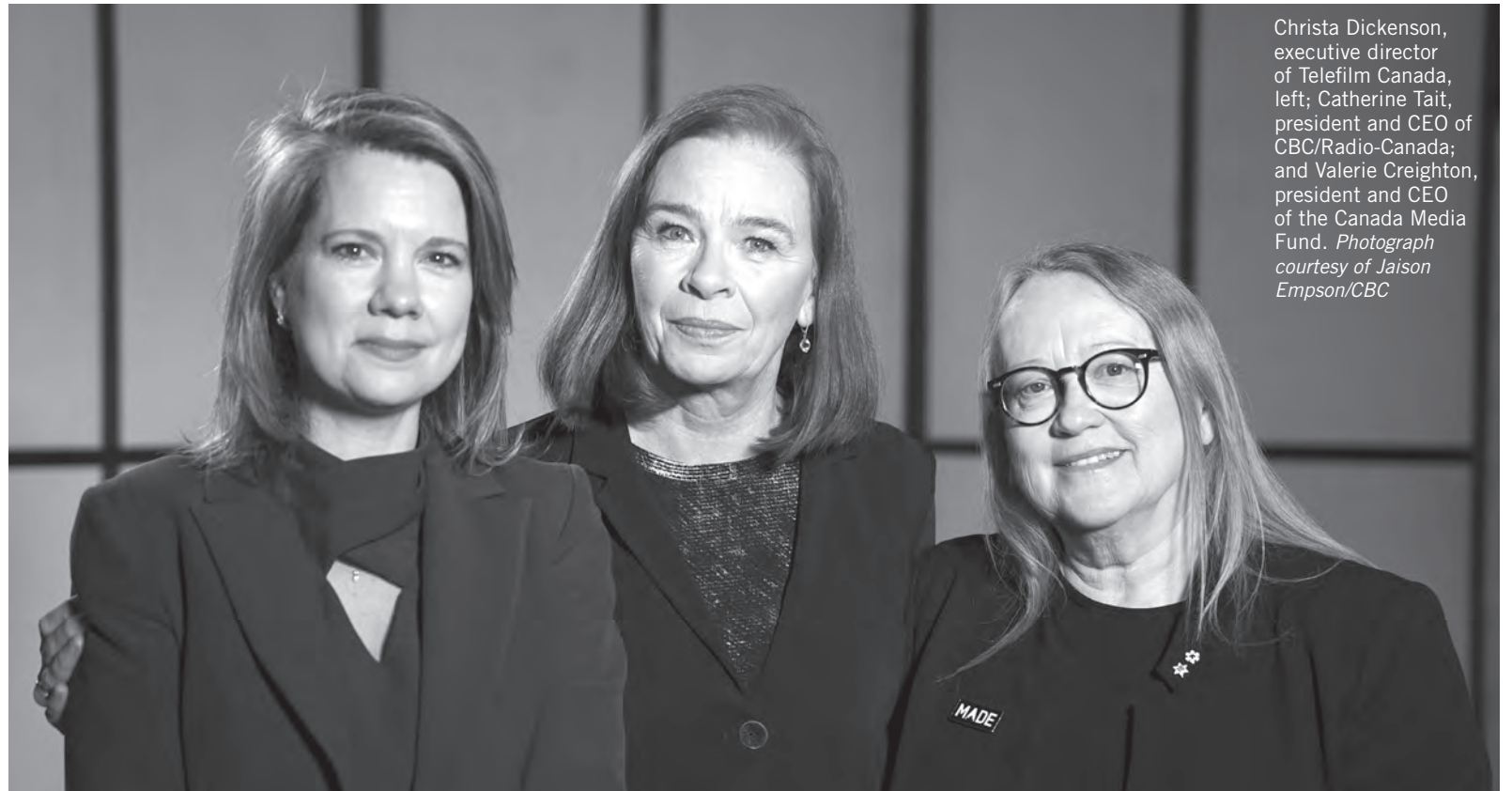
But there are positives, too. This has been a chance to pause, to re-evaluate our lives, and even to see things we may have taken for granted in a new light.

For us, one of the great salves of this pandemic has been the arts, more specifically the Canadian content that has brought us together virtually when we can't be together physically. It has stoked our imaginations, helped us learn, and taken our minds off reality for a couple of hours at a time.

Simply put, Canadian content reflects the world outside our doorsteps in a way other content can't, and right now it's that world outside our doorsteps that we miss the most.

Forced into isolation, Canadians have watched more TV shows and movies, more information programs, have played more videogames, listened to more podcasts and visited more news websites than ever before. Our broadcast networks have experienced record-breaking audiences, like the more than 12 million Canadians who tuned into *Stronger Together*, a national salute to front-line workers by Canadian talent from Buffy to Bieber.

Meanwhile, lovers of Canadian cinema have found new favourites, like Jeff Barnaby's brilliant *Blood Quantum*, a zombie movie with an Indigenous twist that



Christa Dickenson, executive director of Telefilm Canada, left; Catherine Tait, president and CEO of CBC/Radio-Canada; and Valerie Creighton, president and CEO of the Canada Media Fund. Photograph courtesy of Jaison Empson/CBC

had to forgo its theatrical release and was released early on digital when theatres shut down. The cast and crew tuned in online, hosting watch parties with viewers. Their story is similar to many filmmakers across the country who have had to adapt when the cinemas closed their doors.

to unexpected obstacles. The Toronto International Film Festival and Crave teamed up for Stay-at-Home Cinema, a selection of films curated by TIFF, complete with Q&As from filmmakers and special guests. Canadian videogame developer The Coalition (*Gears of War*) worked with the non-profit

and will not be able to return to work until it's safe.

The interruption and cancellation of productions globally has struck a brutal blow to the industry. And because our work is, by nature, collaborative, it will be difficult to fully rebound for many, many months.

at the Berlin Film Festival, *Kim's Convenience* was the most popular foreign show in South Korea, uplifting movies like *The Grizzlies*, the true story of how lacrosse saved the youth of a remote Arctic town, were reaching international audiences, the digital series *Hey Lady!*, with the fabulous Jayne Eastwood playing a crotchety, 75-year-old troublemaker, had its world premiere at Sundance, and audiences were discovering Jeanne Leblanc's *Les Nôtres* as it opened in the last few days of moviegoing.

We won't let a virus stop our momentum.

Decades of public policy in support of Canadian content has worked. Today, our industry is a major economic force, creating more than 180,000 jobs and contributing \$12.8-billion to the GDP in 2018-19. The stakes here are not just cultural, they are economic. So now is not the time to let our creators and producers down. We have built a vibrant ecosystem for content creation in Canada and it has held us together during these dark days.

Now is not the time to turn the lights off on one of our country's greatest accomplishments, the creation of a homegrown, diverse and internationally recognized film and TV industry. It's the time to look forward to a day when we can once again say, 'Lights, camera, action!' and 'Coming soon to a theatre near you.'

Valerie Creighton is president & CEO, Canada Media Fund. Christa Dickenson is executive director of Telefilm Canada. Catherine Tait is president & CEO, CBC/Radio-Canada.  
*The Hill Times*



**Let's do this:** Eugene Levy (Johnny Rose), Catherine O'Hara (Moir Rose), Daniel Levy (David Rose), and Annie Murphy (Alexis Rose), stars of the blockbuster hit TV series *Schitt's Creek* (2015-2020). Fans from around the world sought out Canadian content when, in week three of the global pandemic crisis, the touching finale of *Schitt's Creek* provided welcome solace, thanks in part to Dan Levy's visions of kindness and love, write Christa Dickenson, Catherine Tait, and Valerie Creighton.

Fans from around the world sought out Canadian content when, in week three of the crisis, the touching finale of *Schitt's Creek* provided welcome solace thanks in part to Dan Levy's vision of kindness and love. Speaking of Levy, he was a guest on the very first episode of Tom Power's *What're You At*, a brand-new talk show that premiered on CBC/CBC Gem in early April direct from the amiable Newfoundlander's living room and with a focus on community and culture during the pandemic.

Canadians have shown extraordinary creativity in response

Gamers Outreach organization to donate 200 gaming consoles to hospitalized kids locked down in their rooms. And Big Bad Boo Studios made their children's shows available for free.

These are just a few examples of how we have made lemonade from this dish of lemons.

As the heads of Telefilm Canada, Canada Media Fund and CBC/Radio-Canada—the leading audiovisual organizations, funders and commissioners of original Canadian content—we are painfully aware that many of the artists who made the content we're enjoying are not working

Like other industries hard hit by COVID-19, ours will need emergency support and initiatives to keep workers safe when things return to normal. We are committed to delivering this assistance, which includes \$88.8-million in emergency support via the Canada Media Fund and \$27-million by way of Telefilm. These funds are intended to keep our country's production companies from closing and people from losing their jobs.

Just prior to COVID-19 we were celebrating the success of Canadian series like *C'est comme ça que je t'aime* (*Happily Married*)

# Boiling frogs and tropical storms

Interviewing a couple of climate scientists recently, I saw for the first time a graph, modelling the future of a runaway warming world, that explicitly included a ‘death’ term. Mass death, that is. It made me feel a bit frog-like.



Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs

LONDON, U.K.—I’ve never really believed the story climate crusaders tell to explain why so many people don’t get the message. You know, the one where if you drop a frog into a pot of boiling water it will hop right out, whereas if you just turn the heat up slowly it won’t notice. It will stay there and boil to death.

I’ve never actually tried the experiment, but surely not even frogs are that stupid. And I’m pretty sure human beings aren’t.

So why didn’t the good people of Houston start campaigning against global heating after Hurricane Harvey in 2017 left a third of their city underwater?

Why didn’t the citizens of the Philippines demand that their country end its heavy reliance on burning coal for power after Ty-

phoon Haiyan killed at least 6,300 of them in 2013?

Why weren’t the survivors in the state of Orissa up in arms about India’s greenhouse gas emissions after the most intense cyclone in history killed 15,000 of them in 1999?

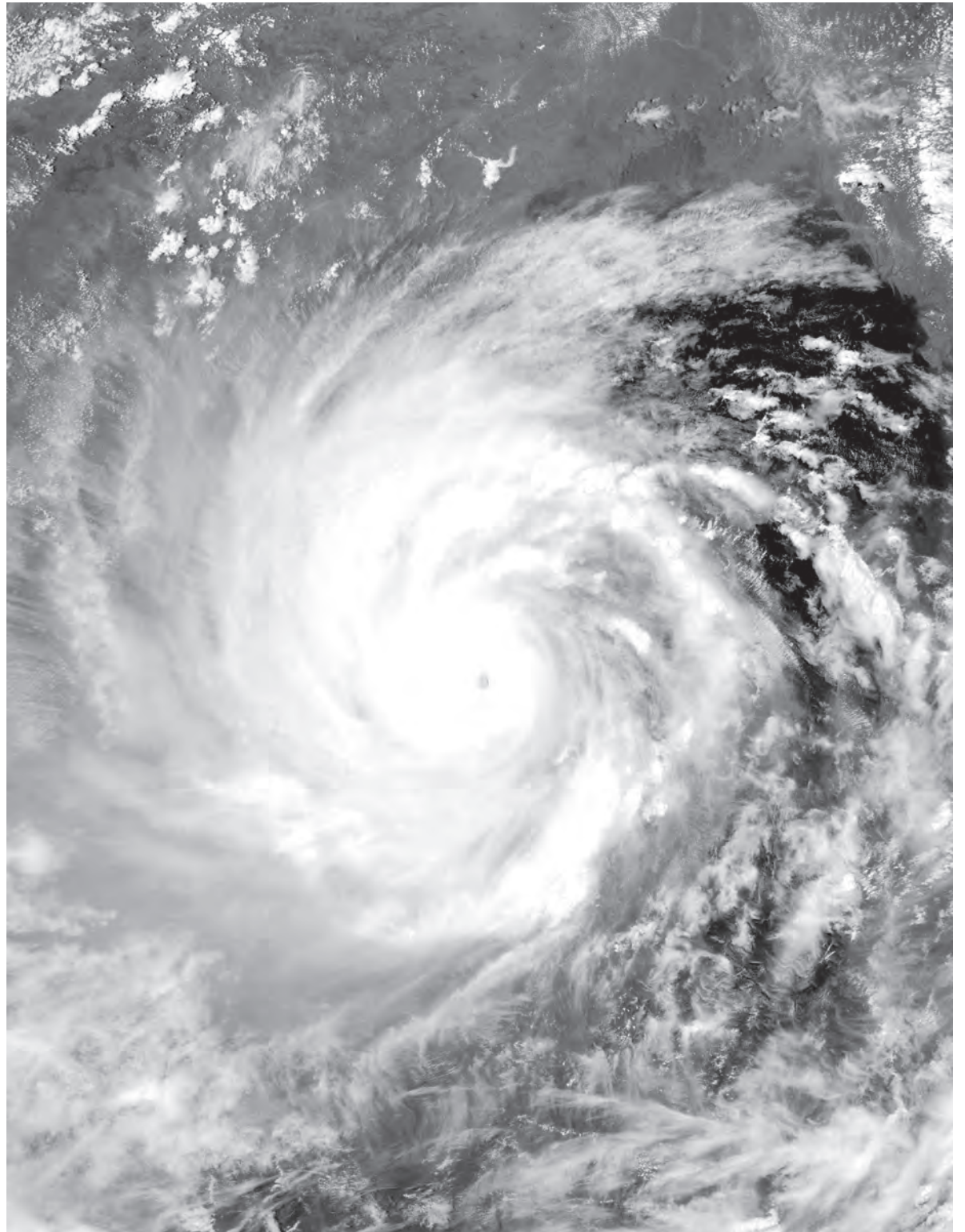
Well, partly because there were no data proving that the warming was making the tropical storms worse. Pretty well everybody in the meteorological trade and a great many lay people assumed that to be the case, but the evidence just wasn’t there. Until now—and as if to celebrate its belated arrival, here comes another monster storm.

On May 17 and May 18, super-cyclone Amphan spun up quickly over the warm waters of the Bay of Bengal, going from nothing much to a Category 5 tropical storm and adding 175 kph (110 mph) to its sustained wind speed in only 36 hours. India’s meteorologists are predicting that the surge of water when it hits the coast could be as high as three to five metres (10-16 feet).

Cyclones, typhoons, and hurricanes (all the same phenomenon, just in different oceans) are capricious. Their winds drop rapidly over land, and they are most destructive if they move slowly and loiter just off the coast. But at best, Amphan will be bad, and it could be very bad indeed.

People living around the Bay of Bengal know that the storms are getting worse: 140,000 people died when Cyclone Nargis struck the Irrawaddy Delta in Burma (Myanmar) in May 2008. So do people living around the Caribbean, on the U.S. eastern seaboard, and at the western end of typhoon alley (the Philippines, China, Korea, and Japan).

But they needed hard evidence, and now they have it. A study by researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, published on May 18



On May 17 and May 18, super-cyclone Amphan spun up quickly over the warm waters of the Bay of Bengal, going from nothing much to a Category 5 tropical storm and adding 175 kph (110 mph) to its sustained wind speed in only 36 hours. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

in the Proceedings of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, confirms that there is a direct link between warmer oceans, more water vapour in the air, and bigger storms.

Not more storms, but MUCH bigger. In fact, the likelihood that any given tropical storm will grow into a Category 3 or higher hurricane (or the equivalent in terms of cyclones and typhoons) is rising by eight per cent per decade.

Could it just be natural variation? James Kossin, lead author of the new study, doesn’t think so: “We have high confidence that there is a human fingerprint on these changes.” The data extend over four decades, which means the number of Category 3+ hurricanes has grown by a third since 1980.

It can only get worse, as will almost every other climate impact. The average global temperature now is 1.1 degrees C above the pre-industrial average, but there is already enough carbon dioxide in the air to give us another half degree Celsius of warming when it delivers its final load.

Never mind all the extra carbon dioxide that will be dumped into the atmosphere next month, next year, next decade. What will just the amount that we have already put there do to the tropical storms? The point will come, as with most of the other climate changes, when the local environment is no longer compatible with a normal human lifestyle.

For the 500 million people who live around the Bay of Bengal, the world’s biggest bay, the breaking

point may be massive cyclones and floods that are made worse by sea level rise. For others it may be intense heat and permanent drought. In some places, it will be famine. But at least a quarter of the world’s population is going to have to move in the next 50 years.

Where to? No idea. With almost eight billion people, the world is pretty full up already.

Interviewing a couple of climate scientists recently, I saw for the first time a graph, modelling the future of a runaway warming world, that explicitly included a “death” term. Mass death, that is. It made me feel a bit frog-like.

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is *Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)*. This column was released on May 20.

The Hill Times

## Opinion

# Economic recovery will be slow and difficult

Existing jobs and businesses can disappear quickly, but new businesses and jobs will take time to emerge. In the meantime, many Canadians will feel poorer. Not all the jobs lost will return—many won't. Not all companies can be saved—or should be.



David Crane

Canada &amp; the 21st Century

**T**ORONTO—The lockdown is easing. But the economic recovery will be slow and difficult. There will be a protracted period of adjustment before we have a healthy economy again because it has to be a different economy.

Existing jobs and businesses can disappear quickly, but new businesses and jobs will take time to emerge. In the meantime, many Canadians will feel poorer. Not all the jobs lost will return—many won't. Not all companies can be saved—or should be.

The challenges of economic recovery—and jobs recovery—are well set and

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Minister of Finance Bill Morneau, pictured March 18, 2020, at a press conference on the Hill. While the Trudeau government has been rightly focused on disaster relief from the pandemic, what we need now is a clear strategy for rebuilding the economy, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

put in a paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in the U.S., written by three economists—Jose Maria Barrero, Nicholas Bloom and Steven Davis. Its title is “COVID-19 is Also a Reallocation Shock.” The economists argue is that we face “a major reallocation shift” in jobs and businesses that is necessary for economic recovery. Businesses and jobs that were important before the pandemic may not be important post-pandemic while new post-pandemic businesses and jobs will take time to emerge.

To help, we should focus on measures that accelerate the transition to a different economy. New jobs will come from new activities. In the meantime, consumer and business uncertainty and fears of a future surge in COVID-19, until we get a confidence-building vaccine, will hold back consumer spending and business investment.

For Canada, this is a big challenge. Even before the pandemic we had a competitively weak economy. Per capita GDP growth, adjusted for inflation, has been growing at an average annual rate of just 1.0 per cent a year since 2010, compared to 2.4 per cent a year from 1997 to 2006.

Canada has not been paying its way in the world, which is reflected in a chronic current account deficit for just over a decade. Instead, we have been building up our foreign debt. We've had trade deficits since 2009 (in 2001 we had a merchandise trade surplus of \$70.1-billion; in 2019 we had a deficit of \$18.2-billion).

Our lack of competitiveness can be blamed in large part on the poor innovation performance by business. Multifactor productivity, which is a proxy for innovation, declined at an average annual rate of -0.6 per cent from 2000 to 2010 and rose at a small average annual growth rate of just 0.7 per cent from 2010 to 2017.

We cannot expect future job growth to match past job growth. Canadians will have to transition into new types of jobs. What's remarkable if we look back on net new job creation in Canada is how dependent we have become on two parts of the economy.

The first part is the largely public sector world of health and social assistance, education and public administration. These three sectors combined accounted for 34 per cent of the net new employment, or 1.4 million positions created between 2001 and 2019. The post-pandemic world is likely to see perhaps big changes in health and education while fiscal concerns will limit growth in public administration.

The second big group consists of those working in retail and wholesale trade or in food and accommodation. Employment in these sectors accounted for another 24.1 per cent of the net new employees, or 967,217 positions, between 2001 and 2019. Long-term job losses in these industries could be huge and changes significant.

We are weak in sectors of the economy that produce tradeable goods and services we can sell to the rest of the world. For example, manufacturing took a heavy hit over this 20-year period, with a loss of almost 400,000 positions, to just under 1.6 million jobs. And even in the mining and oil and gas sector, we added only 64,000 jobs, for a total of just over 200,000 positions by 2019.

Looking ahead, as the three economists point out in their NBER paper, the demand side of the economy, which reflects consumer spending and business investment, will be weak due to loss of income and profits and uncertainty about the future. This will discourage consumer spending and business investment. Weak business investment would also disrupt the supply side of the economy, with a negative impact on the economy's productive potential in the future, they warn.

A number of factors will impact the supply side of the economy, they stress, on top of the uncertainty about the outlook for future growth and product demand. COVID-19 has led to cutbacks in research projects in universities and industry, so that the future supply of new knowledge, the basis for new industries, products and start-ups, could slow, weakening prospects for future growth and productivity.

Moreover, creating new businesses or planning new products takes time. Time is needed to plan a new business or product line, to navigate regulatory and permitting processes, to arrange financing and make the capital investments to enable production, to hire employees, develop supply networks, establish distribution networks and build a customer base.

At the same time, consumer behaviour may have changed significantly, with a big impact on jobs. For example, the pandemic world has led to a significant increase in e-commerce, including food shopping. Businesses may decide they can do without much less travel while consumers will be inclined to reduce travel, impacting airlines, hotels, taxis and restaurants. And many marginal businesses able to survive in the pre-pandemic world, are likely to disappear in the post-pandemic world.

As Bank of Canada Deputy Governor Tim Lane acknowledged in a recent speech, the adjustments brought on by the pandemic lockdown “are likely to result in damage to Canada's productive capacity that may be profound and long-lasting.” Businesses with negative cash flow may not survive. Households will struggle after many weeks of lost income. A lot of wealth has been lost due to the stock market crash.

While the Trudeau government has been rightly focused on disaster relief from the pandemic, what we need now is a clear strategy for rebuilding the economy.

David Crane can be reached at [crane@interlog.com](mailto:crane@interlog.com).

*The Hill Times*

# Politics



Quebec Senator Pierre Dalphond, right, pictured on Dec. 12, 2019, at Qatar's National Day reception at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa with Homoud Al-Saaide, the Embassy of Qatar's counsellor and chargé d'affaires. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

## Dalphond's exit from ISG watershed moment for Trudeau's experiment with Senate modernization

The point of institutional reform was not to continue the rule of fear and favour in the Senate, in forcing through decisions and doling out the goodies from the top. That is not reform. That is regression.



Michael Harris

Harris

**H**ALIFAX—*Here Come the Judge* was an iconic song in 1968 by the Magistrates, featuring the voice of Jean Hillary.

*There Goes the Judge* is the 2020 adaptation, Canadian Senate-style.

The judge, (former judge) in question is Pierre J. Dalphond. His departure from the Independent Senate Group marks a watershed moment for Justin Trudeau's experiment with Senate modernization.

Senator Dalphond was appointed to the Senate in 2018, sporting stellar credentials: brilliant lawyer, graduate degree in philosophy, politics and law from Oxford University in the U.K., and a former justice of the Quebec Superior Court.

Festooned with public honours, he has been awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the Governor General's Academic Medal. With a global reputation, he has been involved in the training of judges in several countries, including China, Brazil, and Rwanda. You get the picture; big brain, lots to offer.

Since Dalphond only decided to let his name stand for an appointment to the Red Chamber

after he became convinced that Trudeau really wanted an independent body, his departure for the Progressive Senate Group (PSG), was interesting. Had something gone wrong with Senate reform, which the ISG is supposed to epitomize?

The best way to find out was to ask him, so I did. Here is what he had to say about the reasons he left the ISG:

"On March 11, ISG and Conservative leaderships suspended the long-protected Senators' right to keep their committee seats if they leave a group—as a check against the undue centralization of power in Senate leaderships. They replaced it by a temporary rule that states that group members lose access to committee seats if they leave. Certainly, I do not agree with this rule change, brought without debate and transparency, as a matter of principle. In other words, like the old parties, the ISG wants to rely on fear and favour. This is not reform."

Was the current leadership of the ISG part of the reason for the Senator's departure?

"The ISG with 48 members is a big organization that has grown up in a very short period of time.

Like any organization having a rapid growth, it reacted by adding structures and more top-down decision-making processes. I prefer to work in a smaller group premised on the equality of Senators with an open and collegial approach to discuss issues ... it is interesting that the Canadian Senators Group (CSG) has put in its constituting document that its membership shall never exceed 25 in order to preserve collegiality and equality among all the members."

Has the "new" Senate become an impediment to the government's agenda?

"The Independent Senate must find a balance in respecting democratic will and doing its constitutional job of review, including to represent regional interests, protect minorities and safeguard fundamental rights. I don't see myself mostly as opposing the government or supporting it. It has to be the same job whatever the government of the day is. This role requires a measure of restraint in bringing in amendments, perhaps a bit more than we saw in the last Parliament. Last Parliament, there were also a few close calls on Senate overreach, such as the near defeat of the electorally mandated North Pacific oil tanker ban (C-48), a bill supported by all parties in the House of Commons, except the Conservatives."

Although Dalphond said he believes that the shift to more independent Senators has resulted in "excellent" policy results for Canadians, with successful amendments to one-third of government bills, he raised this red flag: "However, it is important to remember that there were incredible amounts of Conservative obstruction of both govern-

ment and private members' bills last Parliament in the Senate, that prevented amendments and the adoption of bills, including 15 private members' bills passed by the House of Commons."

So in leaving the ISG, why did Dalphond choose the PSG as his new affiliation?

"I am attracted to working with a smaller and collegial group, where there is no whip and every member remains independent to draw his/her conclusions, which reminds me of the professional culture from my days as an appeal judge. In addition, I really like the Progressives' philosophy of a group that defines itself by an Algonquin word 'Mamiosewin'—a meeting place."

Dalphond says he is looking forward to "learning from" other members of the PSG, including two of the Famous 6 Indigenous Women, who helped end historic inequalities, as well as from Peter Harder, and Patricia Bovey, who also recently joined Senator Jane Cordy's group. And then there is the PSG's leader herself: "I also really like what I have heard from the Progressives' leader' Senator Jane Cordy. She brings a positive, constructive, and forward-looking approach to the Senate, and I think she'll be a great contribution to the house leaders' table, including in fostering collegial dynamics between groups, now that the Progressives have official status."

With prominent Senators leaving the ISG, is that a sign that the dominant group in the Senate has stepped beyond the traditional role of the Red Chamber and become too activist and authoritarian?

"All Senators are independent, and I respect their freedom to use the platform of the position to facilitate or influence on specific issues ignored by political parties. However, I do think senators' primary focus is providing federal legislative review and less partisan oversight of government actions and spending. In fulfilling this role, we need to have a lot of respect for electoral will and the House of Commons, particularly its primacy of financial matters, as well as provincial, territorial, and Indigenous jurisdictions. The Senate still has work to do in demonstrating the institution's public value and earning Canadians' trust. For my part I think senators should be somewhat cautious about how we spend our collective institutional capital."

Dalphond is too diplomatic to say it, but the flight of talent from the largest Senate group raises this as yet unanswered question: how long can Senator Yuan Pau Woo, a political neophyte, remain in the job?

After all, the point of institutional reform was not to continue the rule of fear and favour in the Senate, in forcing through decisions and doling out the goodies from the top.

That is not reform. That is regression.

*Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist. The Hill Times*

## Opinion

# What will terrorism look like post-COVID?

Like COVID-19, terrorism is scary enough. It would be a bad idea to overstate the impact of those who intend to do us harm in the furtherance of an ideology whether during these trying times or on any other occasion.



Phil Gurski

National Security

OTTAWA—As we continue to live through the novel coronavirus, there is certainly a lot to worry about. Will I get the illness? Will someone in my family? Will one of them die? What about my job? Will I be able to pay the rent/mortgage? When will life return to normal? What will the new normal even be?

One thing I would imagine most Canadians are not so concerned about during this difficult time is terrorism. After all, we are relatively immune from this scourge, even if it does cross our newsfeeds a fair bit. At least when it does transpire, it does so “over there” in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, etc.

Suffice to say that average Canadians do not have to obsess about terrorism as this is what we have agencies like CSIS (my former employer) and the RCMP for. Counterterrorism is a big part of both organizations’ mandates, and they do a very good job at identifying and neutralizing the infrequent plots that do develop in our land.

But what about elsewhere? How is terrorism faring right now, in the midst of the global pandemic? The answer to that question depends a lot on how you see terrorism (i.e., as a crime like many others or as an existential threat). There’s an unfolding debate on whether it is indeed on the upswing, especially in the aforementioned countries.

It is far too early to say that terrorists are “taking advantage” of COVID-19 to up their tempo. I am aware of no study that has gathered enough data over the last three months to state unequivocally that this is actually happening, let alone any effort to compare the number of recent attacks in comparison to a similar period last year or the year before. Good analysis requires facts, not conjectures, and we will simply have to be patient.

Counterintuitively perhaps, there are good reasons to expect a downturn, if even only temporarily, in terrorist activity. Here are some of those reasons:

- Terrorists are human after all, and they, too, can contract the disease. Early on, groups like the Islamic State, or ISIS, were actually passing on health tips to their members and wannabes;
- As noted by U.S. terrorism scholar Brian Jenkins, terrorists “do not want a lot of people dead; they want a lot of people watching.” In an era of everything COVID, who is paying attention?;



A U.S. Special Forces Soldier, pictured Sept. 5, 2016, attached to Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, waits for nightfall prior to starting a nighttime operation. Afghan special forces and Green Berets partnered for a month-long operation. *Photograph courtesy of U.S. Army*

- And, as social distancing continues and major events and gatherings are suspended, terrorists do not have the same opportunities to kill masses of people. This may impel them to put off their plans;
- Declines in air travel and other ways of getting around mean that terrorists cannot get from A to B as easily as they once did. This also has implications for supply chains (such as weapons).

Note that I am not saying we will not see terrorism here in the coming months.

Terrorist cells have been, and can continue to be, local, as we have seen here in Canada. Physical distancing may ease off soon leading some terrorists to carry out their plans. In addition, COVID-19 has affected everyone, including security intelligence and law enforcement agencies. This implies that there are fewer protectors to keep us safe. The hit to our economy may have longer term effects as we may not be in a fiscal position to pay for those who disrupt terrorism.

Another important aspect of this is the problem of what we call far-right extremism. The pandemic is bringing out the worst in anti-immigrant, racist, and fascist groups, which seem to be keen to both blame others for the disease as well as the government for the shutdown. Many countries are seeing demonstrations demanding a reopening of the economy and these events are infiltrated by the far right.

And yet, we cannot equate terrorist “chatter” (online messaging) with terrorist action. In my experience, there really is no relationship between the two. Most of those who post material of a threatening nature are posers with neither the capability nor the intent to plan, let alone carry out, a terrorist act. Some can, but not the vast majority.

To date, crime is down, not up, since COVID-19 came to our shores. Experts believe this is for many of the same reasons cited earlier. Will this continue? I have no idea nor does anyone else. Like COVID-19, terrorism is scary enough. It would be a bad idea to overstate the impact of those who intend to do us harm in the furtherance of an ideology whether during these trying times or on any other occasion.

Phil Gurski worked for 32 years in the Canadian intelligence community, including 15 years in counter terrorism at CSIS.

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# Shifting gears in the fight against COVID-19

There has been a lot of speculation about whether Canadians are looking for a more interventionist government because of the events of the past two months. We do not find that to be the case. Canadians remain committed to a strong, free-enterprise economy with an active government holding business to account and pitching in as needed.



Greg Lyle

Opinion

**V**ANCOUVER—As the new COVID-19 case-counts begin to decline in Canada, the immediate challenge facing the federal government will shift from health care to economic recovery. Canadians are happy with their governments to date, and surprisingly confident in their personal finances. But fears are growing about sectors that remain closed or are struggling with new costs. And Canadians are struggling with barriers to return to work, according to our online survey of 1,973 Canadians, 18 years or older, conducted between May 15 and May 19.

As governments develop policies to deal with these challenges, they do so in a surprisingly stable values environment. Despite the dramatic changes we have experienced over the past few months,

Canadians remain committed to a free enterprise-driven economy with government helping business and holding them to account.

## Where do we stand?

Canadians remain confident in their personal finances while rallying to governments.

As we enter the third month of life with COVID-19, all levels of government find themselves in a strong position. A significant majority of Canadians in every corner of the country approve of their government's response to COVID-19 so far. The most common response to the question of whether governments are moving too quickly or too slowly in easing restrictions on business and social contact is that they are getting it right.

Looking close to home, our tracking shows that Canadians' sense of personal financial confidence has bounced back after an initial dip at the start of the outbreak. Digging deeper into previous surveys suggests this may be due to the satisfaction Canadians feel towards the initial emergency income and wage support programs.

However, while Canadians are in good spirits following the initial onslaught of COVID-19, longer-term economic worries are starting to grow. Almost half of Canadians feel we are headed for a severe recession with most of the rest expecting a mild recession. Workers' confidence in their ability to find another job has dropped to levels last seen during the 2008-9 recession. Canadians are far more concerned that their employer will not survive today than they were in the last recession, although that fear was even higher in the early days of the outbreak than it is now.

## The policy playing field

The dramatic events of the past few months have not shifted Canadians' views on economic policy.

There has been a lot of speculation about whether Canadians are looking for a more interventionist government because of the events of the past two months. We do not find that to be the case. Canadians remain committed to a strong, free-enterprise economy with an active government holding business to account and pitching in as needed.

1. Canadians remain committed to free enterprise and



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured May 7, 2020, at that day's press conference at Rideau Cottage in Ottawa. As the new COVID-19 case counts begin to decline in Canada, the immediate challenge facing the federal government will shift from health care to economic recovery. Canadians are happy with their governments to date and surprisingly confident in their personal finances. But fears are growing about sectors that remain closed or struggling, writes Greg Lyle. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the profit motive as the engine that drives our economy. More than half (54 per cent) agree that overall, our free enterprise system works pretty well with only 19 per cent disagreeing. Even more (61 per cent) say the profits a company can earn should be as large as they can fairly earn, not limited by law. Both attitudes are marginally higher now than they were in February. Our core tracking on the trade-offs between equal opportunity (56 per cent) versus redistributing wealth (34 per cent) and whether profit teaches the value of hard

work (49 per cent) or brings out the worst (36 per cent) is stable as well.

2. Canadians want governments to play a strong role in the economy. Two thirds (67 per cent) believe we need a strong central government to handle modern economic problems. Just over half (55 per cent) want government to be an active partner to help business compete in the world. One thing that has changed in the past three months is that fewer people agree that most government economic programs do more harm than good (dropping from 32 per cent to 27 per cent) while those who disagree have risen from 29 per cent to 36 per cent.

3. When it comes to generating economic growth, Canadians think business should take the lead. Just over half (56 per cent) say let business have the lead on economic growth, just 26 per cent would have government lead. This has shifted more towards business over the spring.

4. No blank cheque for business. We still see a healthy skepticism towards business. Just over 60 per cent in both February and May said tax breaks for business come at their expense. Half (51 per cent) say government regulation of business is necessary to keep industry from becoming too powerful. A plurality (46 per cent) say governments have gone too far in allowing companies to operate with minimal regulation and oversight. However, these numbers remained stable over the spring, so the controversies around care homes and food-processing plants have not created a bigger problem for business as whole.

5. Give priority to grow our local companies, but do not abandon trade. Anyone who has done a political poll on the trade versus domestic trade-off will not be surprised to learn that Canadians favour replacing imports over increasing exports and encouraging local companies to grow over attracting foreign invest-

ments. However, when we track Canadians views on trade, only 23 per cent believe free trade is a dangerous threat to jobs while the percentage feeling free trade is a good way to create economic growth has grown from 56 per cent to 61 per cent since February.

6. The deficit still a limited concern. Four in ten Canadians say they have not heard anything about the deficit over the past few weeks. The deficit is a top concern for just a third of Canadians. Similarly, when governments make spending decisions, just 33 per cent say they should give priority to ability to pay over the need for services (57 per cent).

## So Where Does That Leave Government

Governments enter this new phase of our battle with COVID-19 in a strong position. People generally support the action so far. But our polling shows there are new challenges emerging:

- We need to do more to help sectors that remain closed;
- We need to do more to help sectors struggling with new costs;
- We need to manage the disincentives to work within the CERB;
- We need to improve access and deal with safety concerns in childcare and education.

The policies that will work in the future are not likely to be policies that depart strongly from the past. In our value clusters, the median voter looks like a Business Liberal. Someone who sees business as the driver of economic growth and government as a regulator and facilitator. A government that delivers the sort of policies we might expect from Paul Martin is unlikely to go far wrong.

Greg Lyle is founder and president of Innovative Research Group Inc. Innovative Research conducted the online survey of 1,973 Canadians, 18 years or older, between May 15 and May 19. *The Hill Times*

“The policies that will work in the future are not likely to be policies that depart strongly from the past. In our value clusters, the median voter looks like a Business Liberal. Someone who sees business as the driver of economic growth and government as a regulator and facilitator. A government that delivers the sort of policies we might expect from Paul Martin is unlikely to go far wrong.”

# Politics

## There's a federal Conservative leadership election on, right?

The party seems to be stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, it desperately needs a new leader. On the other hand, the prospects in front of the membership, never too exciting to begin with, seem particularly bland and unpalatable right now. It's a tough gig being in opposition at this time.



Menachum Shur

Opinion

**N**EW YORK CITY—As outgoing Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer fumbles his way through his last few months, particularly with his response to the coronavirus, and the Conservative leadership race ground to its May 15 membership signup deadline, many Conservatives are feeling quite frustrated and gloomy.

The party seems to be stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand,



As outgoing Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer, pictured Feb. 20, 2020, fumbles his way through his last few months, particularly with his response to the coronavirus, and the Conservative leadership race ground to its May 15 membership signup deadline, many Conservatives are feeling quite frustrated and gloomy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

it desperately needs a new leader. On the other hand, the prospects in front of the membership, never too exciting to begin with, seem particularly bland and unpalatable right now. It's a tough gig being in opposition right now.

There is no doubt that those who are in power during this crisis—and are able to rise to the challenge—are ennobled in a way that is not possible in ordinary times. A similar phenomenon is playing itself out south of the border, where governors like Andrew Cuomo of New York and Gavin

Newsom of California have seen their stars rise, stepping up to the plate in shoring up their states' medical supply, explaining the (sometimes quite awful) situation straightforwardly, and generally reassuring their worried constituents with their calm, responsible handling of the crisis. To many, they now seem, especially Cuomo, to epitomize good leadership.

Contrast this to U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, who, stuck in his basement, has had to make do with taking low-resolution-video potshots at U.S. President Donald Trump, and has strengthened the impression that he is out of touch and a man whose time has passed. Even with Trump fumbling epically, and emphatically not rising to the challenge, Biden does not seem to have inversely gained the respect of the nation.

In fact, some Democrats are openly (and many more not so openly) calling for Cuomo to be the party's standard bearer in November.

Even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, many Conservatives must quietly admit to themselves, has managed to come across as decently competent—and perhaps more importantly—decent, during the last two months.

All of this begs the question, where does that leave Conservatives right now. With a leadership election looming, for better or for worse, is there any point to it anyway? Is there anything that a leader of the opposition can do? And there are broader questions. What is the future of conservatism in Canada? What is the future of the Conservative Party in Canada, already in flux before the current crisis? What shape will the Conservative Party take going forward? There is no doubt that this time we are living through will change the face of the world and our nation. Many of the old assumptions are dead. Can Conservatives adapt? Is conservatism even adaptable?

The fact of the matter is that profound changes are underway, and the political ramifications will not be fully felt, or understood, for years and even decades to come.

What Conservatives should expect from their leadership during this time, and what Conservative leadership contenders should be doing, is setting out a thoughtful agenda for the future. What is their vision of the country on “the day after?” What lessons have they learned?

Anyone who has not changed during this time, who has not questioned and re-evaluated some of their own treasured assumptions, who stands inflexibly by their old ideas and dogmas, is simply exhibiting their own ignorance and their own personal and intellectual calcification and decay. (They are also, contrary to what they might tell themselves, not conservative in the small-c sense).

And any leadership contender who aspires to be leader of the party, and one day prime minister, must be able to articulate, at least in broad terms, how they intend to lead the country. Yes, they need to offer constructive criticism of the government response where appropriate (and in fact the opposition has in a number of instances done just that, with real improvements in the aid packages that have come out).

But they also need to start talking about the lessons they've learned from all this. There is clearly, for example, a great recalibration going on in how we think of global supply chains, domestic manufacturing and agriculture, resource management, and social welfare programs. Some of these issues were already beginning to gain steam before COVID-19, and have been accelerated even more. Others are wholesale changes.

All this is fertile territory for any aspiring leader, and voters are receptive right now. People are acutely aware that this is a time of change and, although some of the candidates don't seem to believe it, real thoughtful ideas can actually gain them credit with the Conservative membership, and, ultimately, with the Canadian public at large.

The good news is there is still time. There is still time to excite the minds of the voters. There is still more than three months until ballots need to be mailed in. There is still time for real discussion on the country of tomorrow and the crucial role Conservatives must play in that country.

It is also good news for the party, though not for the country, that Trudeau, although he has responded adequately to the immediate needs of the crisis, does not quite seem to grasp its long-term implications.

Even before the virus hit, his posture towards China left much to be desired. He now—belatedly—joins the U.S. call for the WHO to invite Taiwan as an observer, something that Conservatives have been calling for for years. But this is not a real change in his approach to China and, on the more fundamental questions of globalism, he has shown no signs of adjustment.

In many ways it seems to be more of a generational than a partisan divide, with the younger generation taking for granted some of the changes I've been speaking of, while the older generation—both Trudeau and those vying to oppose him—not quite having gotten there yet. But the Conservative Party is at its core, a natural vehicle for many of these changes. Let's hope the driver of the vehicle knows how to steer.

Menachum Shur, who lives in Thornhill, Ont., is not a member of the Conservative Party but did volunteer with Conservative MP Peter Kent's campaign in the last federal election.

*The Hill Times*

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# A digital vaccination scar for the 21st century

If a vaccine for the coronavirus is found, we will need to have effective systems in place to identify those who are immunized. Our existing system of largely paper records will not be adequate.



Kumanan Wilson

Opinion

In the 1800s, smallpox ravaged the world. Fortunately, a vaccine had been developed that could protect individuals. This

vaccine left a scar at the site of injection and identified the individuals as “immune.”

As we look towards the future of the COVID-19 pandemic, unless the virus burns out or an effective therapeutic intervention becomes available, the only way out of our current situation will be immunity—either natural or induced by a vaccine. If so, we will need to create a digital proof of immunity, a digital version of the smallpox scar, to help society to return to normal.

Ideally, a safe and effective vaccine will be available in the new year. If this is the case, we will need to have effective systems in place to identify those who are immunized. Our existing system of largely paper records will not be adequate.

Here is how such a system should work.

Most provincial and territorial governments have repositories of immunization data. For the eventual COVID-19 vaccine, they will need to ensure that this data is accurate and that the individual identified did, indeed, receive the vaccine. The government could then issue a verified credential, an immunization badge, which contains an easily scannable barcode or QR code, through government portals. This can be consumable by third-party apps



A digital solution for tracking who has been vaccinated for COVID-19, when a vaccine is developed, will have security and privacy risks that a paper record won't have. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

or be downloaded similar to a boarding pass.

To enter into certain venues, such as sporting events or for international travel, the digital badge will have to be presented. The barcode will be scanned and matched to an individual's ID card, just as we do for boarding passes. This will permit entry or travel. Exemptions will exist for medical reasons.

I expect our tolerance for philosophical exemptions will be much lower given the consequences on both health and the economy if outbreaks re-emerge.

Ideally, an international standard for this vaccination will be set under the International Health Regulations, which already provide

guidance for Yellow Fever vaccine certificates (Annex 7). This guidance needs to take into account the digitization of these certificates.

More controversial is the issuance of digital badges for natural immunity confirmed by antibody testing. The science and ethics of this solution are not mature at present, but that should not preclude us from considering this option.

As for immunization, antibody data from credentialed labs could be stored in immunity repositories and digital badges issued if a threshold of immunity is considered to be achieved. The most likely initial application of this solution will be front-line workers where, if we are confident natural

immunity provides protection, we can create systems ensuring certain percentages of front-line workers are identified to be immune. This will create a form of “shield immunity” disrupting the transmission of the virus and protecting front-line workers and the people for whom they care.

A digital solution will have security and privacy risks that a paper record won't have. However, a digital solution will be agile and adaptable in a way paper records cannot be. For example, if scientific evidence emerges on waning immunity, digital badges can be revoked. Decentralized ledgers (think blockchain) can facilitate the movement of this information across borders and between institutions.

As we enter into the next stage of this pandemic, we must start taking steps to ensure we have the right technology in place when science provides us with solutions. I have confidence that the combination of science and technology with ethical and legal oversight can accelerate our return to normal.

*Kumanan Wilson is a physician at the Ottawa Hospital and a member of the University of Ottawa Centre for Health Law, Policy and Ethics. He has been a consultant to the World Health Organization on the IHR.*

*The Hill Times*

# Canada's COVID-19 jobs recovery hinges on more insightful data

Insightful data from machine learning and other data-mining techniques have opened new approaches to documenting the skill requirements of jobs, offering Canadians invaluable access to emerging labour market trends.



Steven Tobin

Opinion

The months of physical distancing are beginning to pay off.

Governments have begun to set in motion plans to reopen their economies. While our collective attention must remain focused on the health and well-being of Canadians, it is undeniable that we are in the midst of a job crisis unlike any Canada has seen before. Three million people have lost their jobs in two months, according to the Labour Force Survey for April. That's more job losses than the past three recessions combined, and in a fraction of the time. We're likely not done yet.

While the high percentage of job losses from temporary layoffs gives us some hope of slowly returning to our previous jobs, we must confront the reality that Canada's job market may never be the same again. Many will not find their job waiting for them. Some businesses will be forced to close their doors for good. Entire sectors such as tourism and hospitality have been turned upside down. There is no blueprint for employment recovery from COVID-19. Generally, governments have done well in addressing the multifaceted dimensions of this crisis in a timely way. These efforts must continue as the economic fallout from the crisis unfolds in the weeks and months ahead.



Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough says the government is looking to help retrain unemployed Canadians so they can be deployed in long-term care facilities that have been hit hard by the pandemic. *The Hill Times* file photograph by Andrew Meade

Yet, as with past disruptions, we should remind ourselves that new opportunities will sprout from the ashes of economic turmoil. Entirely new ways of doing business and working will generate jobs that didn't exist before. The demands of old jobs are already shifting in new and uncertain ways. The road ahead will be bumpy, but we have a tremendous opportunity to plan and think now about how to ensure a full and inclusive employment recovery.

As restrictions ease, and people begin to re-enter the labour

force, many will be looking for additional training to upskill and reskill. How do we point them in the right direction to meet the new skill and other work requirements of our changed economy?

First, we need a better understanding of what these new realities could be. In this case, pinpointing with surgical precision what the near- and medium-term economic landscape of Canada will look like will not be helpful. Too often, our insights into the future assume a simple and single trajectory, leaving us unprepared for any deviation from the expected course. A more effective solution is to provide more objective data and insights—quantitative and qualitative—with assumptions around different possible economic scenarios. This will help prepare us for some level of uncertainty in the job market that lies ahead.

Second, we need to develop a clearer picture of the skills requirements of these new job realities. That means working harder to understand employers' needs and how these change in near real time. Insightful data from machine learning and other data-mining techniques have opened new approaches to documenting the skill requirements of jobs, offering Canadians invaluable

access to emerging labour market trends.

Third, workers will need support in evaluating how their existing skills can be adapted to new and different fields and what entirely new skills might be needed. Schools and training institutions must be provided with the necessary insights to help Canadians effectively transition back to meaningful employment. This will be urgently needed to support workers most affected by this job crisis and position them to take part in its recovery.

How do we start thinking and planning for this now to give Canadians the best chance of recovery? Governments and policymakers must invest in ongoing, objective labour market research and data analysis to shed light on the new normal. COVID-19 has exposed our vulnerabilities. Canadians must be able to access comprehensive, unbiased information and insights to ensure that their decisions are well informed in pursuit of investment opportunities and jobs that align with their preferences, qualifications, and skills.

The speed of change at which the labour market will shift in new directions presents an unprecedented challenge. Canada's current and future workforce needs more insightful data, and they need it soon to navigate this transition. Otherwise, the current job crisis could balloon into a social crisis as well.

*Steven Tobin is the executive director of Labour Market Information Council.*

*The Hill Times*

## Opinion

# What would an ethical recovery look like?

Times of great disruption in history have often birthed life-changing moments when once-cherished dreams have unfolded into new realities. Developing a just and 'green' recovery strategy could very well be the moral challenge of our age.



Joe Gunn

Opinion

OTTAWA—Canadians are not accustomed to Googling the websites of their various houses of worship for scintillatingly brilliant advice on how to design vibrant economies. That might be as useful as asking the current denizen of the White House for clues on hairstyling.

But if faith communities are places where adherents go to have their moral and ethical batteries re-charged, what advice is currently being offering to a Canadian public under lockdown, slowly emerging into a future masked with uncertainty?

Times of great disruption in history have often birthed life-changing moments when once-cherished dreams have unfolded into new realities. Developing a just and "green" recovery strategy could very well be the moral challenge of our age.

Will North American religious leadership emerge to guide us with solid ethical principles on which to base the emerging "new-normal" Canadian society?

Pope Francis is one leader who is unafraid to call on our better instincts, even while surrounded by suffering in the European country hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Pope wrote shortly after Easter, "This may be the time to consider a universal basic wage."

In Canada, 43 Lutheran and Anglican bishops (notably unaccompanied by their more timid Catholic counterparts) took a cue from the Roman Pope on May 3, calling upon Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to immediately institute a "guaranteed basic income for all." The bishops wrote, "We would extend and amplify the Pontiff's remarks: 'This is the time.'" According to these bishops, "GBI represents a positive nation-building policy option for today and for tomorrow. It can become the great, transformational legacy, left by this government, which arises from this pandemic, paralleling the great social gains which arose during and after earlier conflicts: public health insurance and equal rights."

In terms of the "green" recovery Canada also needs, a new coalition of faith communities was launched on Earth Day, April 22. Called "For the Love of Creation: A Faith-based Initiative for Climate Justice," the organization plans to educate congregations and to lobby the federal government on climate change policy.

An immediate action growing out of this resolve is an initiative called "Catholics United for Climate Action." The organizers are principally members of Catholic religious communities, predominantly religious women.

Last September, 64 congregations of Canadian nuns signed a declaration calling for more federal government ambition on climate action. The sisters are not waiting around for their male counterparts to approve or join them—that's clearly part of "the old normal."

Catholics for Climate Action have assembled hundreds of signatures in a letter to Trudeau, to be released on May 25 (the fifth anniversary of the Pope's first-ever encyclical on the environment.) They reject bailouts of the oil and gas industries, instead urging government to "implement the commitment to table and then pass in Parliament the Just Transition Act. This should include strengthening measures to provide oil and gas workers with direct immediate relief and opportunities for training, education and employment in existing low-carbon sectors."

The passage of legislation—which died in the Senate last year—to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is also a priority. Signatories call for increased investment in renewable energy, public transit, building retrofits, and "investing in a circular economy that achieves significant reduction of plastic waste."

Their call for change in Canada does not ignore international solidarity, either. The letter reiterates long-

standing demands for multilateral debt cancellation for countries of the global south, now struggling to meet the challenges of the pandemic as well as the climate crisis. In short, signatories are "urging the Canadian government to join this commitment and take immediate concrete actions to flatten the curve of global warming and move towards a just and sustainable future."

Tough decisions lie before Canadians as we emerge from the COVID pandemic. How will we ensure the future economic cure does not become worse than the structural disease that left so many, so vulnerable? What are we willing to let go, in order to refuse to return to the previous "climate emergency"? When a vaccine is discovered, who deserves to be first in line? And will we be willing to share life-saving measures with those unable to pay in the global south? Will we erect new borders for undocumented migrants lining up to try to save the lives of their families? Will today's physical distancing morph into tomorrow's moral distancing from the vulnerable?

Will faith communities be active participants in shaping the new ethical normal?

Joe Gunn is the executive director of the Centre Oblat: A Voice for Justice at St. Paul University in Ottawa.

The Hill Times

## Ontario court's failure to ensure safe, equitable access to sterile needles a blow to prisoners' rights

A properly designed program would provide prisoners with meaningful access to sterile injection equipment to reduce their risk of infection while also minimizing the risk of accidental needle-stick injuries to staff.

groundbreaking case for prisoners' rights in Canada. The judge missed the opportunity to ensure prisoners' right to effective access to sterile injection equipment, a basic and evidence-based harm reduction measure that is essential health care for people who use drugs.

This decision, which found the flaws in the current needle-exchange program were not unconstitutional, isn't just bad news for prisoners. As the COVID-19 pandemic shines a spotlight on the miserable state of health care in Canada's prisons, it's more evident than ever that prison health is public health. Being sentenced to prison shouldn't mean being sentenced to preventable illness. Injection drug use happens on the inside, and without easy, confidential access to sterile injection equipment, prisoners in Canada are still at high risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne infections. And when they are released, needless infections acquired in prison follow them back to their communities.

This is why the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network launched a lawsuit against the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), alongside three other HIV organizations and former prisoner Steve Simons, who contracted hepatitis

C in federal prison when a fellow prisoner used his injection equipment without his knowledge.

In Steve's own words: "In prison, I was shocked to see people injecting themselves with used, makeshift rigs and sharing those with others, again and again. Every injection was an infection waiting to happen, and no one cared because it was happening to prisoners. Needle-sharing will continue because, with this shortsighted court decision, prisoners still don't have any choice. They cannot safeguard their own health."

In human rights law, prisoners have a right to the same standard of health care that exists in the community. On paper, Canada agrees. But in reality, harm reduction behind bars is criminally lagging.

In 2012, when we launched our constitutional challenge, Canada had refused to introduce any sort of needle exchange in prisons despite years of recommendations, including from its own expert advisory committees. As the judge recognized in last week's decision, our court case spurred CSC to finally introduce in 2018 a prison needle-exchange program and then to remove some barriers initially embedded in it. So the proverbial needle has been moved.

But serious problems persist. A properly designed program would provide prisoners with meaningful access to sterile injection equipment to reduce their risk of infection while also minimizing the risk of accidental needle-stick injuries to staff. However, ignoring the world's leading experts and more than 25 years of global experience implementing such programs, CSC's unprecedented model for prison needle exchange still makes it unreasonably difficult and risky for prisoners to participate. This inhibits uptake and undermines potential public health benefits. And two years on, the program is still only available in a handful of prisons Canada-wide. The government is denying equivalent health care in prisons, but without adequate justification.

In our lawsuit, we asked the court to recognize that prison needle-exchange programs are essential health care, leaving no question that prisoners have a right to sterile injection equipment to protect their health. The judge said that there were "compelling constitutional arguments" on this front, implying that there is a right to this program. In his words, "if this were still 2012 with no PNEP," the arguments about Charter breaches of prisoners' rights would be "compelling." As for the CSC's current program, he said it

was too early to decide whether the unnecessary hurdles breach prisoners' constitutional rights.

This means governments must think twice before they disregard evidence and public health because of ideological opposition or because they lack the political will to implement programs based on best practice that actually work.

So the fight must continue. When the prevalence of HIV and hepatitis C infection is many times higher in prison than outside, when there is a history of chronic resistance by CSC to harm reduction, and when the numerous risks to prisoners' health have been exposed yet again in light of recent coronavirus outbreaks, it is essential that our courts protect prisoners' right to essential health care. CSC's prison needle exchange program must resume its rollout nationwide and be quickly reformed to provide effective, accessible, and confidential essential health care. And if CSC fails to protect prisoners' health yet again, the courts should hold them to account.

Sandra Ka Hon Chu, director of research and advocacy at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. Richard Elliott is the executive director at the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.

The Hill Times



Sandra Ka Hon Chu &amp; Richard Elliott

Opinion

Ontario's Superior Court of Justice recently released a disappointing decision in a



THE HILL TIMES

MAY 25, 2020

# DEFENCE

Defence spending likely to face post-COVID cuts, experts say

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**Our efforts here in Canada are saving lives**

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World when Liberal defence policy, 'Strong, Secure, Engage,' was written, no longer exists

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**Canada remains deeply engaged in the Middle East**

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UN peacekeeping works but Canada's contribution falls to all-time low

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**After the Great Lockdown, far-sighted global cooperation will be heralded and lauded as well**

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## Defence Policy Briefing



Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff General Jonathan Vance, pictured April 30, 2020, speaking at a press briefing on the Hill about the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

# Defence spending likely to face post-COVID cuts, military experts say

The Liberals' defence policy, Strong, Secure and Engaged, could be in for post-pandemic trouble.

BY AIDAN CHAMANDY

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues into its third month and with the federal government's response growing alongside it, defence experts anticipate the Department of National Defence will face significant cuts in the near future as Ottawa eventually tries to deal with the fallout of huge increases in government

spending and a dramatic drop in revenues.

That could spell trouble for the governing Liberals' landmark defence policy, 'Strong, Secure, and Engaged,' released in 2017, which is predicated on defence spending increasing year-over-year for the foreseeable future.

"The temptation will be for the government to not spend to the amounts that were initially

promised in Strong, Secure and Engaged," because of the dire fiscal scenario, said Andrew Leslie, a former longtime member of the Canadian Armed Forces and a former Liberal MP who now works as a consultant for Bluesky Strategy.

Strong, Secure and Engaged proposed raising defence spending from \$17.1-billion in 2016-17 to \$24.6-billion by 2026-27, on an accrual basis. On a cash basis, that translates to raising spending from \$18.9-billion in 2016-17 to \$32.7-billion by 2026-27. Accrual accounting spreads the cost of a given asset over its useful life, whereas cash accounting allocates the cost in the year the expenditure was made.

"The Department of Defence budget is particularly attractive now because of its planned spending increases. Strong, Secure and Engaged was a long-term plan to fund the department," said Eugene Lang, chief of staff to two defence ministers in the Chrétien and Martin governments and professor of public policy at Queen's University.

It is more alluring for a government to reduce planned spending increases because they can claim the move wasn't a cut, making it more politically palatable, Mr. Lang said

In addition to Strong, Secure and Engaged being an attractive target because much of the spending comes in the future, the overall size of the department's budget makes it an unavoidable target in any kind of expenditure review, said Christian Leuprecht, professor at Queen's University and Royal Military College and senior fellow with the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. The department accounted for just over \$22-billion in spending last year, and historically accounts for around 20 per cent of federal discretionary spending.

Following the 1994 recession, the Chrétien government reduced defence spending leading to the "decade of darkness" in the Canadian Armed Forces. Bases were closed, troop size was reduced, and more. Defence spending was 1.8 per cent of GDP in 1993, and dropped to 1.2 per cent by 1997. In fiscal year 1998-99, the Chrétien government further reduced it by 25 per cent through budget control measures, according to J. Craig Stone and Binyam Solomon in *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice*.

Following the 2008 recession, defence spending also dropped. Between 2009 and 2013, defence spending was reduced from 1.4 per cent of GDP to just over 1 per cent, one of the lowest totals in Canadian history.

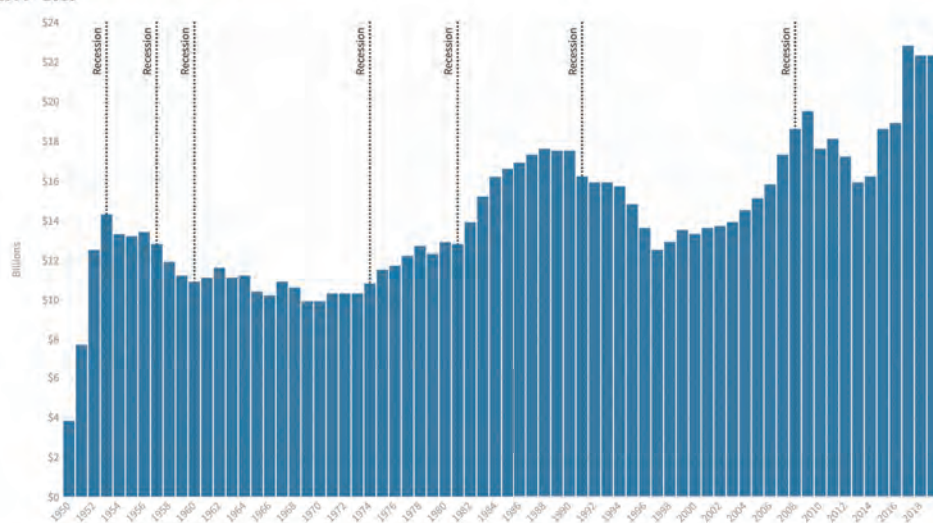
Between 2010 and 2015, the department went through three different rounds of efficiency exercises that "picked all the low hanging fruit," said Dave Perry, vice-president of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

The Parliamentary Budget Office estimates Canadian GDP dropping by 12 per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic and oil price shocks, by far the largest drop ever recorded. The budget deficit could increase to more than \$250-billion in 2020-21, accounting for 12.7 per cent of GDP, also the highest ever recorded. The federal debt-to-GDP ratio, which the Liberal government touts as a crucial fiscal marker, would rise to 48.4 per cent, lower than the high-point of 66.6 per cent seen in 1996-96.

Historically, Canadian defence policies have "suffered the fate of fiscal consolidation following a recession," Mr. Lang said, and

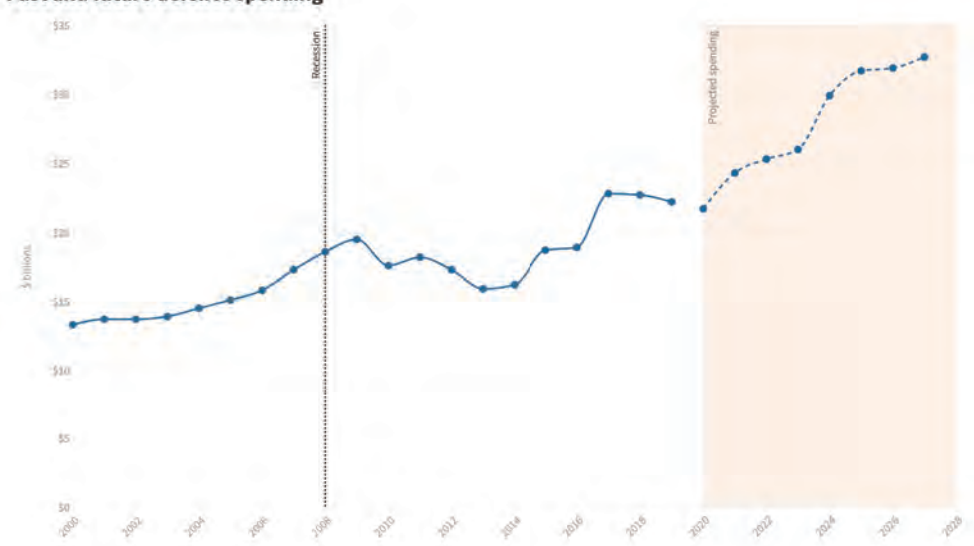
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Total Canadian defence spending 1950-2019



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

Past and future defence spending



Source: Strong, Secure and Engaged, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

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## Defence Policy Briefing

# Our efforts here in Canada are saving lives

While all Canadians continue to fight to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that Canada's defence policy is based on a long-term vision that features the flexibility to respond to rapid change.



Liberal MP Anita Vandenberg

Opinion

In times of crisis, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has always

been there for Canadians. At this time, Canadians and CAF members are mourning the tragic losses in the Cyclone Helicopter and Snowbirds accidents. While the losses are painful, those who serve are continuing to step up for Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While all Canadians continue to fight to slow and stop the spread of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that Canada's defence policy is based on a long-term vision that features the flexibility to respond to rapid change. In 2017, our government released *Strong, Secure, Engaged* where the integral core of the policy was to be first and foremost strong at home. Our focus on making sure that the safety and protection of Canadians are at the very heart of our defence policy allows us to respond to challenges when they appear.

No danger is more present to Canadians right now, than that of COVID-19. Since the very beginning of this pandemic, the Canadian Armed Forces has been there. Our medical personnel were critical in repatriating about 650 Canadians from China and Japan when COVID-19 first began to spread. That repatriation mission, called Operation GLOBE, saw our Canadian Armed Forces health personnel and others work

to temporarily accommodate returning Canadians on our base in Trenton.

To ensure CAF's work is being completed seamlessly, we are working in close coordination with federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous partners in all parts of the country.

In these difficult times, we know that we have to support our most vulnerable. Nowhere is this more evident than in our long-term care facilities. They are home to thousands of our parents, our grandparents and our loved ones.

This is why, since April, through the CAF response to COVID-19, called Operation LASER, we have deployed over 1,600 members to support our loved ones at long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario. All CAF personnel have been trained in assisting long-term care residents and have been provided with personal protective equipment. Conditions at these facilities and others across the country are being monitored.

In a world where we continually ask the CAF to put themselves in harm's way, we have placed our people and their families at the centre of our defence policy by ensuring that they have the care, support, training,

and equipment they need. It is the least we can do. It is why the Department of National Defence is stepping up to meet the challenge, while taking every precaution to protect our personnel and civilian Defence Team members from exposure to the virus.

As the health and protection of all Canadians is one of the CAF's top priorities during this pandemic, the Canadian Rangers are supporting health authorities in First Nations communities and providing assistance to vulnerable populations in Indigenous, Northern and remote communities from coast to coast to coast.

We are also assisting the Public Health Agency of Canada with warehouse management of personal protective equipment and with contact tracing. In order to flatten the curve, we must be able to identify how the virus is spreading.

In addition to COVID-19 efforts, Defence team members stand ready at all times to support Canadians in the face of domestic emergencies, such as floods and fires, as we have done in the past.

As the world adjusts to the COVID-19 health threat, we are also aware that some actors might try to use this crisis to negatively influence political and economic stability around the world.

That is why, in addition to the work that our members are doing around the clock to protect Canadians against COVID-19, our other domestic and international operations continue, with adjustments, to support our international partners and allies. Whether it is through our commitments to NATO, NORAD, the United Nations, Ukraine, a stable Iraq, and a peaceful Asia-Pacific, Canada will be a positive force in the world.

As we continue to implement our domestic and international operations, we continue to progress on multi-pronged efforts to continuously improve our operational effectiveness, including through implementation of Canada's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Our efforts here in Canada are saving lives. Our actions abroad protect Canadians by promoting an international rules-based order where human rights, gender equality and democracy lead to long-term stability and peace. No matter the challenge, our women and men in uniform, who proudly wear the maple leaf on their shoulder, will always be there.

Liberal MP Anita Vandenberg, who represents Ottawa-West Nepean, Ont., is the parliamentary secretary to the minister of national defence.

The Hill Times

# World when Liberal defence policy, 'Strong, Secure, Engaged,' was written, no longer exists

Instead, Canada must reprioritize both the structure of Canada's foreign policy and defence and security framework to define the core capability requirements of Canada's military.



Conservative MP James Bezan & Conservative MP Leona Alleslev

Opinion

While Canada is not yet in recovery, now is the time to define the priorities for the next phase. To prevent drastic economic collapse the government

established sweeping emergency benefit packages at substantial cost to the nation. The Parliamentary Budget Office suggests that it is not unthinkable for the federal debt to reach \$1-trillion this year, possibly bankrupting a generation. In Canada's recovery, tough conversations will need to be had on reigning in government spending. If the past is indicative of the future, then it is likely defence spending will be the first casualty. But in the post-COVID world, that would be exactly the wrong approach.

When national defence budgets were slashed in the 1990s under the Liberal government, Canada was able in part to benefit from a "peace dividend" resulting from the end of the Cold War. However, the world in 1995 is not the world of 2020. Canada's defence and security capabilities have eroded, resulting in diminished supply ships, fighter jets, frigates, and subsurface capacity and limited cyber-security infrastructure. Additionally, the nature of warfare has changed, with the emergence of commercial economic and information targets. Canada's military, through no fault of those in uniform, has been laid bare and

there are no further "dividends" to cash in.

This is happening at a time of unprecedented global instability shaped by the questioning of the strength of critical alliances such as NATO, the erosion of the credibility and influence of multilateral institutions like the UN, WHO, and the WTO and the rise of great powers engaged in changing the global economic world order.

With the world distracted, focused on stopping the coronavirus pandemic and saving lives, adversaries are watching carefully and actively pursuing their national objectives. Reports have emerged of low-yield nuclear testing by the Chinese Communist Party. The Russian regime, despite its own mounting cases of COVID-19, embarked on an Arctic military exercise, unparalleled in its complexity and execution. China's COVID-19 initial underreporting of cases and silencing of doctors attempting to sound the alarm potentially hampered the speed and seriousness with which Canada responded.

The virus has allowed rivals to observe major Western nations' response to a global crisis. The playbook on recalling aircraft carriers, bringing troops

home from overseas operations, shutting down borders, supply chains and economic engines—provides valuable economic and security intelligence to those interested in achieving competing national interest gains. The simultaneous effects of COVID-19 on the economy, foreign policy, and national defence have been profound. To attain a prosperous future, Canada will have to view previously mutually exclusive objectives; the economy, foreign policy and security, as inextricably linked. We will not have the luxury of cutting defence spending to balance the budget. Instead, we will have to repair our economy and spend on defence to ensure Canada's recovery and effective transition to post-COVID-19 life. The world when the Liberal defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, was written, no longer exists.

Instead, Canada must reprioritize both the structure of Canada's foreign policy and defence and security framework to define the core capability requirements of Canada's military. This will represent a substantive paradigm shift to respond to the rapidly changing nature of both alliances and warfare. And, most

importantly, it will need to be funded and delivered as a critical element of Canada's economic recovery, not in addition to it.

As a middle power and a trading nation, Canada's future prosperity requires strong partnerships with like-minded and confident nations, devoted to the protection and advancement of our collective values. Who we trade with is as important as who we train with. Canada's future depends on leadership that is principled, focused, and dedicated to the hard work of getting Canada back on track, and honouring our commitment to our allies as a trusted defence partner. Security is the foundation upon which all other successes are built and a post COVID recovery must include a redefined foreign policy and defence structure.

Canada's Conservatives stand ready.

Conservative MP James Bezan, who represents Selkirk-Interlake, Eastman, Man., is his party's national defence critic, and Conservative MP Leona Alleslev, who represents Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill, Ont., is her party's deputy leader and foreign affairs critic.

The Hill Times



# The Baltic States, Forward Together.

**T**his month marks a special date for the Baltic States, the 30th anniversary of the Declaration on Unity and Co-operation between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In 2018 The Baltic States celebrated one hundred years as independent states. Our birth coincided with major changes on the political map of the world. At the end of the First World War, the empires broke up and independent countries appeared, including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The shining moment came on August 23rd, 1989 when two million Baltic people literally joined hands to create a 675 kilometre human chain from Cathedral Square in Vilnius past the Freedom Monument in Riga ending at the Hermann Tower in Tallinn. Fifty years earlier on that same day, the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union setting the stage for the Second World War and the long post war division of Europe. Fifty years later it was the moment for the Baltic republics to regain their independence for the second time in the 20th century. All three countries regained their independence in the early 1990s and formed the Baltic Council to address their common pressing concerns; strengthening independence, returning their countries to the international arena and securing the withdrawal of Soviet/Russian troops from their sovereign territories, ending the long occupation.

The current focus of our co-operation is on regional security, connectivity and environment. The present COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of digitalization as a tool to strengthen the functionality of affected societies and economies.

On March 29th, 2004 the Baltic States joined NATO and on May 1st, 2004 joined the European Union. These two acts firmly demonstrated the Baltic States emergence as western oriented countries and valued participants in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Both organizations embody the values and visions we have held dear since the beginning of the fight for our own statehood.

Today, the United Kingdom, Canada and Germany lead NATO multinational battalions stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively. With this deployment to the Baltic region, our NATO allies, including Canada are helping countries like the Baltic States to deal with new threats and dangers aimed at the heart of western values such as the rule of law and democratic government.

Centres of excellence on energy security in Vilnius, strategic communication in Riga and cyber security in Tallinn offer their expertise and experience. All three countries achieved NATO's target spending of 2 percent of GDP on defence. NATO remains the foundation for our collective defence and the essential forum for security consultations and decisions among Allies in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The European Union membership has brought a new quality of life and impressive economic growth. According to the World Bank, the Baltic States have become high-income economies with very high Human Development Indices. The Baltic States support the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the outreach program to engage eastern and southern European states still working towards deeper integration with the EU. The Baltic States support NATO's open door policy

and enlargement of the European Union once the necessary criteria are met. It is a common interest to have stable, progressive and secure neighbours.

The COVID-19 crisis has influenced Baltic co-operation at all levels. The Governments have agreed to work together in developing a response. The decision to open borders on May 15th, 2020 and create the first "travel bubble" within the EU was based on the similar epidemiological situation in all three countries. Opening "the Baltic Schengen" - re-establishing physical connections and traveling between three countries - was an important first step in returning to normal life in a co-ordinated and safe manner. Continued close co-operation and exchanges of information remains central in eliminating other restrictions, and helping to restore economic activity and free movement throughout the European Union.

The past thirty years of Baltic co-operation created a shared commitment towards prosperity, safety and security for all its people. To be open, transparent and inclusive for all, confident in its own strong regional identity and focused on sustainable economic growth and development, while being fully aware of its ecological vulnerabilities. Our aim is to become a role model of ecological, economic, social and security standards and policies, with a vibrant civil society.

**Toomas Lukk,**  
**Ambassador of Estonia**

**Kārlis Eihenbaums,**  
**Ambassador of Latvia**

**Darius Skusevičius,**  
**Ambassador of Lithuania**

## Defence Policy Briefing

# EU and Canada: partners for transatlantic security

At the time when we are witnessing geopolitical shifts and a changing global political structure amid a global pandemic, ours is a partnership countries around the world are counting on to safeguard multilateralism and the rules-based international order—and counter any threats to our transatlantic and global security.

BY BRIG.-GEN. FRITZ URBACH

In late April, as we joined Canadians across the country in mourning the loss of six young members of Canadian Armed Forces in a tragic helicopter accident during a NATO military exercise, we were reminded of the great sacrifices of those serving to protect us and our way of life.

For seven decades, Canada has been a reliable and respected NATO ally, and Canadians are familiar with the work of NATO as the main transatlantic security provider in Europe. There is another, perhaps less-known, dimension to transatlantic security cooperation, one provided by the European Union under the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).

In today's multi-faceted and ever-evolving security challenges and threats, the military component is no doubt one tool among several others, such as diplomacy, humanitarian and development aid, rule of law, information, economy, and finances. The EU has taken a leadership role on this front, in the hope of integrating all these tools in a coherent way, under the EU Integrated Approach. EU-NATO cooperation represents an integral pillar

of this effort to strengthen our security and defence.

EU military and civil operations and missions are centerpiece to the CSDP. More than 5,000 EU military and civil personnel and policemen are currently deployed in missions and operations across the world. They include training missions in Mali, Central African Republic, and Somalia, maritime operations in the Mediterranean Sea and around the Horn of Africa, stabilization operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as several civil observation and advisory missions in the European Neighbourhood.

But we want to do more. The ever-changing global security environment, increasing requests for more European engagement, and the evolving nature of threats to our stability require more adapted and advanced military capabilities, smarter spending and more cooperation both among our member states and our global partners.

To achieve these goals, the EU launched several initiatives, including the Permanent and Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which calls for better defence and security cooperation among member states, and the European



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and members of his cabinet at a Canada-EU Summit in Montreal on July 18, 2019. Canada and the European Union are closer than ever. We share the same values and worldview, and our policy objectives are closely aligned on a broad range of issues, not least security and defence, writes Brig.-Gen. Fritz Urbach. Photograph courtesy of PMO photographer Adam Scotti

Defense Fund (EDF), which aims to give research and development incentives to European companies in the defence industry. In addition, the European Peace Facility helps fund modern equipment and arms for the forces we train in Africa, while the EU Military Mobility—a flagship project under the EU-NATO cooperation framework—enhances the movement of military troops and assets throughout the EU.

EU-NATO cooperation is strong and constitutes an integral pillar of the EU's work toward strengthening our security and defence.

In essence, through CSDP, our aim is to reinforce the European pillar of NATO—and by extension the transatlantic link—not duplicate or compete with it. The EU and NATO are two sides of the same coin. The EU does not compete with NATO and its mandate of collective deterrence of military threats. The EU does not have its own military forces or assets, and its operational capabilities depend on members states' contributions, even more so than

NATO. This means that every improvement of military capabilities initiated or funded by the EU has a positive effect for NATO too. In different words, complementarity, not competition, is key to this success.

The result is a reinforced European pillar of NATO, something our allies are counting on.

This EU-NATO complementarity obviously must be well structured and organized. Political dialogues, information exchanges, coordinated and parallel exercises, joint hybrid and cyber defence measures between both organisations have become more focused and intense in recent years. We should pursue this course of action vigorously as modern challenges to our joint security, including the current global public health crisis, call for such closely coordinated and jointly orchestrated efforts.

In Europe, for instance, the armed forces of EU member states play a crucial role in addressing the pandemic by supporting civilian actors and providing cross-border support.

We are actively reflecting on the implications the pandemic presents for our security and defence. The aim is to be ready to confront possible security consequences of the current pandemic and to become better prepared for the future. What's more, our civilian and military missions are also contributing to the fight against COVID-19 outside the EU.

Canada and the European Union are closer than ever. We share the same values and worldview, and our policy objectives are closely aligned on a broad range of issues, not least security and defence. At the time when we are witnessing geopolitical shifts and a changing global political structure amid a global pandemic, ours is a partnership countries around the world are counting on to safeguard multilateralism and the rules-based international order—and counter any threats to our transatlantic and global security.

Brig.-Gen. Fritz Urbach is EU defence attaché in Canada and the United States of America.

The Hill Times

## Canada remains deeply engaged in the Middle East

Post COVID-19, the need for Canada to continue its engagement in the Middle East isn't likely to abate, and the demand for our military expertise won't fade away either.



Chris Kilford

Opinion

Canada has often found itself involved in the Middle East in one capacity or another. During the Cold War, it was largely to do with defusing conflicts involving our closest allies. The 1956 Suez Crisis, for example, was largely de-escalated by the arrival of a Canadian-led UN peacekeeping force. Tensions over Cyprus resulted in another significant deployment of Canadian peace-

keepers in 1964. As the Cold War closed, the focus shifted with Canada taking part in the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War and indirectly supporting the U.S.-led 2003 Iraq invasion.

In 2011, Canada also played a leading role in the ouster of Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi and then joined the global coalition to defeat the so-called Islamic state (Daesh) in September 2014. Over a short period, our military footprint in the region grew considerably, especially our support to the Iraqi-Kurdish Peshmerga. And with Daesh on the run the prime minister announced in July 2018 that Canada would assume command of a new NATO training mission in Iraq, a task that will now run to at least March 31, 2021.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, some 1,000 Canadian military personnel were serving across the Middle East in various missions in Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula, at Canada's Operational Support Hub in Kuwait, on several UN assignments and in our embassies. And overall, the security situation they face today is as bad as it ever was. Civil-wars,



Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, pictured Jan. 16, 2020, being briefed on the Joint Task Force-IMPACT and the Canadian Armed Forces' presence in the Middle East by JTF-I Commander, Brig.-Gen. Michel-Henri St-Louis during a visit to Camp Canada at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, some 1,000 Canadian military personnel were serving across the Middle East in various missions in Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula, at Canada's Operational Support Hub in Kuwait, on several UN assignments and in our embassies. And overall, the security situation they face today is as bad as it ever was, writes Chris Kilford. Photograph courtesy of DND/Cpl. Jerome Lessard

created in part by recent Western interventions and now fuelled by regional powers, persist in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Millions of people are refugees or displaced. Others have lost their lives or been wounded. COVID-19 is also having an impact with Iran and Turkey both reporting very high case numbers. In Saudi Arabia oil

revenues have plunged leading the Kingdom to introduce new economic austerity measures. These days the only issue Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey can seemingly agree on is preventing any move by their respective Kurdish populations to break free.

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# After the Great Lockdown, far-sighted global cooperation will be heralded and lauded as wise



In an appeal released last month, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19: 'The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war,' he said. 'It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives.' Photograph courtesy of the Kremlin

With our allies in the United States and Europe, Canada faces an economic crisis and worldwide depression; apparently long-term government budgets will need massive amounts of public money to boost recovery in critical sectors such as basic income, development, education, employment, energy, and health.



Erika Simpson

Opinion

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs has just released a report, *Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending* as a follow-up to its 2019 report on United Nations Efforts to Reduce Military Expenditures which pushes governments to move the money and spend taxpayers' funds on caring and repairing, not preparing for combat and killing.

Yet defence experts in the U.S. and at NATO and the EU say that, although we are rightfully focused on fighting the COVID-19 crisis, the reality is that with

significant geopolitical challenges currently facing the West and Europe, this is no time to cut or under-invest in expensive defence capabilities. They assume COVID-19 will likely make the world more unstable and insecure, therefore military capabilities and spending must better protect defence investments and industry.

Drops in GDP in 2020 could foreseeably be two and three times higher than after the 2008 crisis, therefore during economic recovery, maintaining and increasing defence spending should not return to be a high priority for North American and European leaders. We must do all we can to halt world leaders from self-reinforcing cycles of insecurity; their mutual suspicions and fears spur arms races.

As the security dilemma foretells, efforts by one country or group of countries to increase their security by pursuing more offensive military forces creates more insecurity among rivals and neighbours, prompting similar in-

creases in spending, and growing cycles of hostility.

Last year, the world spent \$1.9-trillion on the military, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) latest report released last month.

Once again, Canada ranks 14<sup>th</sup> highest at US\$22.2-billion, which is 1.2 percent of GDP; but over the next ten years, Canada still plans to devote billions to reach NATO's target of two percent of GDP. The 2017 defence policy report, *Strong Secure Engaged* promised greater increases to buy equipment including for combatting high-intensity warfare in Europe.

Rather than devote more resources to research and development of next-generation fighter aircraft, battle tanks, new frigates, lethal autonomous weapons systems in space, and killer drones to ensure our military and technological edge is credible, we need to focus on sustaining critical industrial and technological capabilities that undergird human security, not militarization.

Many valuable non-defence sector industrial capabilities—like the airline, service and tourism industries around the world—are experiencing incredible risks and may well disappear.

To mitigate devastating climate crisis effects and preserve humankind's long-term future, we need to learn the lessons of the pandemic and understand militaries are not the primary guarantor of security.

We should not repeat our past mistakes by allowing defence

spending to absorb political attention and material resources that could otherwise be devoted to far more pressing human security challenges.

Canada's renewed \$14-billion export of light armoured vehicles to the Middle East contributes to an arms build-up in the most militarized and conflict-prone region on the planet. The UN's special envoy has welcomed the start of the cessation of hostilities on 10 April of a conflict described by the UN Secretary-General in 2018 as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

The Yemen crisis was a human-made disaster, not a natural disaster like the COVID pandemic; now faced with a looming global food security crisis, we must do all we can to prevent already dire unemployment conditions witnessed around the world from deteriorating into a global famine.

To ensure more efficient use of public spending, we need to redouble our diplomatic peacebuilding efforts, and leverage more spending on nurses, hospitals, medical equipment and Indigenous Peoples, not on combat-capable soldiers, cutting-edge weaponry, threatening war exercises and fomenting armed conflict in Europe and the Middle East.

As Canada and the world gradually emerge from the pandemic, there must be no 'new normal' based on traditional ideas about the percentage of GDP, and the amounts of dollars that should be spent on defence, not development.

In an appeal released last month, UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19: "The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war," he said. "It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives."

Appropriately, a mid-April extraordinary meeting by video conference of NATO defence ministers decided upon coordinated military support of civilian missions to combat the virus. But the UN chief is calling for warring parties to entirely pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity, and "silence the guns; stop the artillery; end the airstrikes."

With our allies in the United States and Europe, Canada faces an economic crisis and worldwide depression; apparently long-term government budgets will need massive amounts of public money to boost recovery in critical sectors such as basic income, development, education, employment, energy and health.

After the Great Lockdown, far-sighted global cooperation—not short-sighted spending on militarization—will be heralded and lauded as wise.

Erika Simpson is an associate professor of international politics at Western University, president of the Canadian Peace Research Association and author of *NATO and the Bomb*.

The Hill Times

## Defence Policy Briefing

# Canadian Armed Forces respond to COVID-19

The accumulation of domestic challenges has prompted some to propose a comprehensive review of the domestic role for the CAF.



Denis Thompson

Opinion

As the government's reaction to the coronavirus pandemic has rolled out, there has been a very public, but measured response from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to help their fellow

Canadians including, but not restricted to, the deployment of military teams to long-term care facilities in Quebec and Ontario.

The CAF is and always has been the force of last resort during domestic emergencies. This is the principle around which the government has designed the CAF's COVID-19 response. The military's medical capacity is not limitless and must be able to deliver on their core task—the preservation of combat power delivered by healthy and resilient personnel. The reorientation of military members from their traditional defence responsibilities to those which were doubtless not on the minds of planners six months ago has stretched the CAF's medical system. This should come as no surprise as the CAF's medical focus is trauma care of relatively young persons in austere environments. The challenge of making the unprecedented switch to geriatric care (in many cases, end-of-life care), in a clinical setting with the added stressor of a lethal virus should not be underestimated.

From a policy perspective, the CAF's involvement is governed



Canadian Forces Sgt. Martin Lapalme-Laviolette, pictured May 15, 2020, at Sainte-Anne Hospital in Montreal as part of Operation Laser. The challenge of making the unprecedented switch to geriatric care (in many cases, end-of-life care), in a clinical setting with the added stressor of a lethal virus should not be underestimated, writes Denis Thompson. Photograph courtesy of Cpl. Genevieve Beaulieu/DND/Combat Camera

by Canada's 2017 Defence Policy *Strong, Secure, Engaged* where the CAF's eight core missions include "provide assistance to civil authorities and nongovernmental partners in responding to international and domestic disasters or major emergencies." The COVID-19 crisis certainly qualifies as a major domestic emergency. For the most part CAF assets have been called out through the

Emergency Management Act, under which a province may ask for assistance from the CAF.

Thus far the CAF response has resulted in the lion's share of support going to Quebec and Ontario. At 25 long-term care facilities (known by the acronym CHSLD) in Quebec and five long-term care facilities in Ontario, military teams have provided relief as such centres harbour the largest concentration of COVID 19

sufferers. In Quebec more than 1,000 troops and in Ontario approximately 250 personnel are engaged in direct on-site support.

Teams of up to 50 personnel each have been deployed, working in shifts each composed of a registered nurse, six medical technicians along with sufficient personnel to perform support duties (think

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## UN peacekeeping works but Canada's contribution falls to all-time low

UN peacekeeping is a good deal, by any relevant measure, especially at a time of crisis like the present. Now is not the time to step back. Missions are needed more than ever.



Walter Dorn

Opinion

Canada's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations has fallen to only 35 personnel among the UN's 82,000 uniformed peacekeepers currently deployed. This is the lowest point for Canada since the first peacekeeping force was created at the urging of (then) foreign minister Lester

Pearson in 1956 to resolve the Suez Crisis.

This minimal contribution does not reflect the current government's promises, nor what Canadians want, which is a strong United Nations in a rules-based international order.

Admittedly, the COVID-19 crisis provides a good reason to pause some military movements, and the UN has cautiously postponed its rotation of troops until July. Furthermore, the UN is adjusting and reprioritizing its field activities, while still meeting mission-critical requirements. And many other nations continue to provide substantive contributions. Both Ireland and Norway, our friendly competitors for a Security Council seat, have more personnel deployed than Canada (Ireland: 474; Norway: 65, at the end of April). The European Union is committed to increasing the contributions of its members in the coming months.

The world's success in combating the virus will depend in part on UN peacekeeping because of the urgent need to provide health services in conflict-prone areas. Africa could become the future epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic and a reservoir for its continued spread if an effort is not made now. Peacekeeping requires that capable UN member nations commit dependably, especially to difficult missions.

Despite the comments of skeptics, UN peacekeeping has made a substantial difference in conflict areas and has helped end many wars, as described in our May 2020 essay, *Peacekeeping Works: The UN Can Help End Civil Wars*.

UN peacekeeping is demonstrably cost-effective and has helped save and improve lives.

Multidimensional peacekeeping operations have the most positive outcomes, dealing with a wide range of national problems, including epidemics like Ebola in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

At least two-thirds of all missions since 1956 can be judged as mostly or partially successful. Fewer, if any, were unambiguous failures. But even some of those considered "disasters" have saved many lives. The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda—led by Canadian general Roméo Dallaire—saved more than 20,000 people during the genocide, despite peacekeeper numbers being reduced to fewer than 300 personnel on the ground. Canada, to its credit, increased its deployment to Rwanda during the genocide.

Canada's current decline in peacekeeping began under previous governments, despite continuing popular support for UN missions. There have been pressures to commit to alliance (i.e., NATO) priorities, to which

Canada has responded far more promptly and generously. But this does not justify the lack of support for UN missions that are known to resolve armed conflicts. Studies show that armed conflicts are reduced by up to two-thirds compared to conflicts without UN involvement, and UN forces deploy at a fraction of the cost of other military missions (e.g., NATO).

Doubling UN peacekeeping budgets alone would result in far less human suffering, fewer infant deaths, better access to hospital care, life-saving potable water, and fewer undernourished people. Imagine the huge financial, economic, and other community benefits that result when conflicted societies end violence early. Now accelerate this with Canada offering significantly more resources and personnel to realize ambitious UN peacekeeping mandates.

UN peacekeeping is a good deal, by any relevant measure, especially at a time of crisis like the present. Now is not the time to step back. Missions are needed more than ever. If anything, Canada should be promoting and contributing to multinational standby brigades and eventually a standing emergency capacity, with UN-hired peacekeepers, thereby proactively pinching off conflicts before they escalate.

These are the kind of bold ideas that the UN needs.

At the Mali mission pledging conference this month, Canada should offer forces for the mission, including the Quick Reaction Force this country promised the UN back in 2017, at the peacekeeping ministerial Canada hosted. This may be the last opportunity before the June vote in the General Assembly for a Security Council seat in 2021–22 that our government has been lobbying for. A convincing commitment to UN peacekeeping is the kind of contribution to international peace and security that is expected for the award of one of the ten rotating UNSC seats.

Canada has maintained deployments of hundreds to the NATO missions in Latvia and Ukraine for many years, so why have we so much trouble providing a few hundred soldiers and police to UN missions, even for short periods? It seems a sad reflection on the government. In particular, the performance is at odds with the unfulfilled promises and lofty rhetoric in support of peacekeeping.

We can ask for more. Canada can do better.

Walter Dorn is a professor of defence studies at the Royal Military College and the Canadian Forces College. He is also a consultant to the United Nations on peacekeeping technology. He serves as president of the World Federalist Movement–Canada. Robin Collins serves on the board of various civil society organizations, including the World Federalist Movement–Canada, the Canadian Pugwash Group, and The Group of 78.

The Hill Times

# Canada remains deeply engaged in the Middle East

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Besides defence commitments, Canada has always engaged in significant diplomatic and humanitarian assistance efforts in the Middle East. And we are certainly not strangers there either. Canada and Turkey established diplomatic relations in the 1940s and Ottawa followed suit with most Middle Eastern countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Nowadays, however, Freedom House's 2019 Global Freedom Index lists every country in the Middle East, except for Israel, as "Partly Free" or "Not Free." Significant differences have also led to the severing of our diplomatic relations with Iran and Syria in 2012, and more recently Canada's interactions with Saudi Arabia have taken a turn for the worse. The irony, given our efforts to alleviate human suffering in the region, is that in 2018, 70 per cent of Canada's international arms exports, excluding sales to the U.S., went to countries in the Middle East and Turkey, the main customer being Saudi Arabia.

While it's tempting to remain at arm's length from the Middle East, Canadian businesses have been engaged there for a long time. The 1997 Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (FTA), updated in 2019, was Canada's first FTA outside of North America and the 2012 FTA with Jordan was the first and only with an Arab country. Meanwhile, growing numbers of immigrants, political refugees and students have continued to flow in the other direction, mostly from Iran. Plenty of Canadians also live and work in the Middle East. More than 9,000 are in Qatar and 6,000 in Kuwait. Some 35,000 live in Israel and even more reside in Lebanon. In fact, the Canadian-Lebanese community constitutes the largest ethnic Arab group in Canada, joined, since November 2015, by almost 65,000 refugees fleeing Syria.

At the moment, all eyes are on how significant the impact of COVID-19 will be across the Middle East. There has been a major reduction in trade, the movement of people, and also Canada's military activities, the latter of which have been acting as a much-needed pressure relief valve, especially in Iraq. But elsewhere in the region, the fighting hasn't stopped, despite calls by the UN secretary-general for a global ceasefire in March 2020. Indeed, the Syrian government is still trying to squeeze the Idlib pocket, the fighting in Yemen continues, and Libyan General Haftar remains encamped around Tripoli. As a result, post COVID-19, the need for Canada to continue its engagement in the Middle East isn't likely to abate, and the demand for our military expertise won't fade away either.

*Dr. Chris Kilford is a member of the national board of the Canadian International Council.*

The Hill Times

# Canadian Armed Forces respond to COVID-19

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orderlies). In these locales, the teams assist in preparing, serving, and collecting meals, feeding residents, assisting with personal hygiene, and providing hands-on labour as required. By all accounts the services rendered have done much to restore dignity to the residents and the implicated CAF members report a true sense of satisfaction despite the unique, taxing work conditions.

Organizationally, CAF domestic operations are commanded from the Canadian Joint Operations Centre (CJOC) in Ottawa and directed on the ground by six regional Joint Task Forces (North [Yukon, North West Territories, Nunavut], Pacific [British Columbia], West [Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba], Centre [Ontario], East [Quebec] and Atlantic [New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland]). With the exception of JTF North, each of these JTFs would regularly have an Immediate Response Unit (IRU) of Regular Force members on short notice readiness to respond to domestic emergencies and a Territorial Battle Group made up primarily of reservists that can and has been activated. This organizational construct has been retained and reinforced resulting in the creation of Local Response Forces (LRF). The activation of community-based Canadian Rangers in Northern Saskatchewan is an example of LRF employment.

In their patrol communities across the North, the Canadian Rangers are providing support such as wellness checks, helping with transportation and distribution of local supplies to community members, assisting in staffing municipal/community-operated command posts and emergency centres, and supporting community food security through hunting, gathering, and fishing.

Additionally, in the Pacific *HMCS Regina* and *HMCS Brandon* and in the Atlantic *HMCS Ville de Québec* and *HMCS Moncton* have been prepared for support to pandemic response with isolation precautions having been made to avoid the virus being present among the crews. As well, early in the crisis the RCAF helped bring home internationally stranded Canadians and provided for their initial quarantine. In all, the CAF has some 24,000 members standing by to assist when called.

While the CAF's previous employment on domestic operations is generally recognized, in recent years there has been a noticeable uptick including support to recurring forest fires and floods across Canada brought on by climate change. These threats are front of mind for military planners even in the face of the unprecedented threat posed by the coronavirus. The accumulation of domestic challenges has prompted some to propose a comprehensive review of the domestic role for the CAF. The public discourse that follows on the heels of the current crisis will almost certainly shine light on the CAF's possible future roles.

*Denis Thompson is a retired major-general with 39 years experience in the Canadian Armed Forces and a fellow with the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.*

The Hill Times

# Defence spending likely to face post-COVID cuts, military experts say



'The Department of Defence budget is particularly attractive now because its planned spending increases. Strong, Secure and Engaged was a long-term plan to fund the department,' said Eugene Lang, pictured. *The Hill Times* file photograph

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given the current fiscal situation, he said he expects a similar process to happen post-COVID-19.

Some national governments around the world have already started cutting defence spending and are reallocating the money to COVID-19 response efforts.

On April 16, South Korea introduced a second COVID-19-response budget that reduced defence spending by just under two per cent (approximately USD\$733-million) from the first response budget, according to reports. Thailand also cut defence spending by nearly USD\$555-million, and Indonesia by USD\$588-million.

Though the pandemic continues to create novel problems for every part of government, Canada's Defence Department was facing spending challenges related to its Strong, Secure and Engaged policy goals prior to COVID-19.

According to Mr. Perry's annual review of the policy, the department has failed to meet some of the spending targets.

In the fiscal year 2017-18, total defence spending actually exceeded planned spending by about \$2-billion, but this was due to a nearly \$2-billion, one-time pension adjustment. Since then, overall defence spending has been in line with the projections in Strong, Secure and Engaged, but below the top-line numbers.

Capital spending and the allocation of capital funding have both lagged behind what was promised in the policy.

In 2017-18, DND fell \$2.5-billion short on actual capital spending compared to what was projected. In 2018-19, DND's allocation fell \$2.3-billion short of projections.

Despite the historic shortcomings, Mr. Perry's analysis notes that capital spending is increasing.

When a department doesn't meet its spending targets, Mr. Lang said, that sends a signal to others in government and in Parliament that the money isn't needed.

"If they can't meet the spending profile in Strong, Secure and Engaged, why should we give them the money? That's the message that gets sent by underspending," he said.

If the fiscal pressures are such that a reduction in defence spending is necessary, deciding where to cut will be difficult given the several rounds of cuts over the past three decades.

The three efficiency exercises between 2010 and 2015 "picked all the low hanging fruit, and all the rest of the fruit. Everything you might consider to be low hanging fruit would all be stuff that this government created, which would make a discussion on getting rid of it a lot more difficult," Mr. Perry said. "It's a lot easier when it's something the last government did."

Prof. Leuprecht said he sees this challenge as a good opportunity to rethink some first principles of Canadian defence policy.

"We've cut everything there is to cut. In terms of serious savings, there aren't savings to be found in efficiency exercises," he said. "An efficiency exercise this time around is going to have to be an honest conversation about what are we going to ask the military to stop doing, what do we want them to do, and what's going to give."

He said the military, government, and the public writ large will have very different ideas on how to best address the question, and reconciling those diverging views is going to be at the heart of the funding issue going forward.

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# ‘Please let it go, enough is enough’: some MPs want Byrne and Teneycke to stop calling for Scheer’s removal

‘I find it very frustrating, to be honest. If we’re going to win an election, we need to win as a team with our focus being on the Liberals’ record instead of infighting amongst ourselves,’ says Conservative MP Michael Kram.

BY ABBAS RANA

Former Conservative campaign director Jenni Byrne wants Conservative MPs to elect a new interim leader, but MPs say there’s no such plan in place, and are calling on senior Conservatives to quit taking shots at the outgoing leader, saying it causes divisions in the party which could be an obstacle to winning the next election.

“I really just think, please like let it go,” said Conservative MP Stephanie Kusie (Calgary-Midnapore, Alta.) in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “Enough is enough.”

In a tweet Sunday, May 17, Ms. Byrne, a top Conservative who was the party’s campaign director in the 2015 election and who held a number of senior positions in the Stephen Harper PMO and the party office, said: “@AndrewScheer continues to show why he wasn’t ready to be Prime Minister and why he shouldn’t be the Official Leader of the Opposition.

“The Conservative caucus needs to do now what they didn’t do in December, and put an interim leader in for 3 months,” Ms. Byrne tweeted.

Attached to the tweet was the CTV *Question Period* clip in which Mr. Scheer (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) said that he halted the process of renouncing his U.S. citizenship after he announced late last year he won’t lead the party in the next election. “Scheer says he halted the process of renouncing his U.S. citizenship once he stepped down as leader. Why? ‘Just for personal reasons...’” CTV *Question Period* tweeted.

This revelation surprised people across the country. Mr. Scheer had said during the last election campaign that he had started the process of revoking his U.S. citizenship. *The Globe and Mail* first reported during the campaign that Mr. Scheer holds dual U.S. and Canadian citizenships, which was not public information until that time.

Mr. Scheer told reporters he never shared information about his dual citizenship publicly because nobody asked him.

In 2005, when Michaëlle Jean was appointed as the governor general, Mr. Scheer raised concerns at the time about her dual French and Canadian citizenships in a blog post. The Conservatives under Stephen Harper also raised similar concerns about dual citizenships of former Liberal leader Stéphane Dion and former NDP leader Tom Mulcair—both held Canadian and French passports.

rookie mistakes, failed to present a viable climate change action plan to Canadians, relied too heavily on negative campaigning, and also because of their leader’s social conservative views that are not in sync with a significant majority of urban Canadians.

A number of senior Conservative stalwarts within and outside of the caucus, including Harper-era PMO staffer Kory Teneycke, led the charge to publicly call for Mr. Scheer’s resignation. They also started a not-for-profit organization called the Conservative

events along with security that accompanied the leader to different venues.

Meanwhile, following Mr. Scheer’s announcement that he would step down, Conservative MPs agreed to let Mr. Scheer lead the party while they go through the process of electing a new leader. Originally, the plan was to elect a new leader in June, but the contest extended because of lockdowns across the country due to COVID-19. The leadership election process is scheduled to conclude by Aug. 21.



Conservative MPs want party stalwarts to stop taking shots at Andrew Scheer’s leadership because they say the public attacks are causing internal divisions in the party. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Ms. Byrne was not available for an interview last week, but in a popular political podcast *The Herle Burlly*, on which she’s a regular panellist, Ms. Byrne said that Mr. Scheer never intended to renounce his citizenship. She also predicted that the Conservative caucus will get more bad press in the coming months as Mr. Scheer will run into more controversies.

“I said in December they should get rid of him, and I have said [that continually], but they’re not going to,” said Ms. Byrne in the podcast. “They’re going to keep him as interim leader and we’ll continue to have these stories for the next three months, unfortunately.”

In the last election, the Conservative Party won the popular vote and 22 more seats than it did in the 2015 election, but Mr. Scheer still faced calls to step down from some prominent Conservatives, who thought the party would not win the next election with Mr. Scheer as the party leader.

They said that the October election was a golden opportunity for their party to unseat Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) Liberals, who ran a terrible campaign and were mired in a number of controversies. These Conservatives say that their party lost the election because it made

Victory to run a campaign calling for the leader to resign and to run for the leadership again. At the time, Ms. Byrne also said that Mr. Scheer should step down.

For about two months after the election, Mr. Scheer maintained that he would not resign, but in mid-December he abruptly announced that he was stepping down. This announcement came shortly after media reports emerged that the party was partly subsidizing the private school tuition of four of Mr. Scheer’s children. Media reports also indicated that the OLO’s budget for the first 10 months of 2019 was \$201,000, but the office ended up spending \$925,000. Both of these controversies made national headlines and did not go over well with the party’s base.

A subsequent internal review found that the party had been paying \$18,000 annually to partly cover Mr. Scheer’s children’s private school fees. The national council of the party was briefed in March about the findings of this internal review. In the briefing, the national councillors were told that the party provided an extra housekeeper and paid for some clothing expenses for the Scheer family’s campaign appearances. Also, the party helped pay for the minivan that Mr. Scheer used to attend pre-election campaign

handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, including, among others, blaming Mr. Trudeau for letting “fraudsters” and “criminals” take advantage of the government’s financial aid programs aimed to provide support to unemployed Canadians.

Ms. Kusie said it is “pointless” for senior Conservatives to call on the caucus to elect a new interim leader at this stage, as the party is already in the process of electing a new leader.

“This is not something that is without end or not finite,” Ms. Kusie said. “We have the dates, we see the change of the regime in sight. So, I just don’t even know what the purpose is at this point. We’re in the middle of this process, please just wait it out, step aside, and we will have a new leader in the fall.”

Ms. Kusie said criticizing the leader when he’s already on his way out causes divisions and hurts the interests of the party. She said both Ms. Byrne and Mr. Teneycke, among others, called for Mr. Scheer’s resignation, and achieved the results they hoped for, so now they should stop going after the leader. Ms. Kusie said that the party now is in the final stretch of the leadership contest, and Ms. Byrne calling for Mr. Scheer’s removal at this point does not help the party’s interests.

“Why would she [Ms. Byrne] do it? It only harms the party,” Ms. Kusie said. “And, I can’t see why would she want to harm the party.”

Rookie Conservative MP Michael Kram (Regina-Wascana, Sask.) also echoed the same views. He said the party has to remain united to win the next election, and that calls for Mr. Scheer’s removal are causing internal strife.

“I find it very frustrating, to be honest. If we’re going to win an election we need to win as a team, with our focus being on the Liberals’ record instead of infighting amongst ourselves,” said Mr. Kram.

None of the Conservative MPs interviewed for this article said that they had concerns about Mr. Scheer’s decision to stop the process of revoking his U.S. citizenship. They said they accept Mr. Scheer’s explanation that he changed his mind because he no longer has a chance to become the prime minister. They also said there’s no point in talking about replacing Mr. Scheer with a new interim leader when the leadership election is in three months.

“Andrew Scheer has resigned as the permanent leader of the Conservative Party, and we have a leadership race that is going on, and we’re going to have a new Conservative leader who will lead our party into the fall sitting, and I’m satisfied with that. And we’ll move forward accordingly,” said Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.) in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

“He has indicated he’s not going to be prime minister. So therefore he has decided to put a halt on the revocation of his U.S. citizenship. I understand his reasoning and I see no issue with it.”

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# ‘Doing democracy by Zoom meetings is just not the same as being there in the House’

This could be ‘the forgotten Parliament’ if the in-person House sittings don’t return before the next election, says Conservative MP Michael Cooper.

Continued from page 1

Parliament during the pandemic, but also say they’re missing out on a big part of being federal legislators, including not attending House committees, the daily Question Period, official functions, diplomatic functions, meeting in-person with staff, other MPs, lobbyists, and building key relationships in-person in Ottawa.

“Doing democracy by Zoom meetings is just not the same as being there in the House of Commons,” said rookie Conservative MP Michael Kram (Regina-Wascana, Sask.), who unseated former Liberal cabinet minister Ralph Goodale in the last election. “Certainly the new opportunities to learn are not there as much for the new MPs but that’s something we all have to deal with.”

Rookie Liberal MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.) said he misses his regular parliamentary duties in Ottawa but under the circumstances there’s no option but to work remotely.

“I do miss Ottawa, I miss sitting in the Parliament,” said Mr. Dong. “It is what it is, the nature of things. We just have to cope with it.”

In 2019, 98 rookie MPs — 43 Conservatives, 24 Liberals, 22 Bloc Québécois, eight NDP, and one Green — were elected to the House. Since the October federal election, Parliament had sat for only six weeks until it was suspended on March 13. The House resumed last month for virtual sittings and a quorum of MPs from all parties has attended weekly Special COVID-19 Pandemic Committee meetings three days a week in the House Chamber since last month. But it’s unknown when the full contingency of all 338 MPs will return to Ottawa again. There are 157 Liberals, 121 Conservatives, 32 Bloc Québécois, 24 NDP, three Green MPs, and one Independent MP.

Liberal Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.), who is also parliamentary secretary to Government House Leader Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.), told *The Hill Times* recently that he does not personally expect the House to return with all MPs until early next year.

“I can’t see that happening this year, personally. That’s a personal opinion, just based on what I see happening in the environment around me,” Mr. Lamoureux told *The Hill Times*.

“I think it would probably be better to have a discussion of this nature in July, when we would have a better sense of [the situation],” Mr. Lamoureux said.

During regular in-person Commons sittings, MPs attend House proceedings and take part in debates on a variety of government and private members’ legislative issues. The opposition MPs come to Ottawa to hold the government to account in the daily 45-minute Question Period and scrutinize legislative issues in one of the more than 20 House committees. Every Wednesday morning, when the House is in session, all parliamentary caucuses hold weekly regional and national meetings to discuss parliamentary strategy and MPs share feedback and information on what their constitu-

also means an election could theoretically happen anytime as the Liberals need the support of at least one opposition party on every legislation.

Considering the ongoing speculation about a possible fall election, if the next election happens before the House returns for full in-person sittings, new MPs could theoretically have had only six weeks in Ottawa.

Two-term Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.) said that if the next election happened prior to the House returning back to the full sittings, the “current Parliament could be the forgotten Parliament.”

“Simply put, there have been very few sitting weeks that the House has been back with all

is sitting regularly in person,” he said. “And we’ve seen over the last several weeks, Parliament’s sitting virtually that is better than not sitting at all, but it’s no substitute for the real thing, to speak in-person and sitting in Ottawa in the Chamber.”

Moreover, he said being in Ottawa offers MPs an opportunity to get to know each other across party lines and to build relationships that play a key role in making progress in the legislative process in the House and in committees.

“Frankly, the opportunity to get to know colleagues, not just within your own caucus, but in all different political parties. And that’s one of the things that is really lacking in terms of virtual sittings,” said Mr. Cooper.



Rookie Conservative MP Michael Kram, left, Liberal MP Han Dong, and NDP MP Laurel Collins say that by working remotely, they’re missing out the parliamentary experience in Ottawa but understand that it’s a pandemic and are making the best of their virtual parliamentary experience by helping out constituents. Photographs courtesy of Facebook and Laurel Collins

ents are telling them back home about their party’s policies. In between their official duties, MPs also mingle with their colleagues in the parliamentary hallways, during lunch time, and often socialize after hours whether it be at popular political pubs around town, restaurants, or at official parliamentary functions and receptions in political Ottawa.

In their constituencies, MPs meet with their constituents as much as possible to discuss individual and collective community issues and try to help. In normal times, they also welcome their constituents to walk into their constituency offices, even without appointments to meet with their staff for help on any issue. As well, MPs like to attend community events and the larger the gathering the better as it gives them more exposure and name recognition.

But these days MPs and their staffers are interacting with the constituents only online or by phone. All in-person meetings have been cancelled.

In the 2019 election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) Liberals were reduced to a minority from a majority, which

338 MPs present, a little more than a month,” said Mr. Cooper. “So essentially, this Parliament has barely gotten off the ground and if there’s an early election, it could go down as the forgotten Parliament.”

Mr. Cooper said that the full in-person sittings allow all MPs the experience of engaging in the cut and thrust of politics by debating and asking questions in the Question Period.

“Certainly having the opportunity to engage in debate, to give speeches, to hone the skills better that you develop in the House of Commons, in terms of parliamentary debate and the back and forth,” said Mr. Cooper in a phone interview with *The Hill Times*.

Mr. Cooper said parliamentarians who have quality skills to ask pertinent questions and to analyze legislation in committees are absolutely essential to hold the government to account. He said he understands the reasons why Parliament is not sitting and added that virtual sittings are better than no sittings at all.

“That’s vital to Canadian democracy that we have a functioning House of Commons that

“You may not agree with someone on an issue but you might actually quite like [him or her], as a person, because you talk to them, you’ve dealt with them, you’ve worked with them. And you don’t have that same sort of interaction in a virtual capacity. It’s certainly important in terms of being able to work with your caucus. But also, in terms of being able to find common ground on issues. Sometimes those relationships can make all the difference in terms of moving an issue forward successfully, such as in different ways, but, you know, it’s something like a private member’s bill, for example.”

Rookie MPs told *The Hill Times* that they do miss the in-person parliamentary experience of attending regular House proceedings, committee meetings, weekly national caucus meetings, and informal interactions with colleagues in between House duties and after work.

“In Ottawa, going to in-person sessions, there is the ability to talk in the lobbies with your colleagues,” said NDP MP Laurel Collins (Victoria, B.C.). “For me, I’m on the Environment Committee, and the only committees that

are sitting right now are committees that are directly related to the COVID response. And so everything on the Environment Committee has been postponed until we can start back up again. And so definitely, I miss being able to bring my constituents and Canadians’ concerns around the environment to that space.”

As well, Ms. Collins said being in Ottawa, rookie MPs can have access to their mentors in-person and build a network of friendships. Working remotely, she said, new MPs can still reach out to veteran MPs, but the in-person meetings are easier as everyone is on Parliament Hill.

“I miss kind of the informal interactions with MPs across party lines,” said Ms. Collins. “And so you just have to put in a little more effort to reach out to, you know, I had a conversation a couple weeks ago with one of the MPs from the Liberals who had heard one of my questions on a technical briefing call. And so we were able to have a conversation. It just takes a little more effort than if you would just see them in the lobby or see them on the Hill.”

Prior to COVID-19, an overwhelming majority of the constituency work was about immigration. But now MPs say they’re mostly dealing with government-related COVID-19 spending programs. Close to seven and a half million people have applied for emergency financial aid under the government’s spending programs.

“My office has been inundated with requests for support; either people who are wanting help navigating the programs are being put out by the federal government, the support benefits; and a lot of people who are falling through the cracks of those programs,” said Ms. Collins.

Mr. Dong who represents a GTA riding said that COVID-19 is still the leading subject in his constituents’ questions. However a significant number of those questions still have immigration component related to wait times, eligibility requirements, whether government financial assistance during the pandemic would affect someone’s ability to sponsor, and international students qualification for immigration, among others, he said.

“Whether it’s processing time, whether it’s eligibility, they’re all triggered by what’s going on with COVID-19,” said Mr. Dong.

All MPs interviewed said that they’re using online resources such as Facebook Live, Zoom, or regular telephone conference calls to reach out to their constituents. All said they are holding regular virtual town halls to meet with their constituents. “My office has been quite busy,” said Mr. Dong. “[We use] virtual platforms to connect with our constituents and local businesses.”

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## HILL CLIMBERS

by Laura Ryckewaert

# Labour Minister Tassi now has a 15-member team

Eight political staffers have joined the labour minister's office since late January, including a parliamentary affairs director, a communications assistant, and two new regional affairs advisers.

Labour Minister **Filomena Tassi** has further built up her office since *Hill Climbers*' last dive into the team in January, including lining up **Nilani Logeswaran** as director of parliamentary affairs, and hiring **Olivier Pilon** as a communications assistant earlier this month.

A former director of parliamentary affairs to then-science and sport minister **Kirsty Duncan**, Ms. Logeswaran joined Ms. Tassi's team at the end of January.

Before joining Ms. Duncan's office in January 2019, Ms. Logeswaran had been an issues manager in Innovation Minister **Navdeep Bains**' office; she started out on that team in April 2016 as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs and issues management.

Ms. Logeswaran is also a former Ontario Liberal staffer, and while at Queen's Park spent time as press secretary to then-education minister **Liz Sandals** and then-consumer services minister **Tracy MacCharles**, and as a legislative assistant and issues manager to Ms. MacCharles' predecessor, then-consumer services minister **Margarett Best**.

**Colin Lalonde** is working under Ms. Logeswaran as a senior adviser for parliamentary affairs, having started in Ms. Tassi's office as labour minister around the same time at the end of January.

During the last Parliament, Mr. Lalonde was a special assistant for operations and Ontario regional affairs in Ms. Tassi's office as seniors minister. He first began working for Ms. Tassi during her time as deputy Liberal Whip in January 2017, having left his old post as a deputy lobby co-ordinator in the Government Whip's Office to do so.



Nilani Logeswaran is now Ms. Tassi's head of parliamentary affairs. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Rounding off the late January additions to Ms. Tassi's team are **Brett Warren Martin**, who was brought on board as a scheduling assistant to the minister, ministerial driver **Daniel Rozon**, and special assistant for policy **Julia Van Drie**.

Ms. Van Drie previously spent time as a special assistant to then-employment, workforce development, and labour minister **Patty Hajdu** for roughly a year starting in May 2017. She went on to work as a special assistant in the federal Liberal caucus' research bureau and most recently was a special assistant for policy and stakeholder relations to Small Business and Export Promotion **Mary Ng**, who has since—as of the post-election cabinet shuffle in November 2019—added on the international trade file.

**Hanna Kambo** has been hired as senior adviser for West and North regional affairs to Ms. Tassi; she started on the job in February.

After serving as a deputy field organizer for the federal Liberal Party in Vancouver during the 2015 election, Ms. Kambo landed a job as an assistant to then-Liberal MP **John McCallum** on Parliament Hill in February 2016. A year later she landed a job in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office as a special assistant for operations, staying there for about a year and a half, at which point she became an operations and stakeholder relations adviser to then-intergovernmental and northern affairs minister **Dominic LeBlanc**.

Also starting in February was **Michaela Rutherford-Blouin** as a special adviser



Labour Minister Filomena Tassi, pictured Jan. 28, 2020, speaking with reporters in the West Block after a cabinet meeting. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

for Ontario and Atlantic regional affairs. She's spent the last two years working in the Prime Minister's Office, starting as a summer intern in 2018, after which she was hired on full-time as an assistant for special projects, working under **Brett Thalmann**, who's since been bumped up from director of administration and special projects to the title of executive director of planning, administration, and people.



Michaela Rutherford-Blouin is now working for the labour minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Ms. Rutherford-Blouin is also a former constituency assistant to Kingston, Ont., Liberal MP **Mark Gerretsen** and a former Eastern regional co-ordinator for the Ontario Young Liberals, and spent a year as president of the Queen's University Liberal Association while studying as an undergrad in political studies at the school. In 2017, while in university, she took part in Equal Voice's Daughters of the Vote event as the delegate for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont.

Finally, on to the team's most recent addition: Mr. Pilon. A former blogger for

The Huffington Post Quebec, covering subjects like LGBT rights and policies and Canadian and American politics, Mr. Pilon has spent the last almost half a year doing communications work for GRIS-Montréal, a non-profit organization aimed at promoting LGBT+ diversity. He's also a former reporter with the Aylmer Bulletin (Bulletin d'Aylmer) and has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Ottawa and a master's degree in the subject from the University of Quebec in Montreal.



Olivier Pilon has been hired as a communications assistant to Ms. Tassi. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

**Jude Welch** is chief of staff to Ms. Tassi. Along with those already mentioned, currently working as political staff in the labour minister's office are: **Miles Hopper**, director of policy; **Shaun Govender**, director of operations; **Lars Wessman**, director of communications; **Dustin Fitzpatrick**, press secretary; **Melonie Fullick**, communications assistant; and **Thomas Gagné**, senior adviser for issues management and Quebec regional affairs.

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# Revival of Upper Chamber's Progressive Group will 'weaken' Senate leaders, says Sen. Pierre Dalphond

'If you have options, you become more independent,' says Sen. Dalphond, the second Senator this month to quit the ISG and join the PSG.

Continued from page 1

too much control over Senators within their groups, and not working cooperatively in the Senate Chamber.

Having regained official status, the PSG will now have a claim to seats on Senate committees, a budget for research and administration, and more speaking time and other privileges for its leadership team in the Chamber.

"The more groups you have in the Senate, the more freedom each Senator will have and enjoy, and less powers the leaders would have," Sen. Dalphond told *The Hill Times* in an interview last week.

"In the old duopoly, you had no choice: you were [in] one group, and you had to oppose the other group. So now you have four groups, and every Senator is free to go, if he wants, to another group where he or she will feel comfortable.

"I think it's going to weaken the leadership in every group, which means more freedom for Senators. Because I really believe not only in equality but in independence, and if you have options, you become more independent."

Sen. Dalphond said he left the ISG because its leadership had been using or threatening to use its majority status in the Senate to solidify its power in the Chamber, and control positions in the Senate. He pointed as examples to a motion passed by Senate leaders in March to prevent Senators who leave a group from keeping their committee seats; to the leaders of the ISG and other Senate groups dividing up committee chair positions between their groups; to the ISG's push to control the selection of the Senate's deputy Speaker, the Speaker pro tempo-

re; and to what he said was a confrontational approach to dealing with the Conservative opposition in the Senate.

The ISG is led by a group that includes Leader Sen. Yuen Pau Woo (B.C.) and deputy leader Sen. Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.).

"To replace party discipline by group discipline is not at all what I was coming for. That's not reform," said Sen. Dalphond.



Senator Patricia Bovey, centre, pictured in 2016 alongside then-government representative, now PSG Senator Peter Harder, left, and ISG Senator Murray Sinclair. *The Hill Times* file photograph

Sen. Bovey told *The Hill Times* that she left the ISG because of issues with "collaborative working" and equality in the Senate. She said that she wanted to advance her work in the Senate on issues related to the arts and culture, and the Arctic.

"To me that's what we're doing in the Senate, we're looking at multiple issues that affect society, we're looking at it from multiple perspectives, and I felt that the Progressives were a place where I would be able to do that with greater ease," she said.

"I've worked with many people, and I don't have a whole lot of years in the Senate, and I'm not prepared to give up my goals and my values and my principles," she said.

Sen. Bovey declined to say whether or how she had been prevented from pursuing those goals during her time in the ISG. "I'm not going to talk against a group made up of members for whom I have great respect," she said.

Both Senators Bovey and Dalphond said they joined the PSG in part because they respected the



Independent Senators Group Leader Yuen Pau Woo (British Columbia), left, pictured at a committee meeting in 2018 on the Hill with Quebec Senator Pierre Dalphond. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

other Senators who made up that group.

Sen. Woo was re-elected by ISG Senators for a second term as the group's leader—using the title "facilitator"—in December. In an interview with *The Hill Times* last week, he said his ISG leadership group had only pressed for what the ISG was entitled to under the Senate rules.

"We have followed the rules and the practices, the well established rules and practices of the

When asked whether the loss of two Senators from his group recently was a sign that he should change his leadership style, he said, "we are in continuous renewal and continuous improvement, and that will keep going."

"I'm not concerned because it is part of the ebb and flow of the Senate that membership numbers change and people migrate to different groups.

"My metric in assessing these developments is whether or not the Senators and the groups they join are pro-reform, whether they also support a more independent, less partisan Senate," he said, noting that Senators Bovey and Dalphond, the PSG and Canadian Senators Group all support some reforms to the Senate.

## Senate committee deal in question

Like the House of Commons, the Senate has been sitting only sporadically since mid-March, given advice from public health officials that Canadians avoid large gatherings amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Three Senate committees have been struck and begun to meet virtually, and a small number of Senators have met in the Chamber for several single-day sittings to pass emergency relief legislation brought forward by the government.

It's not yet clear when the Senate will resume fully attended sittings in the Chamber, or when the remaining Senate committees will be struck. Senate leaders reached an agreement on the composition of committees in March, but have not yet formally struck any committees besides the Internal Economy, Finance, and Social Affairs committees. Efforts to get more committees up and running virtually have been hampered by logistical and technological barriers.

The revival of the Progressive Senate Group will force Senate leaders to rejig their agreement on committee seats. Under the agreement hashed out earlier this year, the PSG was not officially given committee seats for its members because it did not have official standing in the Senate. Instead, the seats were divided up between the ISG, the Conservatives, and the Canadian Senators

Group, and those three groups then pledged to pass on some of the seats that their members didn't want to non-affiliated Senators including the Progressives.

The leader of the PSG, Sen. Jane Cordy (Nova Scotia) told *The Hill Times* earlier this month that those groups would have had the power to take those seats back from PSG members if they so desired.

Sen. Woo told *The Hill Times* last week that he did not interpret the agreement that way, and believed that the PSG members would have had those seats for good.

Now that the PSG has official status, Senate leaders would have to "reconsider" committee composition, said Sen. Woo. He said that may not mean tearing up the old agreement right away.

"With the PSG now a recognized group, we have to reconsider committee memberships, there's no question about that. But whether we want to return to negotiations now I think is a separate question, there may not be a rush to do so," he said.

Senate leaders may also eventually have to renegotiate an agreement reached this spring on how to divide up the funding for the Senate's various groups. The PSG lost its funding for a research and administrative staff after it lost official status.

However, the PSG could lose that status again as soon as this August, when PSG Sen. Lillian Dyck (Saskatchewan) turns 75, the age for mandatory retirement from the Red Chamber. If no other Senators join the PSG before then, the group will drop below the nine-member threshold when Sen. Dyck retires. Several more PSG Senators are scheduled to retire in the next few years.

Sen. Cordy has been trying to recruit Senators from the ISG, and told *The Hill Times* earlier this month that some have expressed an interest in joining her group. She said she will also pitch any newly-appointed Senators on joining the group. There are currently nine vacancies in the Senate that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) could fill at any time.

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THE HILL TIMES



# Feds should use anti-racism strategy to tackle anti-Asian sentiments in wake of pandemic, say experts

The feds should ask jurisdictions to gather more data on race, language, and economic status to better illuminate how the virus is affecting certain populations, says Fo Niemi, executive director of Montreal-based Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations.

BY PALAK MANGAT

Amid reports of a rise in anti-Asian racism driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, some advocates and critics are calling on the federal government to use its anti-racism strategy to respond to those threats, with experts saying it should redirect funds to more targeted initiatives.

Avvy Go, a director with the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic in Toronto, said the pandemic has highlighted the “shortcomings” in the feds’ strategy, which was unveiled last June.

“If you look at the strategy, it doesn’t have anything that could put the government in a position to respond to the rise of racism, particularly anti-Chinese and anti-Asian racism during a pandemic,” Ms. Go said.

The strategy makes explicit reference to tackling anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, Islamophobic, and Anti-Semitic racism and discrimination, but, Ms. Go said, more can be done to tackle the rise in incidents across the country in the past few months.

“From my perspective, after COVID-19, we need to look at more broadly how the different racialized groups are being affected,” said Ms. Go. “In the case of the Asian and Chinese community, it’s that very ‘in your face’ rise of hatred towards our communities. That may persist after COVID-19, as so many people have lost their jobs and they are looking for someone to blame, so we cannot assume that just because the pandemic is over, that that kind of racism will end.”

One new funding stream flowing out of the strategy is the \$15-million Anti-Racism Action Program, spread out over three years. Irfan Chaudhry, director of the Office of Human Rights, Diversity, and Equity at MacEwan University in Edmonton, said his office applied to the program in December. A call for proposals opened last September and closed on Jan. 13, Heritage spokesperson Amy Mills wrote in a May 19 email, with a decision expected “in the late summer.”

“A lot of this leads to a big question mark, in terms of you have this plan, you have this commitment to funding, and now, of course, we have this global pandemic,” said Mr. Chaudhry.

That funding was designed to support projects focused on reducing employment barriers and promoting participation in sports, arts and culture, among other efforts. Mr. Chaudhry’s proposal pitched creating an online tool for people to access information on what to do if they witness discrimination in a sports setting.

“Those are the type of things where, prior to COVID, you’d be able to get a broader approach to different areas you’re observing and see racial discrimination occur [in],” said Mr. Chaudhry. “But I think in the post-COVID world, it’s really important that the funding streams are still available to,

be spent by the end of March, but Heritage allowed the group to defer about 40 per cent of it to September, said Ms. Rosenberg, as some of the events had to be put on hold due to limits on gatherings.

The group was hoping to use the money in the run-up to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21, but is now looking to move some of its events online, which could take place in the following weeks and months, she said.

While the combined \$30-million listed in the strategy for CS-MARI and ARAP is “a drop in the bucket” for a nationwide response outside of a pandemic, Ms. Rosenberg said the overall strategy was a “welcome” step in recognition that there are systemic inequalities faced by many in the country, which are being brought to the fore thanks to the pandemic.

certain demographics over others, “because of who they are.”

“We’re facing a bit of a catch-22. People on the ground are experiencing a lot of acts of harassment and violence. The institutions are not responding, either in words or actions, and somewhere people fall between the cracks and the data will not reflect the situation that people are experiencing,” he said.

According to the feds’ strategy, \$6.2-million has been set aside to “increase reliable, usable, and comparable data and evidence regarding discrimination,” by allowing Statistics Canada to over sample and break down numbers by “meaningful categories of race and/or ethno-cultural origins.”

Statistics Canada is receiving about \$4.2-million over three years, spokesperson Martin Magnon wrote in a May 16 email, \$3-million

by a customer in a Vancouver convenience store in March. Police said some comments were linked to COVID-19.

“The challenge in dealing with the Asian communities on matters of racism is you’re dealing with a community that has historically and culturally been very quiet and often reluctant to speak out and report these incidents to authorities, and that’s a cultural dimension that has to be taken into consideration,” said Mr. Niemi.

Echoing worries that it can be difficult for people to “formalize” their experiences, NDP diversity critic Lindsay Mathyssen (London-Fanshawe, Ont.) said that more core funding, rather than project-based funding, is “something that governments haven’t committed to for quite some time.”

“A pandemic, if anything, really sheds light on the fact that you can have all these organizations doing good work on projects, but when they have project-based funding, they can’t turn to then deal with unexpected emergencies for crises like we’re seeing now. Or to then switch that funding into something that will have meaningful effects in emergency situations like COVID-19,” she said.

Mr. Niemi called for “concerted action” from the federal government, saying he has yet to see “proactive leadership” from it.

## Anti-racism work seen as ‘soft’ work, says former Heritage adviser

Manjot Bains, a former senior program adviser with Heritage and current producer of *the Nameless Collective Podcast*, which focuses on the history of Vancouver’s South Asian community, said she did not have input in the development of the federal strategy, but worked on the ground to implement it at a regional level.

“The idea of working on stuff like anti-racism, is kind of a ‘soft’ subject. It’s not an imperative; it’s not integral to what the government is doing,” she said. “It’s more of a ‘this would be nice to work on because it’s important,’ but it’s not as important as getting money to small businesses or students or individuals.”

She said reports of incidents to police and authorities “don’t even scratch the surface” of what might be happening on the ground.

Ms. Go noted that has led some groups, such as the Chinese Canadian National Council’s Toronto chapter, to begin gathering data on incident reports on its own website in wake of the pandemic.

The CCNC has set up a form that asks questions like the age, gender, jurisdiction, time, location, and type of discrimination faced, and a webpage notes that the project is funded through Heritage. Reached last week for comment, a spokesperson for the council said that it is not ready to share any data but will be doing so “in the coming weeks.”

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Diversity and Inclusion Minister Bardish Chagger's mandate letter charges her with expanding the feds' anti-racism strategy and ensuring that community programs conform to the goals set out in the strategy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

at least initially, focus on how the pandemic has really exposed an underbelly of racial discrimination that’s still occurring in our country.”

He said he “can be mindful” if funding for such broader programs is limited to help Ottawa redirect its funds toward tackling anti-Asian and anti-Chinese sentiments, as there is need for the feds to support “more direct aspects of where people are experiencing discrimination unfairly because of the COVID-19 situation.”

According to Rhonda Rosenberg, executive director of the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, the government is already allowing flexibility in some funding in light of the pandemic.

Her group was awarded \$100,000 in February under the Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiative Program. It is not a new initiative, but Ms. Mills noted the strategy has \$15-million in funding over three years, much like the ARAP funding.

At the time of the announcement, the \$100,000 was supposed to

“The virus is demonstrating to us that when we have inequalities, the people who are made vulnerable by those inequalities are also made more vulnerable to this virus,” Ms. Rosenberg said in an interview last week.

## Canada might ‘miss the boat’ on data, warns advocate

Fo Niemi, executive director of Montreal-based Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations, said that “the concern that we have is that we have not seen much of a federal response in concrete terms to this rising tide of anti-Asian violence and hate.”

His group is one of several calling on authorities to track how the virus is affecting minority groups, as current data focuses on age and gender, but, he said, little is available on race, language, and economic status.

The feds should ask jurisdictions to gather more data on these demographic factors, he said, adding that Canada might “miss the boat” on collecting valuable data that can show the extent to which the pandemic is impacting

of which will support its oversampling work for the 2020 General Social Survey collection, for which work will begin “later this year.”

The survey program focuses on one core topic or question and gathers stats on social trends, monitoring changes in living conditions, and overall well-being. In 2018, for example, the agency collected figures on the theme of caregiving, but it did not “over sample for specific ethno-cultural groups in an effort to achieve the granularity of detail that is being sought out for GSS Social Identity,” wrote Mr. Magnon.

While the feds have signalled a willingness to gather more data, Mr. Niemi said quantitative figures on hate crime remain limited, a fact police in Vancouver acknowledged as recently as last month.

In that city, 11 hate crimes were reported in March, and police say five “had an anti-Asian element.” By comparison, there were 12 anti-Asian hate crimes reported for all of 2019. This year, one incident involved an elderly man with dementia being shouted at and shoved

## Books &amp; Big Ideas

# Flanagan documents how successful First Nations are achieving prosperity

*The Wealth of First Nations*, by Tom Flanagan, published by the Fraser Institute, is one of this year's five finalists for the prestigious Donner Prize, the best public policy book of the year. Here's an excerpt.

BY TOM FLANAGAN

Prior to the 19th century, the large majority of human beings lived in what today would be considered poverty. In all complex societies, an elite stratum used its control of political and economic institutions to enjoy a varied diet, clean water, formal education, and relief from long hours of manual labour, but such luxuries were not for ordinary people.

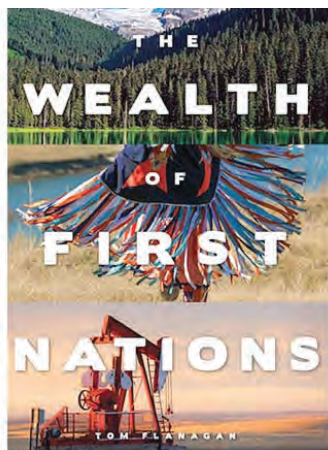
For causes that are still debated, things came together in the 19th century to make possible a gradual extension of these luxuries to the broad mass of the population. A new society emerged characterized by universal education, the harnessing of science to engineering, the division of labour and mass production, multiplication of energy through use of hydrocarbon fuels, the extension of private property rights and free markets, and inclusive political institutions based on constitutionalism, representative government, and a widely distributed franchise.

Canada has thrived under the new form of social organization, achieving rank among the world's leaders in political freedom and stability, material standard of living, longevity, advanced education, relative equality between the sexes, and many other economic and social benefits. Immigrants from all over the world have been able to benefit from Canada's achievements by participating as individuals in the society—becoming citizens and voting in elections, earning income from employment and investment, attending educational institutions, and raising children who can progress even farther. Members of some groups also work hard at retaining a distinctive religious or cultural identity, but that doesn't compromise their prosperity as long as they also take part as individuals and families in Canada's wider social and economic life.

There is, however, a serious problem of prosperity for Indigenous people, who did not volun-

tarily choose to join Canadians in seeking the benefits of the modern form of social organization. Rather, that model was imposed upon them by colonialism, often with harshly coercive methods such as the prohibition of their inherited languages and religious practices, so they are naturally conflicted about it. Some have reacted rather like immigrants, pursuing employment, education, and social participation while also often trying to preserve a distinctive cultural inheritance. Others remain outside the wider society and are largely shut off from the economic and social benefits that most Canadians enjoy. Let's look at some numbers.

In the 2016 census, 1,673,785 of Canada's 34.5 million people labelled themselves as having an aboriginal identity. Of the aboriginal identifiers, 977,230 called themselves First Nations, Registered, or treaty Indians, while 587,540 called themselves Métis, i.e., being of mixed aboriginal and other ancestry.



*The Wealth of First Nations*, by Tom Flanagan, published by the Fraser Institute, 2019. Image courtesy of the Fraser Institute

A comparison between Métis and First Nations highlights the focus of this book. The Métis were designated as an aboriginal people in the Constitution Act, 1982, but they have never been separated from Canadian society in the same way as Indians. Except for the eight small Métis settlements in Alberta, there are no Métis reserves, no Métis Act, no history of separate legal and political status. So how have they done in Canadian society?

Other indicators would show the same pattern: the Métis occupy an intermediate position between First Nations and non-aboriginal Canadians, often closer to the latter than the former. The pattern has been the same as long as data have been available. The disparity between Métis and First Nations would be even larger if we looked at the approximately half of First Nations people who live on Indian reserves. Unfortunately, detailed data from the

2016 census on the characteristics of reserve populations were not yet available at the time of writing. However, data from previous census years have always shown that First Nation people living on reserve were less well off than Métis or indeed than First Nations people living off reserve.

So the most serious concern, and the focus of this book, is not about the prosperity of Indigenous people as such but about First Nations people living in reserve communities. The question is, is it possible for people living in these circumstances, which make it difficult to participate fully in Canadian society as individuals, to participate communally in such a way as to achieve a standard of living similar to that of other Canadians? One answer, going back to the first *Indian Act* of 1876, is no: First Nations people must be enfranchised as individuals after a period of proper education required to learn the arts of civilization. But First Nations communities have rejected this full-scale assimilation, as illustrated in the vehement reaction to the federal government's 1969 White Paper. Those in remote locations have also usually rejected the less sweeping but still drastic option of relocation to a site near a town or city where economic opportunities are more abundant. Hence arises the question of how First Nations' prosperity can be achieved through collective rather than individual participation in Canadian society.

## Making and taking

As I am using the concept of "making" here, it includes the notion of "trading." Thus augmented, "making" means the creation of wealth by offering for sale or lease something owned by the makers. This could be the makers' time, as in contracts of employment. It could be objects that the makers have fabricated, books they have written, manufacturing processes they have patented. It could be land, buildings, or natural resources they own. In all cases, makers enter the economic marketplace through exchanges for mutual benefit in voluntary transactions. Makers have things that other people want, and they are willing to exchange some or all of these things for different things that will make them better off.

"Taking," on the other hand, is involuntary. It means using the power of the state to appropriate the wealth that others have generated through voluntary transactions. It is part of what Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), in their well-known book *Why Nations Fail*, call "extractive institutions." Taxation for purposes of income redistribution is an obvious example. Less obvious but sometimes even more rewarding is what



Tom Flanagan, pictured at the Manning Centre's conference in Ottawa in 2012. 'In the preceding years, I had done a number of specialized studies on the theme of First Nations' prosperity, published on the websites of the Frontier Centre and the Fraser Centre. I wanted to pull all this research together into a more coherent whole, and that became the book.' *The Hill Times* file photograph by Jake Wright

modern economists call rent-seeking—using political power to change the rules surrounding ownership and exchange, to steer the benefits toward a selected group. A classic Canadian example of rent-seeking is the supply management of dairy products, which has created a set of rules that apply nowhere else in the Canadian economy: administered prices, production quotas, and high protective tariffs to reduce the effect of foreign competition.

For First Nations today, "making" means earning money by engaging in what I call "community capitalism." A First Nation can make money and create jobs for its members by organizing or investing in businesses, selling goods and services to consumers, leasing land for residential or business purposes, and licensing the extraction of natural resources. This is the general way of creating wealth in a free-market society, except that First Nations are doing it as communities rather than as individuals.

First Nations engage in "taking" when they lobby for more extensive government services financed by general tax revenues, litigate to create potentially profitable rights such as the duty of consultation, seek compensation for past grievances, and demand a share of resource revenues generated by others. In these instances, they are using the power of government, including both the political and the judicial processes, to acquire more money, land, and property rights.

Even if making and taking are not watertight compartments, it is a useful common-sense distinction. Hence this book is divided into two parts corresponding to these two main strategies of acquiring wealth. As I go along, I will try to point out ways in which they may reinforce or work at cross purposes with each other. The first part looks at how First Nations have increased their well-being by engaging in the Canadian economy through community capitalism; the second part examines the results of their attempts to secure more control over resources through politics and legal action.

## The need for evidence

I agree with the historian of science Alice Dreger that "the pursuit of evidence is probably

the most pressing moral imperative of our time," particularly in the highly politicized field of Indigenous studies. The purpose of the book is to provide empirical evidence about the well-being of First Nations. Which factors are associated with prosperity, and which with poverty? The emphasis is on laws, policies, and strategies that are under the control of governments—federal, provincial, and, most importantly, First Nations themselves. The findings in the book are meant to be of practical assistance to political leaders at all levels, suggesting what is likely to contribute to elevating the well-being of First Nations.

The evidence presented here suggests that improvement will only happen if the changes allow First Nations to become more self-determining, more able to take advantage of the economic opportunities around them, and more agile in using their own governments to promote the well-being of their people. This book contains many detailed findings about laws, programs, policies and strategies, which all cohere around one major conclusion: whatever the wrongs and calamities of the past, the future prosperity of First Nations will depend mainly upon their own initiatives, their own efforts, their own choices. Those—not government transfer payments and administrative reorganization—will build a genuine "Wealth of First Nations."

*Tom Flanagan is a professor emeritus of political science and distinguished fellow at the school of public policy at the University of Calgary. This excerpt was reprinted with permission from The Wealth of First Nations. The five finalists for this year's \$50,000 Donner Prize, the best book on public policy are: Breakdown: The Pipeline Debate and the Threat to Canada's Future, by Dennis McConaghy; Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline, by Darrell Bricker and John Ibbittson; Living With China: A Middle Power Finds Its Way, by Wendy Dobson; The Tangled Garden: A Canadian Cultural Manifesto For The Digital Age, by Richard Stursberg; and The Wealth of First Nations, by Tom Flanagan. The winner will be announced in the fall.*

*The Hill Times*

## Parliamentary Calendar



**Christy Clark to discuss why policy-makers missed so many opportunities to prepare for pandemic on May 27 at 4:30 p.m**

### MONDAY, MAY 25

**House Not Sitting**—The House has been suspended until Monday, May 25, and the spring schedule is still not confirmed due to the global pandemic. However, during this adjournment time, a Special COVID-19 Pandemic Committee has been established, composed of all members of the House, to meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The Wednesday meeting will be in person, while the Tuesday and Thursday sessions will be held virtually. As per the original sitting calendar, if the House resumes on May 25, it will sit for four weeks, until its scheduled adjournment on June 23, but none of this has been confirmed yet. The House was also scheduled to adjourn again for three months and to return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks. It was scheduled to adjourn for one



Former premier of British Columbia Christy Clark will speak at a McGill University-hosted webinar on Wednesday, May 27 about missed opportunities to prepare for the pandemic. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

week and to sit again from Oct. 19 until Nov. 6. It was scheduled to break again for one week and to sit again from Nov. 16 to Dec. 11. And that would be it for 2020. We'll update you once the House calendar has been confirmed.

**Senate Not Sitting**—The Senate has extended its suspension due to the COVID-19 virus until June 2. The June possible sitting days were June 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, and 19. The Senate was scheduled to sit June 2-4; June 9-11; June 16-18; and June 22, 23, it was scheduled to break on June 24 for St. Jean Baptiste Day; and it was scheduled to sit June 25 and June

26. The Senate was scheduled to break from June 29 until Sept. 22. The Senate's possible September sitting days are Sept. 21, 25, 28. It's scheduled to sit Sept. 22-24 and Sept. 29-Oct. 1, with a possible sitting day on Friday, Oct. 2. The possible Senate sitting days are Oct. 5, 9, 19, 23, 26, and 30. It's scheduled to sit Oct. 6-8; it takes a break from Oct. 12-16; it will sit Oct. 20-22; and Oct. 27-29. The November possible Senate days are: Nov. 2, 6, 16, 20, 23, 27, 30. It's scheduled to sit Nov. 3-5; it will take a break from Nov. 9-13; it will sit Nov. 17-19; and Nov. 24-26. The possible December Senate sitting days are: Dec. 4, 7, and 11. The Senate is scheduled to sit Dec. 1-3; Dec. 8-10 and it will sit Dec. 14-18. We'll also update you once the Senate calendar has been confirmed.

### TUESDAY, MAY 26

**The Implementation of CUSMA: Relevance Post-COVID-19**—The ratification of CUSMA is experiencing delays but is still on the horizon for Canada, the United States and Mexico. Join the C.D. Howe Institute to hear Mexico's Undersecretary of Foreign Trade, Luz María de la Mora present on the new trade deal's implementation and fostering a more prosperous relationship between Mexico and Canada. C.D. Howe Institute members and their guests can register online for the event, which takes place Tuesday, May 26, from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 27

**Looking Through the Retro-Scope**—Former premier of British Columbia Christy Clark will speak on "Looking Through the Retro-Scope," exploring why policy makers missed so many opportunities to prepare for the pandemic, and why governments frequently fail to learn from history, hosted by McGill University, on May 27, at 4:30 p.m. Register online.

### THURSDAY, MAY 28–SATURDAY, JUNE 6

**Hot Docs Festival Online**—Hot Docs will be presented online this year because of the pandemic, from May 28 to June 6. Introduced at the 2017 Hot Docs Festival, the \$50,000 award and cash prize have traditionally been given to the Canadian feature documentary screened at the Hot Docs Festival that receives the highest average rating as determined by audience poll. This year, the award will honour the top five Canadian documentaries in the audience poll and will present each director with a cash prize of \$10,000. The Hot Docs Festival Online will offer more than 135 official selections for at-home audiences to stream directly from [www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca) on its recently launched Hot Docs at Home TVOD platform. Although the festival wraps on June 6, a majority of films will be available for extended post-festival viewing until June 24. The film lineup is available at [www.hotdocs.ca/festivalonline](http://www.hotdocs.ca/festivalonline).

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 8

**Canada's Foremost Fintech Conference FFCON20**—Featuring high-growth start-ups and leading industry experts across fintech sectors including digital banking, P2P finance, AI, capital markets, Wealthtech, payments, crypto, and blockchain. July 8-9. Speakers

include: Robert Asselin, senior director public policy, BlackBerry; Paul Schulte, founder and editor, Schulte Research; Craig Asano, founder and CEO, NCFA; George Bordianu, co-founder and CEO, Balance; Julien Brazeau, partner, Deloitte; Alixe Cormick, president, Venture Law Corporation; Nikola Danaylov, founder, keynote speaker, author futurist, Singularity Media; Pam Draper, president and CEO, Bitvo; Justin Hartzman, co-founder and CEO, CoinSmart; Peter-Paul Van Hoeken, founder & CEO, FrontFundr; Cynthia Huang, CEO and co-founder, Altcoin Fantasy; Austin Hubbel, CEO and co-founder, Consilium Crypto; Patrick Mandic, CEO, Mavennet; Mark Morissette, co-founder & CEO, Foxquilt; Cato Pastoll, co-founder & CEO, Lending Loop; Bernd Petak, investment partner, Northmark Ventures; Ali Pourdad, Pourdad Capital Partners, Family Office; Richard Prior, global head of policy and research, FDATA; Richard Remillard, president, Remillard Consulting Group; Jennifer Reynolds, president & CEO, Toronto Finance International; Jason Saltzman, partner, Gowling WLG Canada; James Wallace, co-chair and co-CEO, Exponential; Alan Wunsche, CEO & chief token officer, Tokenfunder; and Danish Yusuf, founder and CEO, Zensurance. For more information, please visit: <https://fintechandfunding.com/>.

### FRIDAY, AUG. 21

**Conservative Party Leadership**—The federal Conservative Party's Leadership Election Organizing Committee, also known as LEOC, announced on April 29 that Aug. 21 is the deadline for mail-in ballots, after the leadership was suspended on March 26 due to the global pandemic. The party says the winner will be announced once the ballots can be safely counted.

*The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to [news@hilltimes.com](mailto:news@hilltimes.com) by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper. We can't guarantee inclusion of every event, but we will definitely do our best. Events can be updated daily online, too.*

*The Hill Times*



Government House Leader Pablo Rodriguez, pictured May 14, 2020, on the Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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