Michael Harris | Palak Mangat | Sheila Copps | David Crane | Susan Riley | Gerry Nicholls | Andrew Cardozo



# **HELL TIME**

# **Morneau:** to be continued or not? p. 12

**Opinion** 

What else is happening while we worry about COVID? p. 10 An October surprise almost inevitable in U.S.

THIRTY-FIRST YEAR, NO. 1752

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020 \$5.00

### News

### Staff harassment 'more widespread,' could happen again, say former Don Meredith Senate employees

### BY PETER MAZERREUW

The Senate's staff harassment problems run deeper than Don Meredith, say two of his former employees, and the Red Chamber has not done enough to confront its own failures to protect staff from their bosses. "I would say it's more widespread," said Jane, one of Mr.

Meredith's former staffers, in an interview last week. Jane is not her real name. The

Hill Times agreed not to name the

'Beirut is bleeding':

disbelief in wake of

Lebanese-

Canadian MPs

express horror,

Continued on page 14

### News

# 94922 81130 Publications Mail Agreement #40068926

massive explosionBY MIKE LAPOINTEFollowing a massive explosionthat ripped through Beirut'sport area on Aug. 5, killing morethan 100 and injuring 5,000 oth-ers, Lebanese-Canadian MPs areclosely monitoring the situation asit continues to unfold, but are also

praising the resiliency of the com-

munities here and in Lebanon.

Continued on page 15

# Ottawa, we have a problem: reconciliation requires structural changes on the Hill

Indigenous inclusion, with enough numbers to be heard, is fundamental to any democratic structure, especially for one that claims to represent Indigenous peoples in Canada. This also applies to the civil service. We cannot say Canada's political system and civil service are representative until Indigenous voices are heard and respected on every bill, and in every debate, and at every parliamentary and cabinet committee table. The upcoming generation of Indigenous leaders will not accept anything less; not a watereddown toothless pilot, and not a tearful apology to cover up lack of action. We are part of the country, and it's time to change structures to respect our voices. Read Rose LeMay's column on p. 3



### News

Would-be Conservative leaders wooing Quebec dairy farmers, but organizers say they won't decide the race this time

### BY PETER MAZEREEUW

The three leading candidates in the Conservative leadership race have all reached out to Quebec's dairy farmers with promises to protect the supply management system, in a bid to win support from a group that may have swung the last contest in favour of now outgoing Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer.

Continued on page 16

### News

'The vast majority of the TFWs would rather come here and get their PR': some MPs signal support for extending permanent residency to Canada's migrant farm labourers

### BY BEATRICE PAEZ ど PALAK MANGAT

As the pandemic brings renewed attention to the vulnerability of migrant workers in the agriculture sector, some



HEARD ON THE HILL

by Palak Mangat

### **'For those of us serving in** elected office, political life can be incredibly intense and it often becomes allencompassing': byelection speculation begins after Liberal **MP Levitt announces he will** resign his York Centre seat



 $\mathbf{B}$  yelection speculation started shortly after Liberal backbencher Michael Levitt announced he will be resigning from his seat for York Centre, effective Sept. 1. Mr. Levitt will then head up the non-profit Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies as its president and CEO. "For those of us serving in elected office, political life can be incredibly intense and it often becomes all-encompassing," wrote Mr. Levitt in an Aug. 4 statement shared to his Facebook. Recalling "surreal moments" like sleeping overnight on the Hill for marathon Commons votes, Mr. Levitt described his time since he was first elected in 2015 as "the greatest honour of my life," but one that has not been without consequence.

"While it is an incredible privilege to serve the people of York Centre, I know deep down that now is the time for me to put family first and come back home, both physically and mentally." Mr. Levitt has become known on the Hill for his efforts to promote human rights and fight anti-Semitism. He co-sponsored in 2018 the Canadian Jewish Heritage Month Act with Conservative Senator Linda Frum in a successful effort that designated May as the officially recognized month to honour and celebrate Jewish people's contribution to the country. Mr. Levitt chaired the House Foreign Affairs Committee and is a founding member for the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee. Resignations usually trigger byelections, and speculation has already begun about who will throw their hat into the ring in York Centre: Global News' David Akin mused on Twitter if the Conservatives might recruit leadership hopeful Leslyn Lewis to run for the seat, and former Conservative staffer Regan Watts threw his support behind former Conservative campaign strategist, and now public relations exec, **Melissa Lantsman**. "Regardless of party, we need more women like Melissa to serve," Mr. Watts tweeted.

Speaking of summertime speculation, there's some buzz that the prime minister will shuffle his cabinet by the end of this month.

Foreign Affairs

Times photograph by

### A few parliamentary reporters will be CAJ mentors for 2020

The Canadian Association of Journalists' mentorship program announced 16 journalists to its roster of reporters, editors, and columnists who are looking to be paired with early-career CAJ members wanting to break into the industry. Maclean's Paul Wells, APTN National News' Francine Compton, and CBC national reporter David Thurton, and CBC Ottawa's Adrian Harewood are among those in Ottawa. Mr. Thurton is at the broadcaster's parliamentary bureau, and Ms. Compton moved to the city in 2016 to lead the bureau and network's political show, Nation to Nation.

Other CAJ mentors are Global News' Mike De Souza; CBC managing editor of digital news Andree Lau; Arif Noorani, executive producer of CBC Podcasts; Brigitte Noël, investigative reporter with Radio-Canada's Enquête; Emma Gilchrist, editor-in-chief of The Narwhal; freelance visual journalist Jesse Winter; Ryerson University journalism professor Karyn Pugliese; CTV chief news anchor Lisa LaFlamme: Maclean's magazine's Nick Taylor-Vaisey; CBC/Radio Canada's Omayra Issa; and freelance sports journalist Shireen Ahmed. "As our industry continues to go through challenges, it is more important than ever that we stick together," said newly-named CAJ president Brent Jolly in an Aug. 4 statement."And part of sticking together is helping each other to learn, grow and thrive in our craft." The pilot project makes up part of the CAJ's professional development offerings for its members, allowing mentees to meet with their mentor for one hour per week for six



weeks. Those interested need to be a CAJ member and apply by Aug. 28.

### **Independent Senator Murray** Sinclair joins Indigenous firm

A Manitoba-based Indigenous law firm got some star power last week after Independent Senator Murray Sinclair announced he will be joining its ranks. Sen. Sinclair, the former chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba and the second in Canada, said on Aug. 4 he will be joining Cochrane Saxberg Barristers and Solicitors, a child protection, employment and labour, and Indigenous advocacy law firm. "I've always known I wanted to return to the legal field before the end of my career, and I'm thrilled" to join the group "and be a part of building this emerging leading Indigenous law firm," he said in a release.



Independent Senator Murray Sinclair, pictured in March 2018, is joining a Manitoba-based Indigenous law firm. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Established in 2017, the group has helped in settlement agreements between the feds and First Nations, and represented clients before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal about racial harassment in the workplace. Most of the group's lawyers are Indigenous and it is looking to expand its work nationally. Harold Cochrane, one of the founding partners, told The Canadian Press that having the 69-year-old Senator join his group "is kind of like having Wayne Gretzky join your hockey team," counting Sen. Sinclair as "Canada's most respected Indigenous rights advocate." For his part, Sen. Sinclair, who was also the associate chief justice in Manitoba, said he wants to help lawyers better understand traditional laws and their intersection with files like child welfare and development. He was named to the upper chamber in 2016 and may stay there until 2026 upon the mandatory retirement age of 75. "We'll see how things go as we get to the point where one or the other will overwhelm me, maybe both," he said of his dual roles."But right now, my plan is, when the Senate calls, I'll be sitting."

### **Canada-American Business Council names new advisers**

A handful of former Hillites were named to the advisory board of the Canadian American Business Council last week, including one-time Conservative leader Rona Ambrose, former Liberal MP Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, and former Conserva

CAJ's 2020 mentors: Arif Noorani, top left, Andree Lau, David Thurton, Omayra Issa, Brigitte Noël, Francine Compton, Karyn Pugliese, and Adrian Harewood. Mike De Souza, lower left, Nick Taylor-Vaisey, Emma Gilchrist, Lisa Laflamme, Frances Bula. Jesse Winter. Paul Wells, and Shireen Ahmed. Photographs courtesy of the CAJ

tive MP Lisa Raitt who was ousted in last year's election. Former Liberal B.C. premier Christy Clark, one-time Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall, and former federal Liberal foreign affairs minister John Manley are among the others named to the list.

The group has traditionally been made up of former American and Canadian ambassadors, but the decision to expand it "is a reflection of the importance of the Canada/U.S. relationship as it enters a new era in the wake of a global pandemic and new North American trade agreement," said the council's CEO, Maryscott Greenwood, in an Aug. 4 release. With the additions, the group aims to contribute "meaningfully to helping ensure that the U.S. and Canada face the world's challenges together," added Ms. Greenwood, who is also a partner with Crestview Strategy and has been named to The Hill Times' list of top 100 lobbyists.

### Hill staffers bid adieu

Travis Gordon, a senior policy adviser for Health Canada who worked on files like food safety laws, tobacco and vaping, and Canada's Food Guide, wrapped up his time with the government last week. Serving for three years under three health ministers-Jane Philpott, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and Patty Hajdu—Mr. Gordon started as an Atlantic adviser before making his way to the policy team."It's an odd thing to leave a job like that in the middle of a global pandemic, but if you're always waiting for the 'right time' you'll never move an inch," he tweeted Aug. 2. Among the perks he's looking forward to are "only having one cell phone for a while," he joked, and "combining practice with theory over the next few years to sharpen my skills. It's been a slice, Government of Canada.'

He will now go on to pursue a master's degree at Carleton University. Mr. Gordon isn't the only staffer to leave the Hill in recent weeks; Gabrielle Cesvet, who headed up Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's speechwriting, left the PMO on July 31. "I've been a private citizen for 3 days now and I've reached out for my work phone more times than I can count," she tweeted Aug. 3, jokingly adding "This is going well. I['m] really good at relaxing."

pmangat@hilltimes.com The Hill Times

### CORRECTION: The Hill Times

Re:"In the time of the pandemic, MPs, cabinet ministers wear their masks in public," (The Hill Times, Aug. 3, p. 20), the cutline incorrectly identified Privy Council President Dominic LeBlanc as his late father and former GG, Romeo LeBlanc. The Hill Times obviously knows who Dominic LeBlanc is, but here he is again, for good measure. The Hill Times apologizes for this error.



### **Opinion**

### Ottawa, we have a problem: reconciliation requires structural changes on the Hill

be ignored.



Rose LeMay Stories, Myths, and Truths

TTAWA—In 2015, the Truth and Recon-Ociliation Commission released the 94 Calls to Action, a roadmap for Canada to find closure on the era of Indian residential schools and to ensure we don't repeat history. What has changed since 2015 to ensure we don't repeat history? Dr. Eva Jewell and Ian Mosby recently wrote in the Yellowhead Institute (https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/12/17/calls-to-action-accountability-a-status-update-on-reconciliat-ion/) that *nine* of the 94 calls to action have been completed.

What is holding back real action? Performative action (doing the action for the

publicity or doing just enough to avoid negative public-ity), and the lack of structural accountability for change. Quite simply, no-body is holding the country to account.

This is the first in a series of columns presenting different approaches to structure reconciliation, based on international and wise practices.

Let's start with political structures. Ottawa, we have a problem.

There are nine Indigenous MPs in

federal office and about 24 in provincial/ territorial offices. In its history, Ontario has only elected five Indigenous politicians. Alberta and Quebec do not currently have any Indigenous representation, and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have never elected an Indigenous politician. A total of about 33 seems like a good number but they are spread out across the country, and even on the Hill they are spread out across committees. Sol Mamakwa from Kingfisher Lake First Nation shared in Maclean's last week that "as a First Nations MPP in Ontario ... I cannot deny my loneliness." Here are some ideas to fix the problem:

we bring in Indigenous candidate proportion requirements; a model of Indigenous representational governance; and an Indigenous Senate.

Political parties at the federal and provincial/territorial level could be required by law to field a certain percentage of Indigenous candidates and, no, it won't lower standards, and, yes, there will be Indigenous people who are interested. We need more Indigenous candidates to push the conversation to be inclusive at the local



Imagine if there were 40 Indigenous MPs invested in Bill C-3, the legislation to strengthen civilian review of the RCMP and Canada Border Agency? It's safe to say that Indigenous people would be legally required to be part of any civilian oversight structure, writes Rose LeMav. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

structure. How about the debates regarding the COVID-19 vaccine trials? If we had 40 Indigenous MPs, then perhaps questions would have been asked why the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force includes no Indigenous voice (or any people of colour apparently), and demand that any vaccine trial includes Indigenous people? Changing the discourse on the Hill

party level. More Indigenous candidates leads to more Indigenous politicians. We need more Indigenous politicians to push the conversation to be more inclusive in every single debate and in every hallway conversation on the Hill. One Indigenous voice in committee is too easily ignored, but three or four Indigenous voices cannot

Imagine if there were 40 Indigenous MPs invested in Bill C-3, the legislation to

and Canada Border Agency? It's safe to say that Indigenous people would be legally

required to be part of any civilian oversight

strengthen civilian review of the RCMP

is both about numbers and structure. To increase the number of Indigenous politicians, we have to change the structure through law and policy: we need a law

requiring parties to field Indigenous candidates and we need policies to give excellent support to those candidates. It obviously won't happen without such changes to structure, the past five years have conclusively proven this.

Indigenous inclusion with enough numbers to be heard is fundamental to anv democratic structure, especially for one that claims to represent Indigenous peoples in Canada. This also applies to the civil service. We

cannot say Canada's political system and civil service (including parties, task forces, committees and all resulting products) are representative until Indigenous voices are heard and respected on every bill and in every debate and at every parliamentary committee table. The upcoming generation of Indigenous leaders will not accept anything less, not a watered down toothless pilot, and not a tearful apology to cover up lack of action. We are part of this country, and it's time to change structures to respect our voices.

Stay tuned for my next columns on the Norway model for Sami, inclusion similar to an Indigenous Senate, New Zealand's Maori Party, and an idea based the EU model.

Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the West Coast and the CEO of the Indigenous Reconciliation Group. She writes twice a month about Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. In Tlingit worldview, the stories are the knowledge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.

The Hill Times



FREE EXPRESSION MATTERS



Dear fellow PEN supporter,

I'm writing today to ask you to join me in donating to PEN Canada at this critical time.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, PEN Canada has experienced a 70 percent drop in fundraising revenues.

Like many human rights organizations, PEN's ability to deliver the important work it does depends predominantly on private donations. Not surprisingly, this unprecedented decline in donations presents a significant challenge to the sustainability of PEN's work for the remainder of this fiscal year and perhaps its very survival in the future.

In these days of growing social and political inequity and unrest, we need more than ever to ensure that the voices of writers are heard. But without the support of donors like you and me, PEN Canada's programs and indeed the organization itself are in real danger of collapse.

So today, I am pledging to match up to \$25,000 in your donations until we reach our goal of \$50,000.

Please join me in supporting PEN Canada. Share our message with your friends and colleagues on Facebook and Twitter.





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Donate today and help us continue to celebrate literature, protect freedom of expression and ensure that our voices are heard.

Sincerely,

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Margaret Atwood Honorary Vice-President, PEN International

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A sprawling federal building complex with space for 22,000 to 25,000 occupants, Tunney's Pasture is located four kilometres east of the downtown core in Ottawa. Bordered by Parkdale Avenue to the east, Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway to the north, and Northwestern Avenue to the west, there are a number of departments on the 121-acre campus, including Statistics Canada, National Resources Canada, and Health Canada. The site includes an LRT station, over 17 buildings, and includes more than 315,000 metres squared of office space. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons* 



Place de Ville, located on Albert Street between Kent Street and Lyon Street, is home to the Canada Revenue Agency and Transport Canada. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

### **'Prudent, gradual, and plan slowly unfolding seven**

Federal departments and agencies are taking numerous precautions and adapting worksites to meet physical distancing requirements, according to the Treasury Board.

### BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Nearly seven weeks after the federal government first addressed how and when federal public servants will return to physical worksites, the Treasury Board Secretariat says the government's approach will be "prudent, gradual, and phased-in," with "no single date for a return to worksites across the government."

The government's approach will follow guidance on workplace safety procedures from Chief Human Resources Officer Nancy Chahwan, and will take recommendations from federal and provincial health authorities, bargaining agents and Occupational Health and Safety committees into account, according to TBS spokesperson Bianca Healy.

"Several departments [and] agencies are also conducting internal engagement activities with employees to ensure plans reflect the needs of the organization," wrote Ms. Healy in an emailed response to *The Hill Times*. "Protecting the health and safety of employees will remain the number one priority throughout this process."

Although a single date for a return has not been set, employees of every organization will be given reasonable notice before being asked to return to a worksite. Federal Departments

and agencies are also con-

tinuing to assess their employees' requirements for access to specialized tools and worksites, according to Ms. Healy, who also noted that public health authorities have signalled that physical distancing requirements will remain in place for some time.

"Most employees will continue working remotely or [in] a combination of physical presence and remote work,"wrote Ms. Healy.

### Duclos issued directive on telework options on March 13

Continued on page 5



The largest office complex in the Outaouais region, Place du Portage is located in the Hull region of Gatineau. Facing the Ottawa River, the complex has space for 10,000 full-time employees in two buildings—one located at 50 Victoria Street and one located at 165 Hotel de Ville Street. The main department in Portage 1 is Industry Canada, with the main department in Portage 2 being Human Resources and Development Canada. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 



Originally built in 1978 and home to around 6,400 federal public servants, Les Terrasses de la Chaudière is home to a number of departments, including Indigenous Services Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission and the Canadian Transportation Agency. Located in Gatineau, the complex consists of 1 Promenade du Portage, 15 and 25 Eddy, and 10 Wellington. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 



### phased-in': public servant return-to-worksite weeks in, but 'no single date' pinned down yet



past the Place de Ville building complex, which consists of four office towers in Ottawa's downtown core, located on Albert Street between Kent and Lyon streets. With more than 4.800 full-time employees and just under 100,000 square metres of office space, the complex is most notably home to Transport Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

#### Continued from page 4

Following a tumultuous and confusing few days at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ottawa, Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos (Quebec, Que.) first issued a directive on March 13 asking heads of agencies, deputy heads, and HR heads to make arrangements to allow telework for employees whenever possible.

Nearly three months later, on June 17, The Hill Times reported that the Treasury Board and public service unions were in talks over the public service's return to the workplace after a threemonth shutdown that sent more than 200,000 employees to work from home.

Five days later, in a June 22 press conference, Mr. Duclos updated Canadians on the easing of



COVID-19 restrictions for public servants, telling reporters that "provinces are at varying paces reopening their economies and restrictions are gradually being eased.

"With that in mind deputy heads have received guidance on how to respond to this easing of restrictions, to support plans to increase access to federal workplaces," said Mr. Duclos. "This guidance which will continue to evolve has been formulated as a result of consultations with bargaining agents and contributions from internal and external experts.

"Noting the health authorities have stated that physical distancing measures should remain, these plans will make provisions for the fact that many public servants will continue to work remotely for some time to come."

Indeed, as plans unfold the health and safety of employees will be an absolute priority for our government," said Mr. Duclos. "Increasing access to federal worksites for employees and the public will be gradual, and planning will vary from organization to organization and from one

location in Canada to the other based on their unique situations."

### 'Still a lot of confusion' around return to workplace plan, says **PSAC** national president

Chris Avlward, national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the federal government's largest public sector union, told The Hill Times that "there is still a lot of confusion" around what a return to the office might look like.

Our members, from what I'm hearing, are still largely in the dark about what a return to the office might look like and when that might happen, so we're disappointed that plans for return to office have been left up to department heads," said Mr. Aylward. "There's a risk that the guidelines in the plan that have been developed will not be followed consistently across the federal public service, so we're getting a little bit antsy.'

Worker safety is a main priority for the union and will prevail in any discussions with Treasury

Board around return to work, he said.

"Until there is a vaccine, which nobody really knows when that's going to happen, but keeping our members and the public safe will be our priority," said Mr. Aylward. "Basically that means allowing employees to work remotely for as long as is needed and ensuring that workplaces have all the appropriate safety measures in place should they return to the workplace.'

Mr. Duclos said in June that the pandemic had shown it was "possible and perhaps practical" for some public servants to work from home permanently. In response, Mr. Aylward told The Hill Times that the pandemic had "created an opportunity to re-think telework in the public service.'

"Changes to our members' working conditions must be negotiated with our union and in full consultation with the membership, so that's something we're keeping our eye on-and how the government is going to approach this telework arrangement going forward.'

mlapointe@hilltimes.com The Hill Times

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, "departments and agencies are taking numerous precautions and implementing various measures to adapt worksites to physical distancing requirements and to protect personnel," such as:

- 1. A maximum number of staff allowed in a building/office at any given time.
- 2. Implementing specific infrastructure measures to maintain physical distancing such as one-way staircases
- designated directional hallways and one-way entrances/exits. 3. Common space restrictions (e.g., no
- cafeteria services). 4. Rotation of personnel on site and
- varied scheduling. 5. Increasing the number of hand sanitiz-
- ing stations, conducting extra cleaning and disinfecting shared work areas.
- 6. Making non-medical masks and personal protective equipment available to employees onsite for when physical distancing is not possible.

Located at 101 Colonel By Drive in downtown Ottawa, the Major-General George R. Pearkes Building is home to just over 4,200 full-time employees with the Department of National Defence, according to the Treasury Board Secretariat. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



# Politics

# Government by bureaucrats may be reality, but it cries out for reform

Since the PM admits that cabinet practised zero due diligence before handing half a billion dollars to WE Charity, and relied totally on the advice of bureaucrats, who were those bureaucrats, and exactly what investigation of this charity's fitness for the job was undertaken? Make it public.



Michael Harris Harris

HCrosbie once told me that 90 per cent of government decisions were in fact made by the public service.

At the time, I was writing a book about the epic collapse of the great northern cod stock off Newfoundland, and Crosbie was Brian Mulroney's fisheries minister.

I asked the minister why he had set such high cod quotas, when fishermen were reporting a disaster brewing in the ocean. They saw it from the stern of their boats—starved skinny fish, when there were fish at all, and no Caplin.

Crosbie's answer was that his experts on Kent Street knew more about the state of the stocks than the men and women who went fishing every day. The DFO dismissed fishermen's assessment as "anecdotal" rather than "scientific."Why did the bureaucrats conclude that the quotas were safe? Because their computer models told them so.

The models, of course, turned out to be fatally wrong, as Ameri-

can expert Dr. Lee Alverson discovered years too late. Crosbie had to return to St. John's and announce the unthinkable—the closure of a fishery that had been prosecuted by 60 nations for 400 years. As a result of Ottawa's bungling, one of the world's great fish stocks was wiped out as a commercial species.

It was a costly blunder at every level. Canadians paid billions for the TAGS program itself to bail out and retrain unemployed fishermen, and retire licences from an overcrowded industry. Too many fishermen chasing too few fish. No one in the public service answered for the ecocatastrophe, the social disaster, or the economic ruination

the economic ruination. I thought of Crosbie's remarks when Justin Trudeau offered his defence of his decision to hand over \$500-million of public money to the WE Charity to run the volunteer grant program for students as part of his government's COVID-19 response. Apparently, Crosbie's insight still holds.

Part of the PM's justification was that it was not really his decision at all. After looking at the problem, his "professional" public service offered the government a "binary" choice. Either choose WE, or have no program at all. The bureaucrats had decided that this charity was the only one that could carry out the mission.

The PM says he pushed back against the initial recommendation, dropping the volunteer grant program from the agenda of a May 8 cabinet meeting. He wanted the public service to



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured on June 18, 2020, speaking to reporters from the Rideau Cottage in Ottawa. When the bureaucracy returned with the same recommendation, Mr. Trudeau followed it, even voted for it in cabinet. The program was endorsed by cabinet on May 22. It was so flawed, the whole thing lasted barely a week as a government program. It remains to be seen how long it will last as a 'scandal,' writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

reassure him that their original finding was correct, and could stand up to the scrutiny he knew was coming because of his own connection to WE.

When the bureaucracy returned with the same recommendation, Trudeau followed it, even voted for it in cabinet. The program was endorsed by cabinet on May 22. It was so flawed, the whole thing lasted barely a week as a government program. It remains to be seen how long it will last as a "scandal."

If the opposition parties get their way, WE will be filling newspapers and newscasts until the truth comes out or the last conspiracy theory falters under the weight of its own overreach. But there are a host of legitimate questions that still need to be asked—and answered—no matter what documents on this deal the government decides to release.

Since the PM admits that cabinet practised zero due diligence before handing half a billion dollars to WE Charity, and relied totally on the advice of bureaucrats, who were those bureaucrats, and exactly what investigation of this charity's fitness for the job was undertaken? Make it public.

Did the responsible members of the PM's "professional" public service know that WE had shelled out more than \$600,000 to Republican political consultants in Washington, as reported by Paul Waldie and Geoffrey York of *The Globe and Mail*?

Did donors to WE know that? And what about WE's murky corporate structure? The CPC's deputy-critic of national revenue, wants some answers about the organization that got millions of public dollars long before the doomed volunteer grant program came along.

Greg McLean has asked National Revenue Minister Diane Lebouthillier to conduct an audit into WE and its various associated entities. That is a good idea. It would be nice to know if Canadian taxpayers' dollars enriched Republican political consultants.

And who, if anyone, in the PMO, no matter how lowly, had conversations with WE before the decision was made by cabinet?

The PM said that neither he nor any of his staff tried to influence the WE decision. His chief of staff, Katie Telford, had a more nuanced view. She spoke of a "handful" of staffers who might have had a "few interactions" with WE. The names please, what "interactions," and if they exist, the emails.

Why didn't the PM or his chief-of-staff know that Canada's finance minister travelled to Kenya on a trip in 2017 that cost \$41,000, a tab picked up by WE?

Bill Morneau repaid that loan just recently. That means that Morneau voted to hand the volunteer grant program to WE while he owed them money. That is not a due diligence problem for the public service. That is a due diligence problem for the PMO. Government by bureaucrats,

Government by bureaucrats, as described by John Crosbie, may be reality, but it cries out for reform. No one elects top bureaucrats. Unlike elected officials, they are not accountable in the same way. Their work is usually done discretely behind the scenes, with little or no public access to how decisions are really made.

And it's not just the WE Charity affair. The Canadian Press recently reported that Ottawa and Alberta have agreed to a deal that makes major cuts to environmental monitoring of the tar sands.

Who would make a deal suspending water quality monitoring around a project that routinely degrades the environment and consumes and pollutes vast amounts of water? Wasn't this supposed to be the government of science-based policy? According to CP,"top bureau-

According to CP, "top bureaucrats" in Ottawa and Edmonton agreed on July 7 to a 25 per cent budget cut that will mean, among other things, no field work on the main branch of the Athabaska River. Coincidentally, Alberta is looking at allowing contaminated water from tar sands tailing ponds to be released into the river. I would like to see the overdue diligence on that one. And I would like to know if Justin Trudeau agreed to this deal.

If Crosbie had it right, the PM's vision of the country and policies are handed to him by the great, grey bureaucracy.

That sounds more like lazy ways than sunny ways, no? Michael Harris is an awardwinning author and journalist. The Hill Times

6

# Last thing the world needs is a new Cold War, this time with China

Canada should support coherent, long-term strategy, and reject Trump's alternative. This should be a key message from the House of Commons committee. If its work is to have value, it should be hearing witnesses and looking at how a **Canadian framework** would work within a more enlightened superpower U.S.-China understanding. It mustn't make this a lost opportunity.



David Crane Canada & the 21st Century

TORONTO—Global Affairs Canada says that Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne has "called for a new framework for Canada-China relations." But when will we see it? And will the House of Commons Committee on Canada-China Relations help formulate this new framework, which should be strategic and long-term, and not short-term and politically opportunistic.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump. The Trump administration has argued, with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent inflammatory speech denouncing China as the latest example, that U.S. president Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger accomplished nothing in establishing diplomatic relations with China. Instead, the Trump administration seeks to isolate China and force it to bend to America's will, writes David Crane. *Photographs courtesy of Flickr* 

The creation of the House of Commons committee was agreed to last December. It had the potential for a serious public discussion on the future direction of the Canada-China relationship. But so far, it has been a disappointment.

Its six sessions so far to hear witnesses have focused mainly on immediate issues, in particular, in securing the release of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, which is the No. 1 priority of the Canadian government, along with Chinese treatment of its Uyghur population and crackdowns in Hong Kong.

Securing the release on Kovrig and Spavor is critical, to be sure. Until this issue is resolved, it will be hard for Canada to move forward on the Canada-China relationship. Likewise, it is important to hear other Canadian concerns about China.

But the committee needs to adopt a longer-term time horizon as well to help define what a long-term framework should look like. This is where the House of Commons Committee on Canada-China Relations needs to do a much better job.

> In a substantive column in The Wall Street Journal in May, Robert Zoellickformer U.S. deputy secretary of state and U.S. trade representative and, later, president of the World Bankdemolished the Trump administration's justification for launching a new cold war with China while recognizing that China has to change its behaviour as well. Photograph courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

This committee of MPs needs to hear ideas on Canada's longterm strategic interests and how they should be pursued. China will become the world's largest economy and will take on growing importance in world affairs, affecting everything from war and peace, and global financial stability, to climate change, the evolution of global institutions, and global economic growth. We cannot deny China its place in the global community.

A starting point is to make clear that Canada does not support the U.S. effort to isolate China and divide the world into anti-China and pro-China camps. Everyone loses in this ill-conceived, paranoid, and misguided U.S. effort. The last thing the world needs is a new Cold War, this time with China.

In a substantive column in *The Wall Street Journal* in May, Robert Zoellick—former U.S. deputy secretary of state and U.S. trade representative and, later, president of the World Bank—demolished the Trump administration's justification for launching a new cold war with China while recognizing that China has to change its behaviour as well.

The Trump administration has argued, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's recent inflammatory speech denouncing China as the latest example, that U.S. president Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger accomplished nothing in establishing diplomatic relations with China. Instead, the Trump administration seeks to isolate China and force it to bend to America's will.

In response to Trump's "New Cold Warriors," Zoellick reminded his readers that prior to the establishment of U.S. diplomatic relations with China in 1972, China was a wartime enemy (the Korean War), a supplier to North Korea and North Vietnam, and the world's leading proliferator of missile and nuclear weapons technology. But "beginning in the 1990s, China reversed course and worked with the U.S. to control dangerous weapons. It turned from proliferation partnerships with Iran and North Korea to helping the U.S. thwart the development of nuclear arms," Zoellick wrote. Moreover, "from 2000 to 2018 U.S. diplomacy prodded Bei-



A second witness that the committee should seek out is Kevin Rudd, the former prime minister of Australia and a recognized expert on China, writes David Crane. *Photograph courtesy of Flickr* 

jing to support 182 of the 190 UN Security Council resolutions that imposed sanctions on states. China also assisted UN peacekeeping and helped Washington end the genocide in Darfur, Sudan."

On top of that, China became the largest contributor to global economic growth, cutting its current account surplus from 10 per cent of GDP to near-zero, while pushing "the largest and quickest stimulus and helped stave off global depression, while cooperating with the U.S., the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank."

As Zoellick wrote, "this doesn't mean all is well with China. But it is flat wrong to suggest that working with China has not served U.S. interests." Moreover, global challenges, such as finding medical solutions to COVID-19 and developing protection against future pandemics, addressing environmental and energy risks and dealing with future terrorism and weapons of mass destruction risks, while improving global growth to recover from the pandemic, will require working with China.

Zoellick would make an excellent witness for the House of Commons Committee on Canada-China Relations, having had many years of experience in dealing with China. He well understands the march to folly that the Trump administration is pursuing and the enormous risks of dangerous missteps that could easily occur. As he has written elsewhere, "the United States needs to cooperate with China to mutual benefit while managing differences." As he put it, cooperation doesn't mean the absence of differences. But the management of these differences "should take place within a larger framework that offers common benefits."

A second witness that the committee should seek out is Kevin Rudd, the former prime minister of Australia and a recognized expert on China. Writing in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Rudd argues that "the world now finds itself at the most dangerous moment in the relationship since the Taiwan Straits crisis of the 1950s." Confron-

tation in the South China Sea, could easily spill over into much wider conflict, Rudd warns. "For the United

States, the China challenge is real and demands a coherent, long-term strategy across all policy domains and in cooperation with allies, Rudd writes. But"it also requires a new framework,"he adds, "based on principles of 'managed' strategic competition: political, economic, technological and ideological competition, open lines of high-level communication to avoid an accidental escalation, and defined areas of global cooperation where it is mutually advantageous (such as on pandemics and climate change).'

Canada should support such an arrangement, rejecting Trump's alternative. This should be a key message from the House of Commons committee. If its work is to have value, it should be hearing witnesses and looking at how a Canadian framework would work within a more enlightened superpower U.S.-China understanding. It mustn't make this a lost opportunity.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com. The Hill Times

Opinion

## **HILL TIMES**

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# It's high time for Senate to commit to its own staffers

The Senate must do more to support and protect the staff that make it work, and that should start with giving them real job security.

Senators have spent a great deal of time discussing the protection of their staffers, or lack thereof, in the wake of Ethics Officer Pierre Legault's report on former senator Don Meredith, who was found to have sexually and verbally abused numerous staff members.

A new harassment policy has been produced and introduced. Staff and Senators have been put through training sessions. The Senate has assigned a former highranking judge to provide compensation to Mr. Meredith's former staffers. Some Senators, including Josée Verner, have called out the Senate for failing to protect staff from harassment. The Senate Rules Committee has been asked to study the limits of parliamentary privilege for Senators when it comes to cases of harassment.

Senators still haven't addressed the elephant in the room: their political staffers have almost no job security, and until they do, they will be vulnerable.

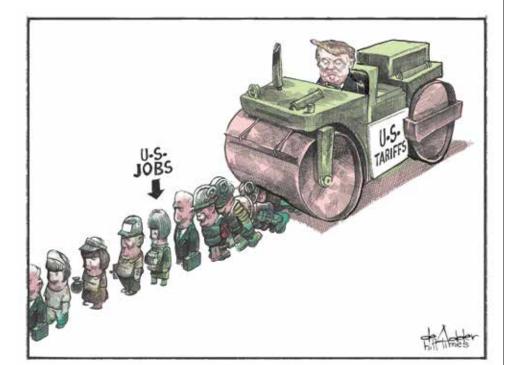
The estimated 300 Senate staffers working for Senators work on year-long contracts. They serve at the pleasure of their bosses, and can be dismissed at any time. Senators, by contrast, have more job security than perhaps anyone in the country. By design, they answer to the judicial system, and themselves, and that's about it. A Senator has never been permanently expelled from the Upper Chamber, though Mr. Meredith might have been if he hedp't regimend

he hadn't resigned. That power imbalance makes the life of a Senate staffer precarious. Any action that reflects poorly on their boss, or the Senate could endanger their job, immediately or down the road when the Senator for whom they work retires.

"If it's seen that you might be a troublemaker or that you might bring unwanted negative press to your office, you're not getting that job," a former staffer to Mr. Meredith told *The Hill Times* last week.

The Senate can't run without competent staff, and those staff should not live in fear of losing their career—particularly not when the Senators who employ them enjoy a nearly guaranteed job and income until they reach the age of 75.

Senators should act quickly to extend permanent employment, or at least longterm contracts to their staff. That will help the staff immediately, and the Senate as an institution in the long run. The Hill Times



### EDITORIAL

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### Letters to the Editor

### WE know Conservative fragmentation equals Liberal rule

The letters, "W" and "E," will play an important role in the future successes and failures of the federal Conservative Party of Canada.

First, there is the WE Charity, and the ethical morass the federal Liberal Party now finds itself in. However, too many Conservatives think that this new scandal will defeat the Liberals, much as the "Sponsorship Scandal" eventually did.

But winning is never a sure thing and scandals matter less than many Conservative strategists think they do. Despite numerous scandals: among them, the blackface scandal, and the SNC-Lavalin scandal, that led to the resignations of two cabinet ministers, the Clerk of the Privy Council and the prime minister's principal secretary, the Conservatives still failed to make virtually any inroads towards victory in the last election and lost seats where it mattered.

Strategists who place faith in scandals taking down a government end up creating a vacuum in the party's electoral policy and communications development. That happened in 2019, and it looks like it will happen again.

#### Second, the "W" and "E," as in the federal Wexit party, will also feature in the next election. "Divide and conquer" is a long-accepted winning strategy in war and in politics; Wexit's plan to run 104 candidates in western Canada, does just that. The extensive disunity within the CPC spells disaster in the next election.

One way out of this mess would be to hold joint-party nomination meetings to select Wexit/CPC candidates. Regardless of which party they came from, these candidates would be conservative advocates for "The West," ready to cut off support to a CPC government should it betray them.

The candidates for the CPC leadership should unite and endorse this idea and

should sign an open letter to Jay Hill, now. Then the "conservative unity" ball would be in Wexit's court.

#### Mark Wegierski Toronto, Ont.

(The letter writer is a Toronto-based writer and historical researcher, published in Alberta Report, Calgary Herald, and Ottawa Citizen, among others, and has previously appeared in The Hill Times. He is a long-time Conservative Party supporter.)

### The 2015 Liberal election campaign not unlike a Copperfield show, masterfully executed in its illusionary progressivism: reader

There's an argument that quota-based versus merit-based appointments can be left for another day. In the role of government, especially among ministerial appointments, one would think that, given the enormous responsibilities involved, demonstrable ability through aptitude, education, and real-world experience would be the qualifiers most heavily weighed when deciding who is best capable of carrying out their duties as the big cheeses of their respective portfolios.

When the pool of available bodies to fill those positions is limited to party members who happened to eke out more votes in their electoral district nomination races and subsequently gathered more votes than any other parties' candidates for the same electoral district in the general election, admittedly, the options may not be ideal, and secondary or tertiary criteria may be deciding factors.

The 2015 Liberal election campaign was not unlike a David Copperfield show. It was masterfully executed in its illusionary progressivism. An "overwhelming majority" (39.5 per cent of the 68.3 per cent of eligible voters who turned out) of voters apparently willingly suspended their disbelief and outside of Papineau, Que., where the name Justin Trudeau didn't appear on any ballots hypnotically checked the relatively unknown names of his understudy cohorts, associated in many cases by brand name alone. Many of us who don't usually let the entertainment value of the illusion itself deter us from wondering how it is done were both horrified and disheartened that this one worked so well. We had a pretty good idea of what the follow-up acts would be.

The unveiling of cabinet, with the announcement that women would make up half of ministerial appointments, was met with thunderous applause.

But was it as it appeared, or was it something more calculated?

We all saw what happened to Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott, and Celina Caesar-Chavannes when they broke ranks. Now as more sortid details of the WE

Now, as more sordid details of the WE affair become public, I'm sure Bardish Chagger's memory is being refreshed a bit, and I'm quite certain she has an ominous premonition of another round of pin-the-tailof-blame-on-anyone-but-the-actual-donkeyswho-run-the-democratic-dictatorship-previously-known-as-Canada.

If nothing else, we ought to question what this country has become under the watch and direction of the Liberal Party of Canada, contrary to what many were led to believe it would be, and far too many still believe it to be.

Dave Partanen Toronto, Ont.

Please send letters to the editor to the above street address or e-mail to news@hilltimes.com. Deadline is Wednesday at noon, Ottawa time, for the Monday edition and Friday at noon for the Wednesday edition. Please include your full name, address and daytime plone number. *The Hill Times* reserves the right to edit letters. Letters do not reflect the views of *The Hill Times*. Thank you.

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# On the eve of the vote, MacKay's front-runner status is no longer secure

Erin O'Toole's fundraising in the second quarter was \$1.24-million with Peter MacKay's raising \$1.16-million. The difference is not that great, but the momentum shift definitely favours O'Toole. The Conservative voting system also lends itself to surprises.



Sheila Copps Copps' Corner

OTTAWA—In two short weeks, the Conservative Party of Canada will vote for a new leader.

If the recent uptick in fundraising numbers holds for Erin O'Toole, the race momentum appears to be shifting.

Internal and public polling put veteran Peter MacKay far ahead of the rest of the pack in terms of party and national support. The race has been MacKay's to lose. But like Donald Trump, MacKay has faced a few COVIDcaused problems beyond his control.

The front-runner spot in any political race is a double-edged sword. People like to support a winner but if you are too far ahead, you become the lightning rod for all disgruntled party members.

If MacKay is too strong, all other leadership hopefuls will band together to blunt his momentum.

The unforeseen lockdown prompted by the coronavirus forced the party to suspend campaigning and delay the proposed vote by three months.

That spawned more allcandidate discussions, boycotted by MacKay. He attended the two official party debates, both held in Toronto, but declined a debate in Vancouver and another Toronto debate.

He also refused to attend a town hall organized by the Independent Press Gallery of Canada; an organization founded to counter the influence of what it characterizes as "the governmentinfluenced Parliamentary Press Gallery."

It is common for the front-runner to minimize debate appearances because the format tends to focus everyone's attack on the leader.

His refusal to attend the Vancouver debate was spun as a spurning of the West.

O'Toole's strength is certainly more western-centric, with the endorsement of Alberta Premier Jason Kenney bringing a broad swathe of elected officials into the O'Toole corner.

The delay appears to have worked slightly in favour of O'Toole, who raised the most money in the last quarter, and also spread the donations amongst a greater number of supporters than the MacKay fundraising efforts.

The candidate with the broadest range of donors is social conservative and Toronto lawyer Leslyn Lewis. She doubled her quarterly financial haul, increasing donations from \$448,000 to \$996,000. Lewis also attracted the most individual donors this quarter with 10,000 contributors, compared to 8,900 for O'Toole and 6,800 for MacKay.

O'Toole fundraising in the second quarter was \$1.24-million with MacKay raising \$1.16-million. The difference is not that

great, but the momentum shift definitely favours O'Toole. The Conservative voting sys-

tem also lends itself to surprises. The party votes on a points

system by riding. With 100 points attached to each riding, divided amongst candidates, a constituency with 10 members has equal voting power to a constituency with 1,000 members.

That means a front-runner in the national popular vote does not necessarily win the election.

We witnessed that phenomenon when future Ontario Premier Doug Ford beat the front-runner in a race that was supposed to be Christine Elliot's to lose.

Her team was so sure she had the upper hand that they refused a unanimous request by all other candidates to extend the membership deadline to accommodate more participants, and fix glitches in the system.

Ford managed to secure support in remote areas where a few votes actually turned the tide and delivered him the victory. In reality, Elliott led in the

popular vote within the party, but

the strategic organizing by the Ford team won the day.

The same thing could happen in the federal race where the first candidate to reach 16,901 points in the race will be elected winner. However, the counting could take several days, because of the complexity of this election system.

MacKay's campaign strategy to date has been very similar to that of American Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden. Say little and do even less.

Biden's numbers have been climbing since he adopted the silence is golden strategy. But the same cannot be said

for the Conservative front-runner. The quieter he has become, the more momentum has migrated to his main opponent.

The other element that will help O'Toole is age. The majority of his parliamentary endorsements are newer and younger members.

There is an old adage in politics that says the more experienced you are, the more you have to say and the less you have to do.

New Members of Parliament are out to make their mark, and that means delivering as many votes as possible to their preferred candidate.

At this point, the parliamentary endorsements for MacKay and O'Toole are almost equal.

On the eve of the vote, MacKay's front-runner status is no longer secure. A surprise may be in store.

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

# The NDP's invisible problem

The Liberals have managed to stealthily degrade the NDP's brand without anybody seeing it happen.



Gerry Nicholls
Post-Partisan Pundit

OAKVILLE, ONT.—The federal NDP faces several challenges which are plain and clear for all to see—poor fundraising results, bad polling numbers, ineffective leadership—yet, I'd argue the party's most pressing problem is actually invisible.

I'm talking about how the Liberals manage to stealthily degrade the NDP's brand without anybody seeing it happen.

In fact, all anyone sees are the Liberals attacking Conservatives.

Okay, that sounds a little confusing, so allow me to elaborate. First off, as we all know, a big

part of the Liberal communications plan is to label their Conservative rivals as scary radical, right-wingers.

Indeed, you don't have to be a psychic to foresee that about five minutes after the Conservatives choose a replacement for Andrew Scheer, the Liberal Party's communication team will inundate social media with frantic claims declaring the winner (no matter who it turns out to be) is scarier than Genghis Khan.

So, what does all this have to do with hurting the NDP, you ask? Well, the main reason the

Liberals want to brand Conservatives as a dangerous far-right party, is they are seeking to create a political narrative which suggests a Liberal loss will mean the destruction of a progressive Canada.

In short, the Liberals are saying a Conservative victory would put at risk our free health-care system; it'd mean the country's pristine landscape would be crisscrossed with ugly and leaky oil pipelines; it'd mean evidencebased science would be replaced by religious superstition, etc.; in other words, the only thing sepa-



rating Canada from a complete collapse into a dark age of conservative barbarism is a strong Liberal government.

It's a propaganda pitch which, although overtly aimed against the Conservatives, is one which also surreptitiously damages the NDP.

After all, it might compel many left-wing, socialist-leaning, progressive voters—who might otherwise support the left-wing, socialist-leaning, progressive NDP—to hold their noses and vote for the Liberal Party, as they NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, pictured Jan. 22, 2020, on the Hill. To blunt the Liberal Party's progressive appeal, the New Democrats need to develop their own sense of tribalism, a tribalism based not on culture, but on class, writes Gerry Nicholls The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

will perceive this as the only sure way to derail the conservative terror train; an attitude, by the way, which the Liberals do everything they can to promote.

How many times, for instance, in the last federal election did you hear the Liberals say something along the lines of "A vote for the NDP is really a vote for the spooky Conservatives"?

Indeed, it also puts New Democrats in an awkward tactical situation, since, as a party of the left, they will always be tempted to echo Liberal attack lines vilifying the Conservatives as horrifying monsters, which, ironically, might only result in helping to push undecided progressive voters away from the NDP and towards the Liberals.

So, what can they do about it? Well, I think they should take a page from the Bloc Québécois, another progressive-leaning party that, unlike the NDP, often seems immune to Liberal ideological fearmongering.

The reason for this, I think, is that Bloc supporters don't see the Liberals primarily as progressives, but as federalists and hence as politicians who pose a threat to Quebec's culture.

Basically, it's a case of tribalism trumping ideology.

The lesson here for New Democrats is obvious: to blunt the Liberal Party's progressive appeal, they need to develop their own sense of tribalism, a tribalism based not on culture, but on class.

Their end goal should be to convince progressives that the Liberals are puppets of corporate Canada who don't care about regular working people.

That would mean attacking the Conservatives less, and the Liberals more.

Unfortunately, such a strategy would be difficult for a left-wing party to justify, especially when it's trying to thwart an attack no one can see.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant. The Hill Times

Opinion

### Opinion

# What else is happening while we worry about COVID?

As a political issue, the environment has definitely been downsized.



Impolitic

CHELSEA, QUE.—The pandemic, the WE controversy, and ongoing problems with the RCMP have given higher-thanusual profiles to a number of Justin Trudeau's cabinet ministers notably Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, Health Minister Patty Hajdu, Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, and, for all the wrong reasons, Finance Minister Bill Morneau.

But there are notable exceptions, the most significant being Environment and Climate Change Minister Jonathan Wilkinson. As worried Canadians focus on immediate problems—staying healthy, surviving financially, whether to send the kids back to school this fall—the environment disappeared from the front pages. So did the minister.



That doesn't mean nothing has been happening. Two weeks ago, for instance, Wilkinson announced the new federal Impact Assessment Agency would be reviewing an application for a two-phase extension of a coal mine in western Alberta, north of Jasper, near Hinton. The expanded Vista Coal Mine, an open-pit operation, would double production of thermal coal, which is used to generate electricity and is

intended for export. This application comes despite commitments from both the Alberta and federal governments to stop burning coal, one of the most talists and indigenous advocates which, along with a proposal for a second expansion, changed his mind. The Hinton project, he said, raises "legitimate questions" including "whether we should be continuing to export a substance we have been saying to folks that they should be phasing out."

While this decision isn't as momentous, or as consequential, as the giant Teck Mine oilsands project that died last year after the company withdrew, it is seen as a test of the new federal environmental assessment agency and of the Trudeau government's sincerity in reaching zero emissions by 2050. The review—which will study impacts on fish habitat, species at risk and indigenous treaty rights—is expected to take 18 months, so it should re-emerge as an issue once the pandemic is mercifully over.

The agency is also a key part of Bill 69—the federal legislation denounced as the "no more pipelines" bill by Conservative critics, including Alberta Premier Jason Kenney. It is meant to speed the approval process by avoiding court challenges. It also, for the first time, takes into account climate change consequences of any new developments.

Details of that aspect of federal environmental policy were also announced three weeks ago (also to almost universal silence). Aimed at clarifying how the government will deal with new resource developments, the new rules broadly require all new mines, power-plants, pipelines and railways to produce plans for reaching net-zero emissions by 2050, in line with the national ambition endorsed by the Trudeau cabinet.

Those few paying attention point to a lack of details on how the regulations will be monitored and enforced. As well, the new regime doesn't take into account Environment and Climate Change Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, pictured on Jan. 28, 2020, on the Hill arriving for the Liberal cabinet meeting in Ottawa. As worried Canadians focus on immediate problems—staying healthy, surviving financially, whether to send the kids back to school this fallthe environment disappeared from the front pages. So did the minister, writes Susan Riley. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

the impact of Canadian fossil fuels burned in other countries. Meanwhile, most politically astute energy companies are already making the net-zero by 2050 pledge themselves, with varying degrees of seriousness. Many are relying on technological solutions that have long proved elusive.

As to the Vista coal mine review, the outcome should be obvious: when last we looked, gigantic oilsands plays were on the Alberta environment and its species diversity appears to be accelerating. While this appears to set up yet another looming confrontation with the federal government, in fact, Ottawa seems to be co-operating with Alberta's backsliding on environmental issues.

This summer produced another headline that would otherwise have prompted a stir: "Alberta, Ottawa reduce oilsands environmental monitoring budget due to pandemic."Wilkinson's office insisted there was nothing sinister afoot, pointing out that COVID has reduced activity to monitor and the staff to do it. Yet, specific details sparked concern, including news that the Athabasca river, which runs downstream from huge oil plants and tailing ponds, will no longer be studied closely—nor will the water at Wood Buffalo National Park, an UNESCO heritage site. As well, since March the Kenney government has already suspended most monitoring measures for oilsands producers.

So collusion between two governments that are putting the financial health of the battered oil industry ahead of public health, or a predictable reaction to reduced economic activity? It is a topic worth exploring in depth, but most media—with the notable exception of new media outlets like *The Narwhal* and others—is absorbed by other mid-summer nightmares.

Meanwhile, the Alberta government is investing \$1.5-billion in the yet-to-be-built Keystone pipeline while another oilsands giant, the French company Total, writes down its Alberta assets and withdraws from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, citing incompatible goals. And, while COVID is blamed for cessation of environmental



The pandemic, the WE controversy, and ongoing problems with the RCMP have given higher-than-usual profiles to a number of Justin Trudeau's cabinet ministers—notably Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, Health Minister Patty Hajdu, Treasury Board President Jean-Yves Duclos, Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, and, for all the wrong reasons, Finance Minister Bill Morneau, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade* 

in deep disfavour and coal's moment was definitely over. However, under cover of the pandemic, Kenney has rolled back some 1976 protections intended to restrict exploration and open-pit coal-mining in the ountains and hills. Facing an unemployment rate of 15.5 per cent in June, the Alberta government is now championing coal as part of the province's economic recovery. According to Alberta Energy Minister Sonya Savage, the goal is to "attract new investment for an important industry."

Combined with Kenney's plan to close some 20 provincial parks and allocate 164 natural sites to third-party management, the war monitoring, work continues apace on pipeline projects, including the Coastal GasLink that runs through Wet'suweten lands in northern B.C.

When we emerge from the COVID fog, the climate change crisis—which poses more hardship to more people than any passing pandemic—will not have vanished. We can only hope we haven't lost ground in the struggle for a greener future. But revisiting old arguments about coal, rather than moving away from fossil fuels altogether? It's not a reassuring development.

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for The Hill Times. The Hill Times



Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and Alberta Energy Minister Sonya Savage, pictured May 2, 2019, in Ottawa. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

Yet the climate continues to change. July was the hottest on record, in parts of Central Canada, and soaring numbers of urban refugees, with nowhere else to go, sought solace and safety in nature as national and provincial parks, local swimming holes and backcountry hiking trails were overwhelmed with visitors. The environment continues to affect our everyday lives, intimately and sometimes dramatically. But, as a political issue, it has definitely been downsized. carbon intensive fossil fuels, by 2030. It also contradicts Canada's position as a co-founder of the Powering Past Coal Alliance, a 100-member international organization initiated by Canada and the United Kingdom in 2017, and devoted to ending the burning of coal.

Wilkinson is aware of the troubling optics. After first giving one phase of the Vista project the goahead last year, he was deluged by complaints from environmen-

# Global

# An October surprise almost inevitable in U.S

Donald Trump will need a fake crisis because otherwise the coronavirus is going to kill him politically.



Gwynne Dyer Global Affairs

L ONDON, U.K.—An 'October Surprise' in the United States is now almost inevitable, because that will be Donald Trump's last chance to get re-elected legitimately. He might try to cling to office even if he loses the vote, but it would be a lot easier and neater if he actually won a majority in the Electoral College on Nov. 3.

'October Surprise' is the American political term for a fake crisis, usually involving foreigners, that is 'discovered' by a president trailing badly in the polls in the last few weeks before an election. All other issues are forgotten, Americans rally around the flag, and the incumbent wins on a surge of patriotism. Or that's the theory, at least.

The same thing happens elsewhere too, of course, and not necessarily in October. That's when it needs to happen in to win a U.S. presidential election, but there's a 'July Surprise' happening in Belarus right now.

Last week, Alexander Lukashenko, the strongman who rules Belarus, "discovered" Russian mercenaries in his country. They were unarmed and on their way to Istanbul, but Lukashenko says there is a plot: "So far there is no open warfare, no shooting, the trigger has not yet been pulled, but an attempt to organize a massacre in the centre of Minsk is already obvious." Only I can save our country! Vote for me!

Trump will need something like that because otherwise the coronavirus is going to kill him politically. This was not true as recently as early June, because up until then the United States



The pandemic is raging again in the United States, and there may be a quarter-million deaths there by election day in November. U.S. 'deaths per million' are going up three per day, which means that the U.S. will overtake Chile (now 509) in less than two weeks, Italy (582) in a month, Spain (609) in five weeks. It might even catch up with the U.K. (682) by election day, writes Gwynne Dyer. *Image courtesy of Needpix.com* 

was not performing especially badly in dealing with the pandemic.

It looked a lot worse because of Trump's bizarre behaviour the endless, shameless lies, the narcissism, the suggestions that people should inject bleach, etc.,—but in terms of COVID-19 deaths per million people the American fatality rate was still lower than any other major Western countries except Germany and Canada.

The United States was late to go into lockdown, but so were they all, at least compared to most Asian countries. Until recently, if you were a Trump supporter, you could still believe he was doing a good job. It was Trump's rush to end

the lockdown, not all the earlier

nonsense, that did the real damage. He believed that he would lose the election if the economy didn't revive, but by opening up too fast he managed to revive the pandemic at the same time.

The numbers tell the tale. This week America will record its 160,000th death from COVID-19. That's almost a quarter of all the coronavirus deaths in the world. Much worse, U.S. deaths are still going up while deaths elsewhere in the developed world have fallen steeply. That's almost entirely due to Trump.

Take Canada, for example. It's very similar to the U.S. in economy and demography, but different in social and political terms. Canada has universal health care and a much less drastic divide between the rich and the rest, for example, which probably explains why America's cumulative death rate per million is 484, while Canada's is 237.

The history is therefore an American death rate twice as high as Canada's: not great, but not utterly awful. By now, however, Canada has managed to get its deaths down to ten a day, whereas America is back up around a thousand a day. Even allowing for Canada's much smaller population, that is ten times worse. This is what coming out of lockdown too early did to the United States, and it is all down to Donald Trump.

The pandemic is raging again in the United States, and there may be a quarter-million deaths there by election day in November. U.S. 'deaths per million' are going up three per day, which means that the U.S. will overtake Chile (now 509) in less than two weeks, Italy (582) in a month, Spain (609) in five weeks. It might even catch up with the U.K. (682) by election day.

Most of those newly dead Americans will be over 60, so probably Trump supporters. Their relatives and friends are bound to notice eventually. Joe Biden's lead over Donald Trump in the polls has already widened to 10 per cent, and there is probably no good news Trump could engineer in the remain-ing ninety days that would be big enough to turn that number around. His only hope, therefore, is to manufacture some really bad news: a restaged 'Gulf of Tonkin' incident with China, perhaps, or a terrorist 'threat' so humongous that it gives Trump a pretext to declare martial law nationally. Or maybe he will arrange the premature certification of a magical new COVID-19 vaccine so he can roll it out just before the vote. If it kills a lot of people later on, who cares? He won.

Trump knows that if he loses the election he will spend the rest of his life in court, possibly even in jail. An October Surprise is practically guaranteed. It isn't over yet.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)'. The Hill Times

# Politics

# The Morneau Doctrine: to be continued or not?

Here's a list some of the things Bill Morneau has put into place over the last five years and you can read it either as the legacy of a finance minister who is about to exit because of his lapses in judgment, or as a list of achievements which justifies why he must stay because his work is so important at this time.



Andrew Cardozo

OTTAWA—Bill Morneau has been one of the longer serving federal finance ministers and probably the most revolutionary when it comes to doing big things. He has a record of big measures in normal times and extraordinary measures in the recent times of crisis. I'm calling it the Morneau Doctrine.

Here is a list some of the things Morneau has put into place over the last five years and you can read it either as the legacy of a finance minister who is about to exit because of his lapses in judgment, or as a list of achievements which justifies why he must stay because his work is so important at this time.

His ability to install programs that help the little people fortunately are at odds with his considerable personal wealth and his habitual forgetfulness of what he owned and what expenses he needed to pay.

Let's take the Morneau Doctrine in three parts. Part One is before COVID-19, and Part Two is during COVID. Part Three is about after COVID—the rebuilding and recovery. For the former successful businessperson and one-time chair of the conservative C.D. Howe Institute, Morneau has been a big investor not a big saver. With continuous low interest rates he has systematically focused on making various investments with economic and social goals in mind. Keeping the debt-to-GDP ratio being a core guideline, not just keeping the deficit and debt low, the promised modest deficit of \$10-billion was surpassed in months of taking office.

Morneau Doctrine Part 1: Jobs: starting at the macro level, in the Part One period, the economy grew consistently to the extent that more than one million jobs were created, some 75 per cent of which were full-time and Morneau's suite of policies created the climate that gets some of the credit.

2. Taxes: remember back to 2015, days after that glori-

zens, those citizens know about it. If it's a bit esoteric few know about it.

3. Child poverty: the Canada Child Benefit, which gave money to every family with young kids, lifted 300,000 kids out of poverty. Families who received it liked it a lot. And it was one of the most significant new social policies in a decade.

4. Gender analysis: Morneau introduced gender based analysis for all budgetary items. It's a longer term thing so few people know about it.

5. Morneau increased the Canada Pension Plan, in cooperation with the provinces, by a considerable 50 per cent. Introduced 50 years earlier by the Lester B. Pearson government, the enhanced CPP will go a long way to combat seniors' poverty. Governments order workplaces to close and people to stay at home. When you order them to stay home someone has to give them money to survive, and so began the biggest suite of government programs—being conjured up in days (instead of the usual months and years), and mostly delivered by government and sometimes through partners.

Here is an interesting fact: the federal government put into place a whopping 75 measures between March and July; that's 75. It was like the biggest federal budget every released over five months, and the federal government introduced several new programs and made significant changes to others. Here are some of the highlights:

9. CERB: the Canada Emergency Benefit is one of the bestknown programs that helps workers who were laid off, or earning significantly less than last year, costing some \$83-billion.

10. CEWS: the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy provides a subsidy to employers to keep their employees in place, with an \$80-billion tab. This was, philosophically, a significant develop13. The government offered support for various sectors, including air transportation, culture, broadcasting, Canadian museums, farmers, food supply, seafood industry, colleges, and universities.

14. The government offered support to the oil and gas sector to clean up the orphan wells and offered an emissions reduction fund at a cost of \$2.4-billion.

15. The Business Credit Availability Program helped businesses through loan guarantees and there was liquidity support through the Bank of Canada and the CMHC.

16. The Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance for small businesses was a life-saver for many entrepreneurs.

17. The list goes on with other programs for seniors, Canadians with disabilities, charities, and the Canadian Red Cross.

Morneau Doctrine Part 3 began with the federal government's \$19-billion Safe Restart Agreement arranged with the provinces and announced on July 16. With an eye to looking to rebuilding and recovery, it is likely the first such program for the future, while, sadly, the federal government deals with the present crisis, which is not over.

Seventy five specific measures. The total is not clear; perhaps closing in on a trillion dollars.

Did Morneau do some things to wrong? Almost certainly. Many programs were being pushed out the door to get to Canadians and getting fixed and tweaked along the way.

Unless the federal cabinet—in its numerous Zoom and conference calls—for some reason spent many hours and days obsessing over the WE Charity as a partner, it is possible that it, along with the 74 other programs, received scant in-depth analysis. Whether that was right or wrong of cabinet, looked at in the midst of 75 programs and during an international pandemic, is a matter of opinion.

That \$41,000 for the travel expenses that Morneau forgot to repay or that villa in France that he perhaps thought was not relevant because it was somewhere else, speaks to a very rich Member of Parliament, who was born into money and who has made a lot of money, but whose unstated defence was that he was pre-occupied with his job.

And here's the thing: his huge wealth does not seem to have obscured his ability to understand the plight of the many little people who are hurting in this pandemic and who needed the big programs like CERB and CEWS, or the more boutique life rafts that he threw out to gig workers, single mothers, students, and stage hands.

Andrew Cardozo is president of the Pearson Centre. (This column was also put together, thanks to a young enthusiastic politico and tweeter, William Stiles who tracked Morneau's pre-COVID measures.) The Hill Times

Minister of Finance Bill Morneau, pictured Feb. 19, 2020, at the House Finance Committee on the Hill. And here's the thing. His huge wealth does not seem to have obscured his ability to understand the plight of the many little people who are hurting in this pandemic and who needed the big programs like CERB and CEWS or the more boutique life rafts that he threw out to gig workers, single mothers, students and stage hands. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

ous swearing-in at Rideau Hall, Morneau introduced legislation to raise taxes on the wealthiest one per cent and cut taxes on the famed middle class and those working hard to join them, which is a fairly progressive step to begin with. (Interestingly though, economists further to the left said the tax cut could have been better used to fund programs to help those further down the income scale or for a national childcare program.)

Here's part of the problem in politics, if no one is vociferously opposed to a government measure, it gets little media attention. If it actually helps certain citi6. GIS: Morneau also increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement earnings exemption, helping some 300,000 seniors.

7. Business taxes: in response to the reduction of business taxes by the Trump administration in the U.S., Morneau reduced business taxes from 11 per cent to nine per cent in 2019, among other measures.

8. Home buyers: Morneau created the First-Time Buyer Incentive to increase the number of home owners.

Morneau Doctrine Part 2: Disaster strikes Canada and the world and the economy has to shut down like never before. ment. Rather than bailing out the companies, that are "too big to fail," the Morneau doctrine follows the money to workers. Wow, what if the Americans had thought of that back in the crash of 2008?

11. Indigenous peoples: more than \$1.1-billion was offered in a range of programs specifically for Indigenous peoples—community support, on-reserve assistance, women's shelters and Indigenous businesses, in addition to the larger programs that would benefit Indigenous peoples across the country.

12. Morneau offered deferral of income tax and sale tax payments for businesses.

12

# Two lost weeks: one lost student program

The situation with WE Charity has raised questions about the prime minister's judgment, his inability to deal with ethical issues, and now the belief that such matters either do not apply to him or that he just can't be bothered dealing with them.



Bruce Carson
Opinion

OTTAWA—When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his chief of staff Katie Telford appeared before the Commons Finance Committee on July 30, their objective was to put an end to the WE Charity saga—something derailing the government's agenda and sucking up all oxygen.

The opposition parties, of course, had a different goal: find the smoking gun that would prove that Trudeau interfered with the development of the federal government's Canada Student Service Grant program, so that only his friends, the Kielburgers of WE Charity, would be chosen to deliver this program.

As with most things in life, neither Trudeau nor the opposition parties got exactly what they wanted. But each got enough to at least declare a partial victory. From Trudeau, the new

information was that he wasn't involved in design of the program or choice of WE Charity to deliver it. He claimed he first knew

of WE's involvement when he arrived at the May 8 cabinet meeting. He said he immediately recognized there may be a perception of conflict of interest and had the item pulled from the agenda. This was not unusual in the cabinet process. What is unusual is that Trudeau didn't know about the recommendation of WE Charity as the only entity capable of delivering the program until then.

Usually, cabinet agendas and accompanying memoranda are circulated well in advance. Here it seems the documents were not read and the prime minister was not briefed before this meeting.

If the prime minister is not getting cabinet documents in a timely manner, does that mean other cabinet members are not either?

Nevertheless, the CSSG and WE Charity were pulled from the agenda, at the insistence of the prime minister, we are told, even though it had been previously approved by the COVID cabinet committee on May 5.

Into this mix of issues was the request, also on May 5, from WE that they be allowed to start working on this project before it was approved and be able to charge administration fees immediately.

We also know now that Trudeau's policy director was aware of this unusual request as he forwarded it on to Employment and Social Development Canada. The item was pulled to provide

time for a deeper dive into WE

Charity's qualifications to carry out the contract. Trudeau said that because of the involvement of his mother and brother with WE, there could be a "perception" of conflict of interest.

Apparently, Trudeau wasn't concerned with his own involvement with WE, as he wasn't paid, and his wife's involvement had been previously cleared by the ethics commissioner.

It is not clear from the committee hearings what occurred during the two-week period between May 8 and May 22, before the matter returned to cabinet. It seems that no one—not Trudeau's office, not Finance Minister Bill Morneau's office, not Diversity, Inclusion and Youth Minister Bardish Chagger's office—performed anything close to due diligence.

We know now there were other entities ready to deliver this program, had they been approached.

The proposal, unchanged, was once again presented to cabinet by Chagger on May 22 and approved with all the conflict-ofinterest issues still alive.

What happened to the concerns raised by Trudeau and Telford on May 8, and why when they weren't addressed did cabinet proceed with Trudeau, Morneau and possibly Natural Resources Minister Seamus O'Regan having possible conflicts?

Just because the program is recommended without change by the public service, doesn't mean cabinet must accept that conclusion. The prime minister, as the ultimate decision maker, could have turned it down because concerns were not addressed.

The situation with WE Charity has raised questions about the prime minister's judgment, his inability to deal with ethical issues, and now the belief that such matters either do not apply to him or that he just can't be bothered dealing with them.

Of course, they have been compounded by the ethical lapses of Morneau. What of other cabinet ministers who failed to speak up?

The result of the ethical "blind spot" has caused the loss of much needed help for students and once again an ethically wounded prime minister is left, hopefully to reflect on how this happened.

Bruce Carson worked in the Prime Minister's Offices of Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper. The Hill Times

# The COVID-19 economic dislocation, climate emergency, and what governments must consider

Mitigation and a return to health will require fully functioning markets. We don't need a planned, centralized economy, but we do need vision and good government policy over an uncertain next decade.



Opinion

GIBSONS, B.C.—Six months into the COVID-19 global pandemic, it's looking increasingly like getting back to normal might take a long, long time and that the social and economic dislocation caused could endanger Canadians in ways just beginning to be appreciated.

Here in Canada our governments have done a reasonably good job of containing and controlling the virus, but globally COVID is a surging monster and in our closest neighbour and major trading partner COVID was allowed to escape and now the contagion is 'extraordinarily widespread' and economic recovery progress is at risk, along with healthcare and probably school for who knows how long.

Six months of effective government support of citizens and the economy has stabilized the situation here in Canada and eased economic pain while giving our health system time and resources to combat the virus, but there are questions about the mounting damage to the economy and how long the government can continue to deficit spend.

As the first wave of COVID continues to grow globally and with conditions worsening in the US, Canadians should be expecting growing economic problems aggravated by global economy malaise. What was initially thought or hoped to be a short V-shaped downturn, now increasingly looks like a potentially long, L-shaped depression.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured on July 8, 2020, in Ottawa. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

And associated conflict and social disturbance is flaring alarmingly amongst our southern cousins with fault lines extending across the border. In a turbulent election year, with COVID raging, potentially increasing economic dislocation, and with growing social conflict, all interacting and looking to get worse not better, at least for the rest of this year, there is a real threat to Canada's security.

There are competent, effective legislators in all of Canada's political parties. Hopefully these legislators are considering what might be needed to safely navigate a potentially much longer COVID emergency, a potentialy much more difficult and maybe decade long recovery, and, worst-case, chaos surging over our borders if the U.S. descends into anarchy. The primary lesson from CO-

The primary lesson from CO-VID for government has been the responsibility of being prepared and acting quickly and effectively in an emergency.

A few climate activists have been working to try and get public officials and policy-makers to consider an emergency wartimestyle coalition government as a vehicle for finally achieving the effective climate mitigation that we so surely need, but which remains almost impossible in political and economic business as usual.

Now, after three decades of mitigation failure, with time for a needed transition almost gone (if it is not too late already), it just might be time for this governance innovation where we could moderate political division and all get on the me nage\_'all hands as our last chance at not only effective mitigation but continuing prosperity. A robust Green New Deal, which is only one example of policy that emergency government could make possible, could drive and stabilize the economy over the next decade transitioning to a postcarbon economy.

The battle with the virus, economic dislocation, and climate mitigation require government action right now. All these challenges are difficult and mostly unprecedented. Our socio-economy must evolve and adapt quickly and this requires effective government leadership, stabilization and support. Mitigation and a return to health will require fully functioning markets. We don't need a planned, centralized economy, but we do need vision and good government policy over an uncertain next decade.

Each challenge involves potentially very divisive policy development and implementation. There will be strong disagreement about the path forward in uncharted territory. This policy process and disagreements would be more productively debated inclusively around a common table within a common goal—the best longterm interests of Canadians—then divisively in our present adversarial politics.

Our governments have cooperated well so far in these first months of the COVID emergency. This co-operation has been a refreshing and welcome change and an example of a better governance that could be possible.

It's time to at least quietly consider emergency coalition government as necessary to protect Canadians in what could become a deeply troubling decade.

Bill Henderson is a longtime climate activist. He can be reached at bhenderson@dccnet.com The Hill Times

**Opinion** 

### News

### Staff harassment 'more widespread,' could happen again, say former Don Meredith Senate employees

Sexual harassment is 'more widespread' in the Senate than the Don Meredith case, says one of his former staffers.

Continued from page 1

two former staffers, who fear retribution for coming forward. Both still work on Parliament Hill.

Jane said she had seen another example of harassment at a Christmas Party involving Senators and staff within the last year, but did not reveal further details.

The Hill Times was one of several media outlets that spoke to two of Mr. Meredith's former staffers last week, as well as Brian Mitchell, a lawyer representing them and two other former employees of Mr. Meredith as they seek compensation and accountability from the Red



Don Meredith resigned from the Senate in 2017. Senate Ethics Officer Pierre Legualt issued a report last year that said Mr. Meredith had harassed and sexually harassed Senate staff. *The Hill Times file photograph* 

Chamber for the verbal or sexual abuse they endured at the hands of the former Senator.

Don Meredith resigned from the Senate in 2017 on the eve of a vote by Senators to expel him from the Upper Chamber over reports that he had a sexual relationship with a teenage girl. That came after a secretive third-party investigation launched by the Senate documented Mr. Meredith's serial sexual and verbal harassment of his and other Senate staff, in what became known as the "Quintet" or "workplace" report. Senate Ethics Officer Pierre Legault later conducted his own investigation, making public some of the details of that harassment.

The Senate appointed retired Quebec judge Louise Otis in July to serve as an independent "evaluator" overseeing a process to offer financial compensation to some of Mr. Meredith's former staff. They instructed Ms. Otis to accept Mr. Legault's finding that the employees were harassed as fact.

However, the former staff who spoke to *The Hill Times* last week criticized that process for, among other things, limiting Ms. Otis' assessment to cover only the behaviour of Mr. Meredith.

The Senate leadership and administration failed to take action to protect them, they said, or other female staff who were placed in Mr. Meredith's office after they left.

Both former staffers said that the Senate administration was told about the harassment that was happening, and didn't take action.

"They didn't act. There was no process. To my mind, there should have been red flags the minute these concerns were raised. There should have been action. At the very least, [human resources] should have gone and addressed these concerns with him directly. But that didn't happen," said Jane.

The other staffer, Rebecca, said she told the Senate's human resources department about Mr. Meredith's harassment in November of 2013. She said she was told in response that the HR department knew about some of Mr. Meredith's behaviour, but that the HR department existed to serve

Senators, not Senate employees. Rebecca said she was told that she could file a formal complaint about Mr. Meredith, but that the HR staffer advised her not to do so, because she was a contract staffer and could end up without a job and on a hiring "blacklist."

The Hill Times has not independently verified these allegations. Independent Senators Sabi Marwah (Ontario), who chairs the Internal Economy Committee that oversees the Senate administration, and Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), who chairs the Senate's subcommittee on human resources, both



The Speaker's parade enters the Senate Chambers on Nov. 04, 2019. Former staffers of ex-senator Don Meredith say that the Senate has not done enough to prevent other staff from being harassed and kept silent in the future. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

politely declined to comment for this story when contacted by *The Hill Times.* Sen. Marwah said that he could not properly discuss the matter without violating the confidentiality of in-camera conversations by members of the Internal Economy Committee. Neither staffer filed a formal

complaint against Mr. Meredith.

"That digs into a fundamental flaw in all of this, which is that the power imbalance, the discriminatory policies, and the misapplication of privilege have all contributed to a system that doesn't leave people feeling comfortable to come forward," said Jane.

Senate staff have very little job security. Even senior staff work on yearly contracts, and can be dismissed at any time. When a Senator retires, their staff must try to find work in another Senate office.

"I would say that reputational harm is real in the Senate," said Jane, when asked whether she had ever seen a staffer "blacklisted" from getting another job.

"Political staffers, our reputation is a huge part of what gets us our next job," she said. "If it's seen that you might be a troublemaker, or that you might bring unwanted negative press to your office, you're not getting that job."

Sen. Saint-Germain is currently leading an effort to implement a new policy in the Senate for dealing with cases of harassment. The Senate has also held training sessions for staff and Senators on harassment.

Still, both former staffers say the Senate has dodged accountability for its own failures in the Meredith case, and is acting in a way that protects Senators and the administration, not victims of harassment. Both said they still had not been shown copies of the Quintet report, after fighting for years to see a report that was produced in part thanks to their cooperation.

"This whole process is all about protecting themselves and the institution," said Rebecca.

The new harassment policy would still give the Senate Ethics Committee the authority to make a final decision about how to respond to alleged harassment in an in-camera meeting, said Jane. It would also require staff who file a complaint to keep the whole process confidential.

Independent Senator Marilou McPhedran (Manitoba) has also criticized the new harassment policy, and called on the Senate to stop asking any employees to sign non-disclosure agreements about their time in the Senate. Sen. McPhedran maintains an email tip line for anonymous complaints about harassment of Senate staff, and previously told *The Hill Times* that she had legal fees, since the Senate's own lawyers were heavily involved in the process.

"We have been stonewalled," said Mr. Mitchell. "We have not had a dialogue but rather it's been a situation where the process was unilaterally imposed upon us. There was no discuss as to the process."

In response to those demands, some of which were reported last week by the Canadian Press, the Senate Internal Economy Committee issued a press release that said Mr. Meredith's former



received complaints not linked to Mr. Meredith.

The harassment training for Senate managers was "a joke," said Jane. The person conducting the training told the attending staff how to recognize harassment, but not what to do once they saw it, because the Senate's harassment policy was still in flux, said Jane, who left halfway through the training session.

Both former staffers told *The Hill Times* last week that they wanted the Senate to amend the terms of reference given to Ms. Otis, to allow her to take into account harm done by the Senate's inaction in her decision on the compensation awarded to former staff.

They also said they wanted the Senate to communicate more with them and their lawyer, Mr. Mitchell, and to reverse a decision to bar legal counsel from attending any meetings they had with Ms. Otis. They also said they wanted the Senate to pay their staff could be accompanied by a lawyer during the compensation hearings—which would take place via phone or teleconference—and that they could ask Ms. Otis to include legal costs in their compensation award.

In response, Jane and Rebecca sent *The Hill Times* a statement, which said they had received a message from Ms. Otis on the same subject.

"We were grateful for the clarification we received from Mme. Otis on Wednesday afternoon that was also reflected in the Senate's release Thursday morning," said the statement.

"Multiple letters back and forth with the Senate Law Clerk's office had produced less clear and, at times, contradictory information. This has been a demanding, demeaning and—quite frankly—inappropriate process, and the victims look forward to an agreeable resolution."

peter@hilltimes.com The Hill Times

### 'Beirut is bleeding': Lebanese-Canadian MPs express horror, disbelief in wake of massive explosion

'I'm sure with the will of the Lebanese and their friends from all over the world, Beirut will shine again,' says Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury.

#### Continued from page 1

"Beirut has a deep and wide wound, Beirut is bleeding, but I'm sure with the will of the Lebanese and their friends from all over the world, Beirut will shine again,"said Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval-Les Îles, Que.), who chairs the interparliamentary Canada-Lebanon Friendship Group.

"I couldn't believe my eyes; you cannot imagine the huge damage," said Mr. El-Khoury in an interview with *The Hill Times*, referring to footage and photographs of the blast that was powerful enough to register on seismographs as a more than 3.0-magnitude earthquake, and which could be felt more than 240 kilometres away."When I start calling some friends over there, sending and receiving videos and photos, and they started to see the entire picture, I could compare it to a small tactical nuclear bomb."

The blast was caused by the ignition of a large amount of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in the port since 2013.

"Those details support suspicions that the explosion was not the result of an attack but simply the result of negligence," according to a report from NPR.

Mr. El-Khoury, who arrived in Canada in August of 1976 after

fleeing the country that had just descended into war, said he wanted to thank both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) for offering their support following the deadly blast.

"Absolutely tragic news coming out of Beirut," tweeted Mr. Trudeau on Aug. 4. "Canadians are thinking of everyone who has

been injured and all those who are trying to locate a friend or family member or have lost a loved one. We're keeping you in our thoughts and we stand ready to assist in any way we can."

"Tragic news out of #Beirut today,"tweeted Mr. Champagne, also on Aug. 4. "Canada is closely monitoring the situation. Our hearts are with the victims and their families.

We stand with the people of #Lebanon and the diaspora during this difficult time and we are ready to assist however we can."

Mr. Champagne announced on Thursday evening the government is pledging an "initial" \$5-million in humanitarian assistance for the people of Lebanon. He said \$1.5-million will "immediately" go to international humanitarian groups, including Red Cross Lebanon, to cover "urgent needs" such as food, shelter, and emergency medical services. The blast has also left an esti-

mated 300,000 homeless.

With thousands of Canadians living in Beirut, Mr. El-Khoury believes Canada will contribute in the effort to help the people of Lebanon rebuild in the coming days and weeks. "The Canadian people show

The Canadian people show

generosity in every part of the world when catastrophe strikes, and I'm sure now they will do the same thing," said Mr. El-Khoury."My thoughts and my prayers go to the victims, to the wounded, to their families, to their loved ones, and to all Lebanese." Conservative MP Ziad Aboultaif

(Edmonton Manning, Alta.), who immigrated to Canada in 1990, told *The Hill Times* that, during disasters and



Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury, left, Conservative MP Ziad Aboultaif, and former Liberal MP Eva Nassif say the massive explosion, which has left an estimated 300,000 homeless, is going to have a devastating toll on Lebanon's struggling economy. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade, The Hill Times file photograph, photograph courtesy of Twitter* 

> in difficult times, there are opportunities to create solidarity and resilience.

"Hopefully, all of the interest and attention goes directly to the people, because this has happened in a very difficult time for the country,"said Mr. Aboultaif. "The financial system is collapsing. The economy is in the worst shape I believe in the history of the country, and the political situation in general is not great."

The Lebanese economy "was already shattered before the explosion, drowning in its worst crisis since the 1975-90 civil war,"according to the Independent. "The economy stagnated last year, with a fifth of the workforce unemployed and almost 30 per cent of young people out of work. Inflation was vaulting higher." "This is happening also with

COVID, we must not forget, so ev-

erything happened at the same time," said Mr. Aboultaif. "If there is a bright side to a disaster, maybe people will realize that things can happen beyond any other circumstances, and hopefully, that will bring us together along with all the international help that is going to somehow minimize the effect on Lebanese society."

"Hopefully, we'll have to somehow change the course over what's going on with the economy in order to bring some more realistic approach to what's going, more towards more the practical and focusing the care of the people."

Mr. Aboultaif lauded the efforts of the Lebanese-Canadian community who have been donating to the Lebanese Red Cross directly, adding he hopes that the organization (an continue working with the Canadian government to find a way to support the victims of injured families in Beirut.
 According to the 2016 census,

there were nearly 220,000 people of Lebanese descent in Canada. "Canada has always been here,

not just for Lebanon, but for everybody," said Mr. Aboultaif.

Before arriving in Canada in January 1993, former Liberal MP Eva Nassif, who represented the riding of Vimy in Quebec from 2015 to 2019, worked as a registered nurse during Lebanon's civil war that lasted 15 years from 1975-1990. Both Ms. Nassif's brother and father were killed during the conflict.

When asked about her initial reactions to the events that unfolded earlier this week, Ms. Nassif said it "was a flashback from the war."

"From what I've seen all my life as a child, as a person all my life before emigrating—it brought back bad memories of Lebanon,"said Ms. Nassif.

Ms. Nassif also said that another one of her brothers, just a few minutes before the explosion, had passed by the site of the explosion, and likely would have been one of the casualties.

"And I have another brother whose apartment, whose car, is affected—everything is broken,"said Ms. Nassif."All the community is devastated. Everybody is worried about their families there; it's not easy. It's a really horrible situation, on top of the economic situation that started October of last year."

"Half of the population lives in poverty, and with COVID, the economic situation is bad,"said Ms. Nassif."This came yesterday to add to the poor Lebanese people there, another tragedy—and now, more than 300,000 people don't have shelter and lost their homes."

"I don't know what to say, everybody is devastated."

In response to a query from *The Hill Times*, Israel's embassy forwarded a joint statement from its foreign minister, Gabi Ashkenzai, and defence minister and alternate prime minister Benny Gantz, which said Israel has offered the government of Lebanon humanitarian and medical assistance.

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson tweeted on Aug. 5 that, as a show of solidarity for the people of Lebanon, the OTTAWA sign in the ByWard Market will be lit up in the red, white, and green colours of the Lebanese flag.

"Our thoughts go out to the families and friends of all those affected by this terrible tragedy,"wrote Mr. Watson.

mlapointe@hilltimes.com The Hill Times

### 'When you have the will, there is a way': Lebanese-Canadian Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury's rise to federal political power

The Liberal MP was first elected in the 2015 federal election, taking just over 25,800 votes and 47 per cent of the tally in the Quebec riding of Laval–Les Îles.

### BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Founder of the interparliamentary Canada-Lebanon Friendship Group, Liberal MP Fayçal El-Khoury has had a remarkable rise into Canadian politics, starting from his early life growing up in the northern province of Akkar in the small town of Charbila in Lebanon, to fleeing the beginnings of brutal civil war that consumed the country for a decadeand-a-half in 1976, to ultimately being elected as the MP for the Quebec riding of Laval-Les Îles in the 2015 federal election.

As a politician and prominent member of Canada's large Lebanese-Canadian community, Mr. El-Khoury has been watching the tragic events unfolding in Beirut last week very closely.

As of press deadline, Mr. El-Khoury told *The Hill Times* that according to reports, the number of houses and buildings damaged or destroyed from a massive blast in the city's port exceed 1,000, with more than 350,000 people left homeless.

It's estimated 156 people have also died as a result of the explosions, with CBC reporting that rescue teams continue to pull bodies from the rubble resulting from a blast of more than 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored at the port since 2013.

#### Arrived in Canada in 1976

At the outset of Lebanon's 15-year civil war that began in 1975 and

lasted until 1990, Mr. El-Khoury first came to Canada in 1976 after engaging in a mandatory one-year military training regime before the war began.

In early 1976, Mr. El-Khoury headed to the Canadian Embassy in Beirut, which was closed."So I went from Beirut to Egypt and I applied in August 1976,"said the MP in a phone interview with *The Hill Times* on August 7.

"The first couple of years [here in Canada] were the most difficult years of my life, there was no Lebanese community like [there] is now, I had to work hard to be able to find a school or university,"said Mr. El-Khoury."I wanted to study engineering—it was not easy, the university here did not recognize the diploma from Lebanon because of the war, so I was accepted as an independent student in mathematics at Concordia University."

Mr. El-Khoury had to work Fridays and Saturdays, and had to study full time, "but when you have the will, there is a way." One year after earning his degree in civil engineering from Concordia, Mr. El-Khoury built a construction company and contributed directly to the residential construction boom in the metropolitan region.

More recently, Mr. El-Khoury has been an avid voice in the Lebanese community here in Canada.

"The Lebanese community, the largest Arab Canadian community, is making a remarkable and growing contribution to Canadian heritage," said Mr. El-Khoury in Parliament during Lebanon's 74th anniversary on Nov. 22, 2017. "The Lebanese, most of whom have chosen the province of Quebec as their home, are not only bilingual, they are also a diverse group, comprising 18 religious denominations. They are active in politics, science, medicine, music, and the economy.

"Through this diversity, the Lebanese community reinforces the fundamental values of the charter of Canada," said Mr. El-Khoury.

### Decisive win during 2015 federal election

Mr. El-Khoury was first elected in the 2015 federal election, winning just over 25,800 votes and 47 per cent of the total vote. He beat NDP candidate and incumbent François Pilon, who won just over 10,700 votes.

Mr. El-Khoury has a number of family members still in Lebanon, including his sisters, nephews, nieces and cousins, and told *The Hill Times* he visited the country with Stéphane Dion when he was still minister of foreign affairs prior to his appointment as an ambassador to Germany, as well as with former House speaker Geofrrey Regan.

When asked if he plans to stand for re-election whenever the writ drops next, Mr. El-Khoury said he was "100 per cent sure" that he would like to run "to make sure Laval's voice heard in Ottawa and serve the citizens of my country, of Canada, and to serve our democracy."

mlapointe@hilltimes.com

News

### Would-be Conservative leaders wooing Quebec dairy farmers, but organizers say they won't decide the race this time

With Maxime Bernier out of the party, dairy farmers don't have a supply-management bogeyman to unite against this time.

#### Continued from page 1

However, the organizer of a Facebook group for Quebec's dairy farmers that played a key role in that 2017 contest told The Hill Times that he does not expect the group will significantly influence the outcome of this year's leadership contest.

The Conservative Party will elect a new leader at the end of the month to replace Mr. Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.). The party is not holding a convention in order to respect public health guidelines for the COVID-19 pandemic. Party members have until Aug. 21 to mail in their ballots for the election.

Three men and one woman are candidates for the leadership post: Peter MacKay, a former high-ranking Conservative cabinet minister who left politics in 2015; Erin O'Toole, the MP for Durham, Ont., who served as the veterans affairs minister in the last government; Leslyn Lewis, a Toronto lawyer who is new to politics; and Derek Sloan, the MP for Hastings-Lennox and Addington, Ont.

A French-language Facebook group titled Les Amis de la Gestion de L'offre et des Régions-Friends of Supply Management and the Regions, in English-rallied Quebec dairy farmers during the 2017 leadership contest, urging them to sign up as party members and vote for any candidate besides Maxime Bernier, who had campaigned on a promise to scrap the system governing the production of dairy, eggs, and poultry in Canada.

The supply management system limits the amount of product farmers can produce and sell, keeping prices for those goods high. Canadian tariffs keep out international competitors, with some exceptions.

The dairy farmers may have swung the outcome of the last leadership race. Mr. Bernier lost to Mr. Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) by a razor-thin margin of about one percentage point. Three of Mr. Bernier's rivals in that contest including Mr. Scheer sought endorsements from the organizers of the group, visited dairy farms for photo ops, or asked organizers to sell memberships on their behalf. The chief administrator of Les Amis, Jacques Roy, hosted candidate Steven Blanev for a photo op on his own farm.

This time, Mr. MacKay and Mr. O'Toole have reached out to Les



It's on: Derek Sloan, Leslyn Lewis, Erin O'Toole and Peter MacKay are contesting the Conservative Party leadership election. The deadline for mail-in ballots that will decide the race is Aug. 21. Twitter photographs, The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade, and The Hill Times file photograph

Amis as part of their campaigning in Quebec. Both candidates sent the group videos in which they delivered short speeches in French promising to support the supply management system and agricultural sector. Ms. Lewis and Mr. Sloan have not reached out to the group, according to Mr. Roy, but Ms. Lewis has run ads promising to support dairy farmers in both French and English to Facebook users in Quebec.

Conservative MP Luc Berthold (Mégantic-L'Érable, Que.) also posted a video on Facebook in July, standing in front of a pen full of cattle. Mr. Berthold says he visited a farm in Coaticook. Oue. with Mr. MacKay; that he supports supply management; and that he supports

Mr. MacKay in the party leadership race, in part because of Mr. MacKay's positions on agriculture.

However, with no candidate vocally opposing the supply management system, Quebec's dairy farmers don't appear to be as engaged in this year's campaign as they were in the last, Mr. Roy told The Hill Times in a series of messages exchanged via

Facebook. Les Amis has nearly 12,000 members, but Mr. Roy said it's likely that fewer of them are Conservative Party members now than were during the last campaign. Mr. MacKay seems to be receiving the most positive comments from group members, he said, but others favour Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. Roy said that he did not think Quebec's dairy farmers

would influence the outcome of this year's leadership contest, because their votes would be distributed among the candidates.

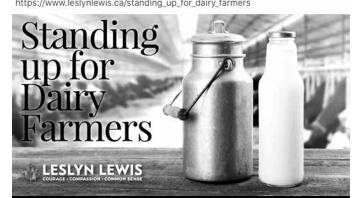
One of Mr. O'Toole's top organizers in the province gave a similar assessment in an interview with The Hill Times. Former Quebec MP Alupa Clarke said that the Roxham Road irregular border crossing, rail blockades, and respect for Quebec were the top issues for Quebec Conservatives now.

Supply management?"It's not an issue," said Mr. Clarke, who is a senior adviser with Wellington Dupont Public Affairs, and is serving as the O'Toole campaign's Quebec chair.

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Leslyn Lewis's campaign ran this ad promising support for dairy farmers to more than 30,000 Facebook users in Quebec in late July. Screengrab of Facebook's ad library

> Mr. O'Toole supports supply management, and so do the other candidates, said Mr. Clarke. There don't appear to be any coordinated third party campaigns to push dairy farmers toward or away from any of the candidates, he said.

Mr. O'Toole sent a video to Les Amis, said Mr. Clarke, because it is normal for a campaign to speak to groups within the province about issues important to them. The O'Toole campaign platform includes policies supporting supply management and agriculture, but "no specific strategies around [the] supply management group," he said.

Mr. Clarke said he had personally called about 5,000 party members in the province on behalf of the O'Toole campaign, and was planning to undertake a week-long trip across the province to visit members who weren't accessible by phone or email. He said that Mr. O'Toole had held weekly Zoom meetings for interested

....

party members in Quebec every week during the campaign, and for a month did four such meetings every week. The O'Toole campaign also

held what Mr. Clarke called "teleforums" for party members in the province several times, autodialing 13,000 party members at once, and holding a teleconference with any of those who chose to stay on the line and listen

Mr. O'Toole has three pages of his policy platform devoted specifically to Quebec, including a promises

to protect supply management and "put an end to the failure of the Liberal government in commercial treaty negotiations and their negative impact on the dairy industry.'

in.

Mr. MacKay's policy platform does not include a section for

Quebec specifically, but promises to protect the supply management system. In the video that the MacKay campaign sent to Les Amis, Mr. MacKay promises to introduce legislation to protect the supply management system, and to stop conceding market share to foreign producers through international trade agreements.

Ms. Lewis' platform includes a lengthy section in which she promises to defend supply management,"stand up for our dairy farmers," and stop giving market access to other countries. Mr. Sloan's platform does not explicitly mention supply

management, dairy farmers, or Ouebec.

### Quebec party membership nearly doubled during campaign

The format for the Conservative leadership election indirectly places a higher value on votes from party members in ridings where the party is less popular, including much of Quebec, where the Conservatives routinely poll in third place.

Each federal riding in Canada is given equal weight in determining the outcome of the leadership election, regardless of how many members live and vote there. Each riding is worth 100 points, and candidates are awarded points for the share of the vote they receive in each riding: for example, a candidate who receives 40 per cent of the vote in a riding will be awarded 40 points, regardless of whether that 40 per cent represents 10 votes or 100 votes.

In ridings with relatively few party members-including many in Quebec—a leadership campaign can capture a greater share of the vote by persuading one party member, or signing up a new one, than it would by winning over a member in the Conservative heartland.

The number of party members in Quebec more than doubled during the 2017 leadership contest, as campaigns raced to sign up new supporters. By the end of the race there were 16,483 party members in Quebec, out of 259,010 nationwide, iPolitics reported.

The party's nationwide membership has swelled again this year to 270,000 because of the leadership contest, according to a party press release. That release said that membership in Quebec has nearly doubled during the race, but did not say how many members there now are in that province. Mr. Clarke said there were around 13,000 party members in Ouebec.

The Conservatives currently hold 10 seats in Quebec, behind the Liberals' 35 and Bloc Québécois' 32. Alexandre Boulerice holds the remaining seat, Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie, for the NDP. Weekly rolling polls by Nanos Research showed the Conservatives in third place in Quebec as of July 31, with just shy of 15 per cent support, behind the Liberals (38 per cent) and the Bloc (27 per cent), and just ahead of the NDP (12 per cent). peter@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times

News

### 'The vast majority of the TFWs would rather come here and get their PR': some MPs signal support for extending permanent residency to Canada's migrant farm labourers

A recent study from StatsCan found that Canada has seen a steady uptick in work permits for temporary foreign workers, with nearly 470,000 foreign nationals qualifying in 2019, up from 390,000 in 2018 and 340,000 in 2017. Within the agriculture sector, foreign nationals account for 27.4 per cent of those involved in crop production.

Continued from page 1

MPs are expressing support for extending permanent residency to those who make the yearly pilgrimage between Canada and their home country.

Conservative MP John Barlow (Foothills, Alta.), his party's agriculture critic, said he supports calls from advocates for Ottawa to develop better pathways to permanent residency for those employed in the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

"For most employers, it is much more expensive for them to have to train new people every couple of years,"he said, noting workers can apply to be with an employer for two years. "The vast majority of the TFWs would rather come here and get their PR, and I'm sure the vast majority of employers would prefer that as well."

Employers interested in recruiting foreign nationals to fill a labour shortage in their industry have to go through the Labour Market Impact Assessment as a means of verifying that the jobs can't be filled by Canadians themselves. Migrant advocates have long called on the federal government to make TFWs eligible for permanent residency upon arrival, saying that, without that status, many face threats of deportation and are vulnerable to exploitation.

Mr. Barlow said expanding eligibility for PR status would also benefit employers, saying it could eliminate the need to have to go through the "merry go round, every year" of qualifying for the LMIA.

NDP MP Richard Cannings (South Okanagan-West Kootenay, B.C.), for his part, said his party has long been in favour of helping more foreign workers obtain permanent residency. "Our policy has always been, 'If you're good enough to come here and work, you're good enough to stay and then become a Canadian,' " he said. "Not only should they have the same rights as Canadians,

but they should have a clear path to stay here permanently, rather than just temporarily."

While TFWs are afforded the same labour rights as citizens, Syed Hussan, executive director of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Canada, said that, because of their tenuous status, which is tied to their employer, leaving an exploitative situation, in many cases, is not an option they can easily exercise.

"Speaking out still means termination. The central issue is power; our position is if you change the law, but don't give permanent resident status, you can't enforce their rights," said Mr. Hussan.

Immigration lawyer Elizabeth Long, a partner with law firm Long Mangalji, said she agrees there's an imbalance of power built into the program's design, because of the employer-specific work permit. She echoed Mr. Hussan's assertion that TFWs have little recourse when it comes to filing complaints about unsafe working conditions.

"Is there a reporting regime, where workers can easily report to a government officer and get something done positively, and then not lose their work permits? And be able to work somewhere else? No, there isn't," said Ms. Long.

The government has an online reporting tool to report fraud under the TFW program and can hold inspections to protect workers.

Mr. Hussan pointed to the open-work permit program, which the government has referred to as a solution for those in abusive work conditions, saying that qualifying is an onerous process that could compromise the workers' ability to be invited back the following year and to earn an income because of the short harvesting season.

Canada's agriculture industry is heavily reliant on foreign nationals, with Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia leading the way among provinces that employ the most temporary foreign workers on their farms, according to 2018 data from Statistics Canada. In Ontario, for example, they account for 42 per cent of agricultural workers.

A recent study from StatsCan found that Canada has seen a steady uptick in work permits for temporary foreign workers, with nearly 470,000 foreign nationals qualifying in 2019, up from 390,000 in 2018 and 340,000 in 2017. Within the agriculture sector, foreign nationals account for 27.4 per cent of those involved in crop production.

"These are just simply jobs that, in most cases, Canadians just don't want to do. They don't want to be working for 12 hours a day, [tending to] vineyards, grapevines, or picking strawberries or working in a feedlot or on a fabrication line at a beef processor. That's just the reality,"said Mr. Barlow. "These workers, in most cases, are highly skilled."

According to StatsCan's 2016 data, Mr. Barlow's riding is home to 2,375 farms, among one of the highest in his province.

Mr. Cannings' riding is home to 1,191 farms, the fourth highest number in the province, according to the StatsCan data. His region had 288 organizations report that they employed workers across the crop production, animal production, and meat pro-duction industries: 248, 39, and one, respectively. The MP's riding is also home to the Krazy Cherry Fruit Company in Oliver, B.C., where a migrant farm worker and another person linked to the company tested positive for the virus, after which 36 migrant workers and nine others were given isolation orders. Health authorities reported the temporary foreign worker had tested negative before starting work at the farm. Mr. Cannings added that, "locally, from a health perspective, things have been handled very well. There's probably more concern locally about farm workers coming from Quebec than farm workers coming from Mexico."His region welcomes between 1,500 and 2.000 domestic seasonal workers to pick fruit. Because they are domestic workers, fruit pickers do not have to self-isolate for 14 days, unlike migrant workers in other fields.

In his own bid to control the spread of the COVID-19, New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs was forced to reverse course in May after initially banning temporary foreign workers, amid criticism from the industry, which was unable to recruit enough Canadian labourers. Mr. Higgs told CBC he had expected those who had been laid off due to the pandemic to fill the demand.

### Consultations on housing standards to begin in 'weeks' ahead, says minister's office

In the months since the pandemic hit, three migrant workers have died of COVID-19 while working on farms in Ontario, and there have been numerous reports alleging mistreatment and substandard living conditions. The Windsor-Essex region in Ontario, where more than 8,000 migrant workers are employed, has been hit hard by the pandemic. It's the only area in Ontario that is stuck in stage three of the reopening, with Premier Doug Ford citing outbreaks among workers in the agriculture and agri-food sectors for the delay.

Many labourers across the country are housed in bunkhouses, which, during the pandemic, has made compliance with physical-distancing measures near impossible.

Rookie Liberal MP Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.) said that while not all farms are "created equal," most of the farmers in his riding are doing their "utmost" to establish protocols and safeguards to prevent outbreaks and to provide safe and healthy working conditions. Based on the StatsCan data, he has 648 farms in his riding, which falls just short of the riding with the most in the province, an honour that goes to Cumberland-Colchester, N.S., which boasts 928 farms.

Mr. Blois pointed to one farm in his riding, Noggins Corner Farm, which, he said, sought to purchase additional farmhouses to improve housing conditions in response to the pandemic.

Asked if he supports calls to expand access to permanent residency beyond the three-year pilot program the government is testing, Mr. Blois pointed out that the government has said"all measures are on the table," while noting that many TFWs don't necessarily want to settle in Canada.

He also said that, since many farms are dependent on the program, most who employ foreign nationals "know how valuable workers" are and treat them well.

"I hope this program doesn't get a black eye. Of course there are

improvements to be made,"he said. Mr. Barlow agreed, saying if the vast majority were treated unfairly,

many wouldn't return every year. Employment Minister Carla

Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.) an-

nounced on July 31 that the government intends to spend \$58.6-million to improve living conditions for migrant workers, saying it's prepared to assume responsibility for an area that's traditionally under provincial jurisdiction. She told *The Windsor Star* the government is "weeks away" from sharing new housing standards and guidelines employers will have to adhere to. Those found to be non-compliant, she suggested, would not be able to access the labour program.

In an Aug. 6 email statement to *The Hill Times*, Ms. Qualtrough's press secretary, Marielle Hossack, said the consultations have yet to begin, explaining they "will begin in the weeks to come with provinces and territories, employers, workers and foreign partner countries on a proposal for mandatory requirements for the TFW Program."

Ms. Hossack said the government intends to increase the volume of inspections, adding 3,000 more.

Mary Robinson, president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, which represents some 200,000 farm families, said her organization has yet to be consulted, and expressed concern the government is potentially making putting forward a "knee-jerk" response, when, in many cases, reports about mistreatment are "isolated cases."

"There's always going to be bad actors in whatever field there is,"she said, adding that most are working hard to comply with public-health guidelines and have had to be "nimble" in adapting to the pandemic.

Ms. Robinson said that, while her organization is supportive of calls for pathways to permanent residency, there are other considerations to be addressed. She said farmers who avail of the TFW and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, which is limited to individuals from the Caribbean and Mexico,"invest' a lot of resources and incur many costs, including purchasing plane tickets and providing housing, to hire labourers, and can't afford to risk losing workers who may decide to leave for another opportunity, in another province.

"When you consider all the investments one farmer makes to secure their labour force, the idea that the worker could leave for whatever reason to move from rural P.E.I. to downtown Toronto, [is also difficult to square],"said Ms. Robinson, adding the government also needs to be mindful of these considerations. "We don't condone anyone being mistreated. It's a business; we need to make sure that we protect that, to a certain degree."

"If we're going to make changes like that to the mobility of workers, that entire investment has got to be revisited,"she said.

Ms. Long said until the government overhauls the program to make it easier to access open work permits or to expand access to permanent residency, problems around the mistreatment of some workers will persist.

"There has been very little thought given to workers who are coming here. They are not the priority," she said. "They don't vote, so the traditional system has been very much, 'Well, you know what? You're no longer useful, then you go away.'"

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### **Photo Feature**

### Outtakes from PM's and Telford's remote testimonies before House Finance Committee on July 30



In a rare move, the prime minister and the prime minister's chief of staff testified before a House committee. The House Finance Committee is looking into the details of the federal government's nowcancelled \$500-million contract with the WE Charity to deliver the Canada Student Service Grant program. The prime minister and the finance minister were accused of having conflicts for being at the cabinet table when this decision was made because of their personal and family connections to the WE Charity. The issue has damaged public opinion for the prime minister for the first time since the pandemic was officially declared in mid-March. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured July 30, 2020, remotely testifying before the House Finance Committee. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Katie Telford, chief of staff to the prime minister, followed the prime minister remotely testifying before the House Finance Committee. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Finance Committee, held in Room 415 in the Wellington Building, was empty but for the translators and technicians. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

The House



The parliamentary committees are certainly not the same without the federal MPs and Senators and staffers. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



A look through the translator's booth. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

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# Parliamentary Calendar

### MONDAY, AUG. 10

House Not Sitting—The House has not met regularly since mid-March, when it was suspended amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The regular summer recess was scheduled to begin on June 24, but MPs agreed to meet as a committee of the whole on July 8, July 22, Aug. 12, and Aug. 26. The House is then scheduled to return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks, as per the original House sitting calendar.

Senate Not Sitting—The Senate is adjourned until Sept. 22.

TUESDAY, AUG. 11

COVID, Recovery, and Immigration— Since 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau and the Liberal government have regularly and widely championed immigration to Canada and the welcoming of refugees. Now, as we begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must examine how this tumultuous period has shown areas of weakness in immigration. We must also consider how immigration has been affected during the pandemic and how this has affected Canada economically, socially, and otherwise. Join the Pearson Centre and federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Marco Mendicino as we discuss the role of immigration in rebuilding the Canadian economy. Tuesday, Aug. 11, from 2 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12

House Sitting—MPs are scheduled to meet as a committee of the whole on Aug. 12, and Aug. 26. The House is then scheduled to return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks, as per the original House sitting calendar.

Business Fireside Chat with Minister Ng and NCR Caucus—Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion, and International Trade Mary Ng will take part in a Business Fireside Chat hosted by the Ottawa Board of Trade. Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 11 a.m. to noon. Registration available at business.ottawabot.ca.

### THURSDAY, AUG. 13

How-to Parliament—Ryerson University hosts "How-to Parliament: An introduction to the Institute for Future Legislators." Past IFL alumni and instructors will share insights from their time in the program, how they've put their training practice since the institute, and advice for anyone interested in the program or politics in general. Participants can participate in one of our signature IFL political simulations, experiencing first-hand some of the challenges, trade-offs, and opportunities that come along with public office. Thursday, Aug. 13, beginning at 3:30 p.m. EDT. Register for the Zoom event via Ryerson.

### WEDNESDAY, AUG. 19

Ipsos COVID-19 August Update: Ask Me Anything Webinar—Join Darrell Bricker, global CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs for another interactive and frank "Ask me anything" webinar examining how the public mood around COVID-19 has evolved, where concerns are most focused now, and how the crisis is affecting Canadians' behaviour now and in the future. Aug. 19, 1:30 p.m. (ET), online. It will last 60 minutes. Register at Ipsos.com.

#### FRIDAY, AUG. 21

**Conservative Party Leadership Contest**— 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.

### MONDAY, AUG. 24

Innovation and Manufacturing in the Time of COVID—The Pearson Centre will host this talk with Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains on Monday, Aug. 24 from 1:30 to 2 p.m. to discuss his government's plans to assist the

# MPs to return for House committee of the whole meeting Aug. 12 on the Hill



Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, pictured on July 22, 2020, leaving the West Block on Parliament Hill. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade* 

private sector in the rebuilding and recovery of the Canadian economy. He will be discussing this issue with Rhonda Barnet, president & COO at AVIT Manufacturing, and past chair of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Mr. Bains is expected to talk about how he believes the Canadian industry can return to its strong footing in the global economy in the coming years. Go to the Pearson Centre's website to register, or for online readers.

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 2

43<sup>rd</sup> FIPP World Media Congress—Susan Goldberg, editor-in-chief of *National Geo*graphic and editorial director of National Geographic Partners, is the latest speaker to be confirmed for the 43rd FIPP World Media Congress, which will take place online from Sept. 2-30. To find out more, www.fippcongress.com and online here.

### MONDAY, SEPT. 21

House Sitting—The House is scheduled to return in the fall on Monday, Sept. 21, for three straight weeks, as per the original House sitting calendar.

### TUESDAY, SEPT. 22

o- Senate Sitting—The Senate is scheduled to return in the fall on Tuesday. Sept. 22.

### More at hilltimes.com/calendar -

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 23

Politics and the Pen 2020: Digital Edition—Politics and the Pen will hold a virtual event on Wednesday, Sept. 23. Politics and the Pen is a highlight of political Ottawa's social calendar and an important annual fundraising event benefiting the Writers' Trust. The in-person event regularly attracts 500 guests from Canada's political and literary circles. The 2020 digital event will feature a special presentation of the 20th Shaughnessy Cohen Prize as well as memorable moments from past galas. To date, Politics and the Pen has raised more than \$4.5-million to support the programs of the Writers' Trust. This year's finalists are: Canada on the United Nations Security Council: A Small Power on a Large Scale, by Adam Chapnick; Peace and Good Order: The Case for Indigenous Justice in Canada, by Harold R. Johnson; Claws of the Panda: Beijing's Campaign of Influence and Intimidation in Canada, by Jonathan Manthorpe; Truth Be Told: My Journey Through Life and the Law, by Beverley McLachlin; and Canadian Justice, Indigenous Injustice, by Kent Roach. For information and sponsorship, contact Julia Yu, events manager, at jyu@ writerstrust.com

### THURSDAY, OCT. 15

**PPF Testimonial Dinner and Awards**—Join the Public Policy Forum at the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual event to network and celebrate as the Public Policy Forum honours Canadians who have made their mark on policy and leadership. Anne McLellan and Senator Peter Harder will take their place among a cohort of other stellar Canadians who we've honoured over the last 33 years, people who have dedicated themselves to making Canada a better place through policy leadership and public service. The gala event will be held on Thursday, Oct. 15, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front St. W., Toronto.

#### SATURDAY, OCT. 24

Parliamentary Press Gallery Dinner—The Parliamentary Press Gallery Dinner happens on Saturday, Oct. 24, in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building on Wellington Street in Ottawa.

### FRIDAY, OCT. 30

**CJF Awards Celebrating 30 Years of Excellence in Journalism**—The Canadian Journalism Foundation Awards will be held on Oct. 30, 2020, at the Ritz-Carlton, Toronto, hosted by Rick Mercer, former host of *The Rick Mercer Report*. The CBC's Anna Maria Tremonti will be honoured. Tables are \$7,500 and tickets are \$750. For more information on tables and sponsorship opportunities, contact Josh Gurfinkel at jgurfinkel@cjf-fjc.ca or 416-955-0394.

### TUESDAY, NOV. 3

**U.S. Presidential Election**—The U.S. presidential election is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020. U.S. President Donald Trump is the Republican candidate and former vice-president Joe Biden is the presumptive Democratic candidate. The winner is scheduled to be inaugurated on Jan. 20, 2021.

### THURSDAY, NOV. 12

Liberal Party National Convention—The Liberal Party of Canada announced the 2020 Liberal National Convention will be hosted in Ottawa, from Nov. 12-15. For more information, please contact: media@ liberal.ca, 613-627-2384.

### FRIDAY, NOV. 13

Bridging Divides in Wake of a Global Pandemic—The University of Victoria (UVic) and the Senate of Canada are bringing together change-makers at the Victoria Forum to help generate solutions to some of the world's most divisive problems. The two-day virtual forum will be held Nov. 13-14 to examine issues that fall under the theme of "Bridging divides in the wake of a global pandemic." The forum will draw on emerging trends and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic through biweekly webinars. For more information or to register, visit www. victoriaforum ca

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 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

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