

The Hill Times' 100 Best Books in 2021 & more



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NEWS

Trudeau should condemn Bill 21, commit to intervene if law challenged at Supreme Court, say Liberal MPs

BY ABBAS RANA

A significant number of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's caucus says he needs to unambiguously condemn Quebec's Bill 21 and, should the matter appear before the Supreme Court, clearly state the federal government would intervene to defend Charter

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NEWS

Duplicating cabinet committee could speed work on climate change, says lobbyists

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

A need for speed could be behind the PMO's decision to form two cabinet committees with identical mandates related to climate change, according to some lobbyists.

"Just speaking from my experience, as a chief of staff in

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FEATURE

Anand picked as most valuable politician in 2021: All Politics Poll



Here comes Anand: Defence Minister Anita Anand was picked as the best of the bunch in 2021. Read all about it and more, in this year's All Politics Poll pp. 16-18. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia/graphic design by Serena Masonde

NEWS

More 'efficient, effective' future pandemic spending needed to keep deficit under control: Page

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

The government will have to find less expensive ways to deal with disruptions caused by the fast-spreading COVID-19 Omicron variant, if it wants to make good on its plan to rein in

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NEWS

Fergus, Oliphant shut out of cabinet, but sworn in as privy councillors, giving them access to cabinet docs

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Liberal MPs Greg Fergus and Rob Oliphant were shut out of cabinet, but were sworn in as members of the Privy Council on Dec. 10, which will give them more power and influence in their roles as parliamentary secretaries,

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Alice Chen

Heard On The Hill

Five political books to watch for in the new year, wonks

A new year means lots of stuff, including fresh books on politics. So here are five to look for in the coming year.

Making Middle-Class Multiculturalism: Immigration Bureaucrats and Policymaking in Postwar Canada, by **Jennifer Elrick**, is set to explode onto the scene in January, backed by publisher University of Toronto Press. The book explores how immigration officials in post-Second World War Canada shaped our country's multiculturalism, focused as it was on markers of middle-class traits, to success and, simultaneously, inequity.

For even heavier fare, try **Commodity Politics: Contesting Responsibility in Cameroon** from authors **Adam Sneyd**, **Steffi Hmann**, **Charis Enns**, and **Lauren Sneyd**. Published by McGill-Queen's University Press, it takes a deep-dive into the "emerging politics of responsibility surrounding agri-food and extractive industries in commodity-dependent country," according to the book description. It's set for a February release.

There's also **Canada's Deep Crown: Beyond Elizabeth II, The Crown's Continuing Canadian Complexion** set for a January release from publisher University of Toronto Press and authors **David Smith**, **Christopher McCreery**, and **Jonathan Shanks**. As the title suggests, it explores and examines how a constitutional monarchy works and how the various abstract layers of the Crown can play out in different contexts.

Gender politics is explored in **Mary Ann Sieghart's The Authority Gap: Why Women Are Still Taken Less Seriously Than Men, and What We Can Do About It**, published by Norton and set to release Feb. 8. Written by a journalist, it explores how in spite of all the superficial progress made towards equality, there's still a lack of respect and appreciation for the authority of women in the workplace.

Lastly, there's a look into the world of linguistic plurality with editors **Maria Constanza Guzmán** and **Sehnaz Tahir Gürçaglar** and publisher McGill-Queen's University Press' **Negotiating Linguistic Plurality: Translation and Multilingualism in Canada and Beyond**. Exploring the ways in which language and its diversity reflect transnational and comparative conditions, the set of essays is due out in February and is sure to be a thought-provoking delight.

'The energy is intoxicating': Sen. Bovey celebrates new artwork featured in the Senate

The chair of the Senate artwork and heritage advisory working group is celebrating the "immense impact" that two new artists exhibits bring to the Senate building: a second installation honouring Canada's Black artists in the foyer and Inuit art from the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Nunavut in a committee room.

"The public response to our work remains high, and I want to thank all involved. The energy is intoxicating," said Progressive Senator **Patricia Bovey** during a Dec. 9 presentation to the Senate Internal Economy Committee.

A mixed-media piece by Ontario image maker **Tim Whiten**, and an acrylic-on-paper by the late Trinidadian-Canadian painter **De-**

nyse Thomasos—both who were widely acclaimed internationally, said Bovey—will be featured in the Senate foyer until July 2022.

"The artists both dig deep into their roots, dig deep into the psyche of their communities and reach out across Canadian society to ensure that their histories and the world that defines us is understood," said Bovey in the Dec. 7 release about the work.

The Manitoba Senator said this work is an example of the body furthering its commitment to the African Canadian Senate Group, which formed earlier this month, and the Parliamentary Black Caucus, created in 2015, and to Black Lives Matter.

In a Dec. 1 speech about the advisory group's projects to bring "poignant, truly meaningful art" to the Senate, Bovey also highlighted the new backdrop in committee room B-30, which now features Inuit art from the Winnipeg Art Gallery and Nunavut which she said "reflect the Senate's reconciliation goals"



Manitoba Senator Patricia Bovey admires *Wyoming Saddle* by Denyse Thomasos, left, and *Light Laureate* by Tim Whiten, which she arranged to have exhibited in the foyer of the Senate of Canada Building. Photograph courtesy of the Senate of Canada

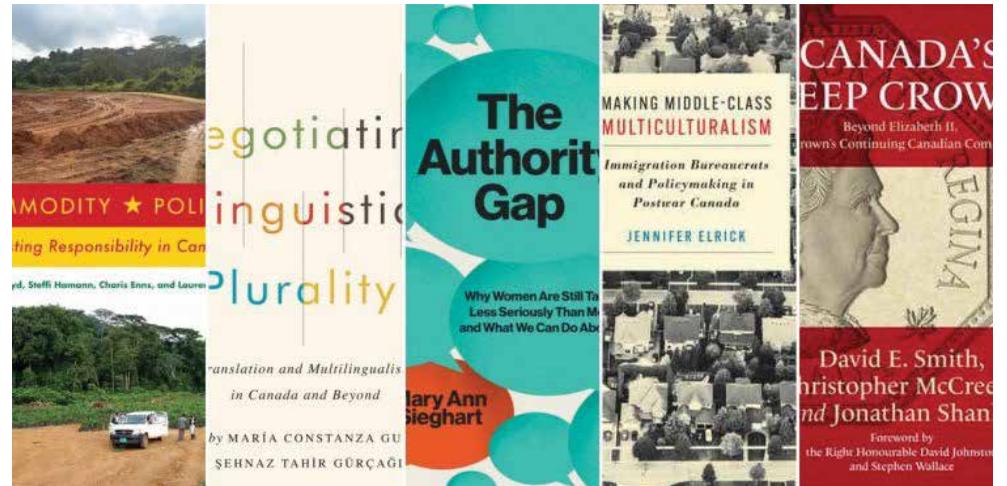


Also featured in the Senate foyer is Trinidadian-Canadian painter Denyse Thomasos, pictured standing in front of her work *Metropolis*. Thomasos passed away suddenly in 2012, at the age of 47. Photograph courtesy of the Senate of Canada/The Estate of Denyse Thomasos and Olga Korper Gallery

"These small projects have immense impact," she told the Red Chamber on Dec. 1. An art historian, museologist, and former gallery director, since being appointed in 2016, Bovey has sponsored a bill to create a Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate. Bill S-202 has proceeded through the Red Chamber and is at second reading in the House.

The Low Down to Hull & Back News breaks national story

The Low Down to Hull & Back News, billed as "the only paper serving the Gatineau Hills since 1973," and a "feisty little English weekly!" broke the story online on Dec. 8 about a local elementary teacher, **Fatemeh Anvari**, who works at Chelsea Elementary School, and who was told she could no longer to teach her Grade 3 class owing to Bill 21, Quebec's



Five to watch for, nerds: *Making Middle-Class Multiculturalism: Immigration Bureaucrats and Policymaking in Postwar Canada*; *Commodity Politics: Contesting Responsibility in Cameroon*; *Deep Crown: Beyond Elizabeth II*; *The Authority Gap: Why Women Are Still Taken Less Seriously Than Men*; and *Negotiating Linguistic Plurality: Translation and Multilingualism in Canada and Beyond* are all reads worth sinking your teeth into in 2022. Photographs courtesy of McGill-Queen's University, University of Toronto Press, Penguin Random House Canada

secularism law introduced in June 2019, which means she can't wear her hijab to work. Headlined, "Chelsea teacher banned from class for wearing hijab," the story was quickly picked up by other media outlets and turned into a national story and a national debate.

"One Chelsea teacher's dismissal sparked a national conversation about Bill 21," reads the Dec. 15 tweet, noting that Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** applauded the Chelsea protesters "but is staying out of the fight."



Read all about it: The front page of the Dec. 15 issue of *The Low Down*. The paper first reported the story online on Dec. 8, which was picked up by media across the country. Photograph courtesy of Twitter/LowDownNews

For its part, *The Low Down*, headed publisher **Nikki Mantell**, was started by her parents **Art** and **Kitty Mantell** "on their kitchen table in 1973" and for "no better reason than that they loved newspapers." The paper, which has a staff of 10, "is the most dedicated team of newsies you'll ever find," and it's published 50 times a year on Wednesdays.

City of Brampton renames Rhapsody Park to Gurbax Singh Malhi Park to honour first Sikh Member of Parliament

In recognition of his work as a Brampton MP for 18 years, the City of Brampton has renamed Rhapsody Park to **Gurbax Singh Malhi**. Malhi who was the first turban wearing Sikh MP in the House of Commons. The park is located at 50 Burlwood Road in Brampton and the official renaming ceremony took place on Dec. 7.

Malhi represented the riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton from 1993 until 2011 when he lost the riding to Conservative candidate **Bal Gosal**. During his parliamentary career, Malhi won six back-to-back elections and served as parliamentary secretary to a number of cabinet ministers, including ministers of labour, industry, human resources, and national revenue. In 2003, then-prime minister **Paul Martin** named him a privy councillor for life.

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Trudeau should condemn Bill 21, commit to intervene if law challenged at Supreme Court, say Liberal MPs

Montreal Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi says all federal party leaders should educate the public on how Bill 21 is trampling on the rights of their fellow Canadians.

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rights, Liberal MPs told *The Hill Times*.

"If you and I know that the Liberal Party is against Bill 21, why doesn't the population understand it? Because it's not been said clearly enough," said one of the Liberal MPs who spoke on a not-for-attribution basis in order to offer their candid opinion. The MP said the topic was a focus at last week's national Liberal caucus meeting, where the prime minister was pressed to offer a clearer stance.

Since Bill 21 became law in 2019—prohibiting some public-sector workers like teachers, police officers, judges, and others in positions of authority from wearing religious symbols at work—the three major federal party leaders have been trying to stay away from this issue, arguing it's a provincial matter.

The law is popular in Quebec and Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.), and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) have spoken carefully when asked about the law, reluctant to offend Quebecers, who elect 78 federal MPs, the second highest after Ontario's 121 seats.

But Chelsea, Que., teacher Fatemeh Anvari's removal from her position earlier this month for wearing a hijab, forced the hands of party leaders to state where they stand on this. As soon as the story made national headlines, a

number of Parliamentarians from both sides of the aisle have come out to condemn the reassignment of Anvari to a different position. Even though the issue dominated the national agenda for days, putting party leaders under the spotlight, each has been making carefully worded statements to avoid offending Quebec voters.

In a press conference and later in the Question Period last week, Trudeau said he is "deeply" opposed to the law but doesn't want to intervene for fear the Quebec government would use it as a wedge against the federal government.

As the case is before the courts, he said, he wants Quebecers to show their disapproval of the law to the provincial government. He did not make any commitment but said that the federal government could intervene if the issue ended up in the Supreme Court.

"Quebecers are people who stand up for human rights, freedom of expression and gender equality. We also stand up for conscience rights. In Quebec, we stand up for freedom of religion," said Trudeau in the House of Commons on Dec. 15.

He said many Quebecers were "surprised and disappointed" Anvari lost her job "because she is Muslim. That should not happen in Canada."

MPs pushed for clearer position at national caucus meeting

The Liberal MPs interviewed for this story said Trudeau's position has evolved on this issue, but his comments come across as very nuanced when their constituents want a clear stance. The national Liberal caucus held a detailed discussion on this subject last week, where MPs pushed Trudeau to take a clear position and commit to intervening if it ends up in Supreme Court. Trudeau, however, responded that in his judgment, by doing that, he would be giving ammunition to the Quebec government which

would exploit it for political reasons.

After the caucus meeting, two Liberal MPs who wanted Trudeau to change his strategy, said he was persuasive at the meeting and said they now agree with Trudeau's approach in handling this issue. They said that the key challenge in this debate is that Quebecers see the issues of secularism in a very different light than Canadians living in the rest of the country. They said that this issue is divisive and if dealt in a populist fashion could cause more divisions between Quebec and the rest of the country. Also, they said, given that Quebec has invoked the notwithstanding clause, it has limited the legal options.

"It rattles all of us to our core to see these types of ridiculous incidents [Anvari's removal as a teacher]. We have to look at it from the mindset of people in Quebec," said one MP.

backwards," ultimately receiving unanimous support.

"Racism and bigotry have no jurisdiction," Chahal said in September 2019. That motion came forward, he told *The Hill Times*, after he heard concerns from his constituents who were worried that their families and friends living in Quebec would be affected by the new legislation. His family is familiar with the effects of discrimination, said Chahal, whose father Ram Chahal is a turban-wearing Sikh and has suffered, alongside other family members, numerous incidents of racism over the years in Alberta.

In 1991, his father, the then-secretary of the Alberta Liberal Party, went to attend a private party at the Royal Canadian Legion in Red Deer, but was told that to enter he would have to take off his turban or go through the back door, which was locked. This incident made national head-

claiming federal interference, and that depriving Quebec of a political cudgel is more virtuous than using every federal resource possible to defend the rights of marginalized Quebecers," she wrote.

"Mr. Trudeau's government has used federal financial levers to put pressure on New Brunswick for failing to improve access to abortion. Its caucus speaks out in chorus in reaction to individual acts of hatred and discrimination, and will condemn examples of systemic injustice that are not Quebec-specific."

The province of Quebec plays a pivotal role in the outcome of every federal election. When the NDP became the official opposition in 2011, it was chiefly because of its massive breakthrough in Quebec which helped propel the party to official opposition for the first time in its history.

In the last two elections, the Liberal Party's hopes of winning a majority were based on making more gains in Quebec, which never materialized. The scandal around SNC Lavalin, in which the federal government intended to protect the Quebec based construction company from criminal prosecution on fraud charges, shook the Trudeau government to its core before the 2019 federal election. If the Liberal Party had lost that election, that scandal would have been one of the key reasons.

In the September federal election, the Liberals won 35 of the 78 seats, the Bloc 32, the Conservatives 10, and the NDP one. In recent elections, most of the 78 ridings have been four-way contests creating a highly competitive environment for all federal parties.

According to a mid-September poll by Léger, 64 per cent of Quebecers supported Bill 21 while 27 per cent opposed it. In comparison, 28 per cent of Canadians in the rest of the country were in favour of Bill 21 and 52 per cent against. The poll of 1,000 Canadians came out in mid-September and had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Two-term Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que.) said that going forward federal party leaders should educate Quebecers and Canadians on how Bill 21 is trampling on the rights of their fellow Canadians. He said Trudeau's passionate Dec. 15 Question Period exchange with the Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.) made it clear the Liberal Party strongly opposes Bill 21.

"Party leaders are also educators, and it's important that we educate the voters around the issues in question," said Zuberi. "And in particular, we need to highlight the values that, at the end of the day, are landing on the side of protecting fundamental freedoms, human rights, the right to work, the value of men and women having equality, to enter the workforce equally. These are the values that we have to highlight."

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Liberal MPs want Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to commit now that the federal government would intervene if Bill 21 ended up in a court challenge before the Supreme Court of Canada. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"You don't want to kick up a storm in the province about issues of this nature. If this wasn't such a complicated issue, you can rest assured that the other party leaders would have taken a very different stance as well," said the same MP.

Another MP told *The Hill Times* the federal government wants to let this issue play out in Quebec and let people see first-hand the consequences of this legislation. The thinking is that after watching incidents like Anvari's removal, some Quebecers will change their opinions. The source predicted the federal government's tone, tenor, and substantive arguments would slowly change in the coming days and weeks.

On Nov. 16, in an interview with *The Toronto Star*, Diversity and Inclusion Minister Ahmed Hussen (York South-Weston, Ont.) offered a stronger stance on how the federal government should proceed, including intervening in a court challenge. "Absolutely, I would support that. Yes, of course," he told *The Star*.

Rookie Liberal MP George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Alta.) said that he's been speaking against Bill 21 since 2019 when he was a Calgary city councillor. At the time, Chahal forwarded a motion to condemn the law, which he called "regressive" and a "step

lines at the time and the federal Liberal Party objected to the legion's actions.

Chahal said that Trudeau and the federal government's position on Bill 21 is clear and that it's up to the provincial government to reconsider their position on this law.

"The [federal] government has been very clear on our stance and that we do not agree with the legislation," said Chahal.

"Ultimately, it is a decision of the Quebec government. The courts there have made their decision that we look at what that is, and make sure that everybody has an opportunity to participate in all aspects of our society."

Quebec pivotal in election outcomes

Trudeau has been repeatedly criticized by pundits and politicians for his position, which they suggest reveals the federal government uses one standard for Quebec and another for other provinces.

Trudeau's statement that Ottawa won't intervene so as "not to give the excuse to the Quebec government that this is federal interference," falls flat, wrote *The Globe and Mail* columnist Robyn Urback last week.

"That claim supposes that the Legault government isn't already

News

Duplicating cabinet committee could speed work on climate change, says lobbyists

Two cabinet committees for economy, inclusion and climate were created with the intent of preventing a bottleneck of work on the climate change file, according to lobbyists.

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the government during the last mandate, the cabinet committee agendas were very heavy every single week. It was a large workload. Obviously, from time to time, there were bottlenecks where things slowed down, and this might be their way of trying to speed things up," said Carlene Variyan, an associate vice-president at Summa Strategies and a former Liberal cabinet staffer with past roles include serving as chief of staff to Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Man.) when he was the minister and special representative for the Prairies.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) released his cabinet committee mandate and membership list on Dec. 3, outlining the committees that will carry out most of the day-to-day work of the cabinet. The list included two 14-member cabinet committees for "economy, inclusion and climate," which were divided into an A and a B team.

The climate A committee is chaired by Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.), and the chair of the climate B committee is Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.). The mandates for both committees, which are identically worded, state they are expected to consider "issues as sustainable and inclusive social and economic development, post-pandemic recovery, decarbonization, and the environment as well as improving the health and quality of life of Canadians."

Variyan said it would be safe to say that the announcement of two climate committees left many in and around Parliament Hill puzzled. Having two climate committees is likely intended to increase the volume of work that can be done; but with identical mandates, it is not entirely clear how responsibilities may be divided between the two, she said.

"Stakeholders ... who have an interest in their economic and climate agendas, want to have as many avenues to advocate as possible. If a stakeholder knows that a particular cabinet committee often considers matters related

to an issue they care about, they may want to focus their time on trying to get the attention of the cabinet committee," said Variyan, "I think everybody is waiting to find out whether one [committee] will carry out a particular set of functions or relate to certain policy areas ... or whether it'll be more arbitrary."

The Hill Times reached out to the Prime Minister's Office to ask why it decided to have two committees on economy, inclusion and climate, and how work responsibilities would be divided between them. An emailed response from the PMO on Dec. 14 did not directly address the question about the division of work responsibilities, but said that the structural change "will deliver results for Canadians by accelerating action on the government's platform commitments."

"As we finish the fight on COVID-19 and build a resilient recovery, both committees will be able to work on policies to make sure they promote economic growth that works for Canadians and builds a cleaner, greener future," said the statement emailed to *The Hill Times* by Cecely Roy, a PMO press secretary.

Variyan told *The Hill Times* that the two economy, inclusion and climate cabinet committees will serve as a functional replacement for the economy and environment cabinet committee that operated during the last Parliament.

"It was a particularly busy committee for the government during the last mandate, and even the one before that, [because] so much government business was passing through. That was a reflection of the type of mandate that this government had, with such an ambitious climate action agenda," she said. "It would be credible to speculate that this might be an effort to share the workload a little bit, and also bring in an even wider spectrum of perspectives to these items."

Susan Smith, a principal of Bluesky Strategy Group and a former Liberal strategist, told *The Hill Times* that she agreed that the economy, inclusion and climate committee was divided into two groups to allow faster work on the climate file.

"I think from a lobbyist perspective, we'll always be curious to try and find out ... to which committee a particular initiative may be going," she said. "I think [the two committees] is a different approach, but the motivation is based on the priority that the government is placing on those issues, and that the climate lens has to be applied to everything. The reason there are two committees, I understand, is so that we don't get bottlenecks and things move."

The list of parliamentary secretaries, released on Dec. 3, revealed that Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.) would have two parliamentary secretaries in the current

parliamentary session. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Manitoba) remained in role, but was joined by Julie Dabrusin (Toronto-Danforth, Ont.) as a parliamentary secretary.

Trudeau released the ministerial mandate letters on Dec. 16, which included no fewer than 39 priority tasks in his mandate letter for Guilbeault. Some of those files will be shared with other ministers. They include drawing up a plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as required under a law passed by the government in the last Parliament; capping emissions from the oil and gas sector at current levels; developing a plan to reduce methane emissions; mandating that 50 per cent of all light-duty vehicles sold in 2030 be zero-emission vehicles, a step on the way toward a target of 100 per cent for 2035; creating a national ban on single-use plastics; strengthening the Environmental Protection Act; and establishing 10 new national parks and 10 new national marine conservation areas in the next five years, among other things.



Environment and Climate Change Minister Steven Guilbeault was given 39 priority tasks in his mandate letter on Dec. 16, including drawing up a plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) has been assigned to help provinces and territories pay to start switching to low-emissions electricity infrastructure; work with Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan to draw up the government's long-promised "just transition" legislation, to help resource-sector workers switch into new lines of work; try to make Canada a leading manufacturer of batteries; add 50,000 new electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen fuel stations across Canada; and more.

Variyan described the mandate letters as dense and "extremely ambitious."

Qualtrough's mandate letter said that she is expected to seek opportunities within her portfolio to support a whole-of-government effort "to reduce emissions, create clean jobs and address the climate-related challenges communities are already facing."

Qualtrough's mandate letter also states she is to support the ministers of natural resources and labour in moving forward legislation and actions to transition to a

low-carbon economy, and to ensure implementation of a Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit intended to support workers whose work has been interrupted as a result of public health measures.

The mandate letter for Champagne instructs him to lead the implementation of the Net Zero Accelerator Initiative, an \$8-billion federal program to support projects that will enable Canada to reduce its domestic greenhouse gas emissions. Champagne's letter also said he is to advance the government's efforts to ensure Canada is a world leader in clean technology, including by partnering with post-secondary institutions and Indigenous organizations to accelerate development of Indigenous clean technology businesses.

David Brown, a political science professor at the University of Ottawa who specializes in the management of information and technology in the public sector, told *The Hill Times* that he wonders if the two climate committees may divide work along the lines of "social policy" responsibilities and

Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ont.).

The climate B committee includes more members related to economic policy, according to Brown. The vice-chair of the B committee is Housing Minister Ahmed Hussen (York South—Weston, Ont.), and other members include Infrastructure Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, B.C.), and International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham—Thornhill, Ont.).

The "bones" of the two committees could be divided between economic and social policy decisions, but the two policy areas may overlap, according to Brown. As an example, housing issues can straddle the boundary between economic and social policy when discussing social and affordable housing, he said.

"Committee B is chaired by François-Philippe Champagne, who's [minister of] innovation, science and industry. That does kind of suggest that A, perhaps, is focused on the social policy and B on the economic policy, but with license to run into each other. I don't know," said Brown.

Smith said the list of cabinet committees reflected a positive balance of representation by women. Out of the eight cabinet committees and three sub-committees, all of them include a female minister as a chair or a vice-chair, with the exception of the climate B committee, said Smith.

"There's lots of powerful women in powerful roles," said Smith. "I think that the prime minister in this government is continuing to walk the talk [of gender representation]."

The cabinet committee list indicates that LeBlanc will be "one of the busiest guys in Ottawa" for the next several years, according to Variyan. LeBlanc is listed as a member on six cabinet committees, which is more than any other minister. LeBlanc is chair of the committee on operations, and chair of the sub-committee on intergovernmental coordination. He is also a member of the cabinet committee on agenda results and communications, the climate B committee, the sub-committee on litigation management, and the sub-committee on the federal response to the coronavirus.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the heavy assignment load he's been given on cabinet committees is a reflection of the trust and confidence that the prime minister has personally in Dominic LeBlanc as a very long-time confidant and close friend of his for several decades," said Variyan. "The prime minister knows that he can't personally be everywhere at once, and the next best thing is to have those you trust there."

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Fergus, Oliphant shut out of cabinet, but sworn in as privy councillors, giving them access to cabinet docs



Liberal MPs Rob Oliphant and Greg Fergus were sworn in as members of the Privy Council on Dec. 10, 2021. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade

Privy Council membership will provide a larger voice for Liberal MPs Greg Fergus and Rob Oliphant in the federal cabinet, according to lobbyists.

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say some government relations professionals.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) released his roster of parliamentary secretaries on Dec. 3. The list included an announcement that Trudeau's parliamentary secretary, Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.), and Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.), the parliamentary secretary to Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), would be sworn in as members of the Privy Council. Fergus is also the parliamentary secretary to the Treasury Board president.

"Given the mandate for digital transformation that is ultimately going to rest with the Treasury Board, it is going to be that much more important that Greg [Fergus] is viewed as an equal partner to his minister to execute on those mandate commitments,"

said John Delacourt, a vice-president of public affairs with Hill+Knowlton Strategies, and a former communications director for the Liberal caucus research bureau. "These two additional [Privy Council] members of the caucus are significant. It says that we view your mandate as one where you're going to be an equal partner in fulfilling those commitments."

Privy Council members have access to cabinet documents that other parliamentary secretaries or MPs are not necessarily privy to, according to Delacourt. Greater ability to review cabinet documents allows Privy Council members more ability to participate in cabinet discussions, he said.

Members of the Privy Council advise and support the prime minister and cabinet ministers.

The appointment of Fergus to the Privy Council is significant because Trudeau decided to drop the role of minister of digital government from his cabinet in a shuffle on Oct. 26, according to Delacourt. Fisheries Minister Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, B.C.), previously Canada's digital government minister, assumed her new responsibilities in the shuffle with no one appointed to replace her in the digital minister role. Her responsibilities as minister of digital government appear to have been divided between Treasury Board President Mona Fortier (Ottawa-Vanier, Ont.) and

Public Services Minister Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, Ont.), according to Delcourt.

The transfer of responsibilities from the former minister of digital government to Fortier makes it more important for Fergus, as her parliamentary secretary, to have a greater voice on the key mandate considerations, said Delcourt.

"Any minister who has [Privy Council] status is effectively given access to the cabinet conversations. That is the big difference. Parliamentary secretaries without Privy Council status are part of the minister's office, in terms of their conversations about the commitments that are established at the cabinet level, but they're not necessarily a de facto part of that conversation, for lack of a better term," said Delcourt. "In other words, if you don't have the briefs, it is that much more difficult to say you're an equal partner in the conversation."

For Fergus and Oliphant to receive Privy Council status reflects "a great vote of confidence for both of them" from the Trudeau government, he said.

"The larger piece for the Treasury Board's consideration ... is the digital transformation of government; the enhancement of data infrastructure, the service delivery for digital government now," said Delcourt. "So much of how we communicate ... are clearly going to remain remote or virtual for quite some time. The

digital component of this is going to be that much more important."

Ashton Arsenault, a vice-president at Crestview Strategy and former ministerial staffer in Stephen Harper's Conservative government, said that assigning Fergus and Oliphant to the PCO is intended as an honour. Privy councillors are entitled to the honorific of "the honourable" preceding their names.

"At the end of the day, this is a 'You guys are a welcome addition to this caucus, [and] while the cabinet table was full, we want to make you parliamentary secretaries in recognition of that good performance over the last couple of years.' That's how I read it," said Arsenault. "I think they just wanted to give Rob [Oliphant] that title boost as a recognition of good service. I understand that he's well-liked within the caucus as well. I assume that has something to do with it, but without knowing more on what or if that's going to add to their job responsibilities, I wouldn't be able to comment."

In addition to Fergus, the parliamentary secretaries' list includes three other MPs who are serving with more than one minister. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Nfld.) is parliamentary secretary to Wilkinson and parliamentary secretary to Minister of Northern Affairs Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.) Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Ont.) is parliamentary secretary to Minister of Health Jean-Yves Duclos (Quebec) and parliamentary secretary to Minister of Sport Pascale St-Onge (Brome—Missisquoi, Que.).

Julie Dabrusin (Toronto-Danforth, Ont.) is parliamentary secretary to Minister of Natural Resources Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) and parliamentary secretary to Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.).

Assigning Dabrusin to a parliamentary secretary role for the minister of natural resources and the minister of environment could be a way to help the two portfolios "work in lockstep," according to Arsenault.

"I think the approach is that they want extra coordination between the two portfolios. A lot of what the left hand does in this instance needs to be matched by what the right hand does," said Arsenault. "A lot of times, there might be an outside perception of incoherence between the two objectives of those portfolios, but I think the federal government is doing what it can to make that relationship as symbiotic as possible."

Drabrusin is one of two parliamentary secretaries for Guilbeault because Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.) also remains in his role as parliamentary secretary to the minister.

Arsenault said two parliamentary secretaries on the environment portfolio could also reflect the size and scope of the Liberal government's climate change goals.

"It's no secret that they have a very ambitious environmental agenda, and there's a lot of different policies that they have to track. There's going to be a number of pieces of legislation that are going to be germane to

this line ministry," said Arsenault. "I think it's honestly just a way for them to halve-off responsibility, so they don't have to put all of it onto one person."

On Dec. 16, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) released the ministerial mandate letters which included at least 39 priority tasks in the letter for Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte Marie, Que.).

Priorities for Guilbeault include drawing up a plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, as required under a law passed by the government in the last Parliament; capping emissions from the oil and gas sector at current levels; developing a plan to reduce methane emissions; mandating that 50 per cent of all light-duty vehicles sold in 2030 be zero-emission vehicles, a step on the way toward a target of 100 per cent for 2035; creating a national ban on single-use plastics; strengthening the Environmental Protection Act; and establishing 10 new national parks and 10 new national marine conservation areas in the next five years.

Matthew Barnes, a senior consultant at Navigator who previously served as a senior manager of communications for former finance minister Bill Morneau, agreed the choice for Dabrusin to serve as a parliamentary secretary for the ministers of environment and natural resources could be an attempt to improve coordination between the two portfolios.

"I suspect, given a number of the Liberal platform commitments that have a lot of overlap between those two portfolios, whether it's carbon capture, utilization and storage, or the cap on emissions for the oil and gas sector ... both those offices are going to need to talk from the same source, so to speak. I think that one in particular makes a lot of sense," said Barnes.

In regards to van Koeverden, Barnes said that his role as parliamentary secretary to the minister of sport makes sense because of his history as an athlete. Van Koeverden won an Olympic gold medal in the K-1 500m category in 2004, and he won world champion titles in K-1 500-metre in 2007 and K-1 1,000-metre in 2011.

Barnes said that van Koeverden's selection as parliamentary secretary for the health minister may also be because of his skills as a communicator, which is an important skill during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When he first ran in 2019, he was viewed as one of the party's star candidates, and even on the recent campaign trail he did what would be called an 'auxiliary tour' and was present in other ridings supporting other candidates," said Barnes. "With the COVID 19 pandemic, it's been an issue where, in some cases, they've had communicators out on every single day. And it'll certainly continue to be a pressure point for the government in the House of Commons, which is where a parliamentary secretary will find most of their work or their airtime, so to speak."

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The Hill Times

Opinion



Deputy PM and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland is pictured during a virtual press conference on the fall fiscal update on Dec. 14. Both the press conference and the update itself took place virtually after two of Freeland's staff tested positive for COVID-19. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Feds' rosy economic update could do more harm than good

Chrystia Freeland's rose-coloured view of the world does more harm than good because it induces complacency, which is the last thing we need. It will take much better analysis and harder thinking to achieve a better Canada.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—Perhaps the boldest promise made by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland in her 2021 fiscal outlook is that the Trudeau government “will ensure that there are good sustainable jobs for Canadians in every corner of the country, for decades to come.”

That's a great aspiration, and Canada has been trying to do this for more than

half a century, in recent years through regional development agencies each with a cabinet minister backed by young Liberal staffers—but with limited success despite much federal spending. Unfortunately, Freeland didn't tell us how she would actually deliver such promised success, not only now but for decades to come. That, presumably, is for her next budget.

In fact, much has been put off until the next budget, which is where it should be. But we need the next budget sooner rather than later.

As Freeland told reporters, the fiscal outlook “is not the master plan for the Canadian economy going forward. That will be in the budget.” That next budget, she promised, would be about growth and competitiveness. On that point, she is right. The fiscal outlook is intended to set out the fiscal framework which provides the parameters for the next budget. The practice, introduced by Paul Martin after he became finance minister in 1993, was intended to help Canadians—and government departments looking for money—have a better idea on how to set priorities and allocate money in the coming budget.

The problem is that we have needed a growth strategy that delivers the new industries, exports, and jobs for some time. The Trudeau government made an attempt with its so-called innovation strategy, but this was more a set of transactional programmes to hand out money than a coherent strategy based on critical analysis of the country's problems, needs, and opportunities.

The pandemic only served to accelerate many of the disruptive changes already taking place in the world and highlighted the need for a much smarter innovation strategy in Canada. This should have been in this year's spring budget so investors, corporations, educators, and skills agencies could have started putting the pieces into place now. But it wasn't, and so we have to wait until next year.

Instead, there's still too much of a tendency to pretend all's well. The Canadian economy is, Freeland told us, “roaring back” with more than a million new jobs and a soar-

ing GDP. This recovery, she said, “continues to be backed by solid underlying fundamentals, which should support robust household spending and business investment.”

Consumer spending, she said, “could beat expectations amid a significant build-up in savings by households and the strong rebound in the labour market.” At the same time, “business investment could pick up more than expected given the strength in profits and corporate balance sheets, strong demand, higher commodity prices, and the need for large-scale investment to expand capacity, improve supply chain resiliency, and reduce carbon emissions.” Meanwhile, “more business investment in digitalization could strengthen productivity growth. At the same time, Canada's world-class universities, growing tech sector, and highly educated and growing workforce will continue to give Canada a leg up.” The word “could” appears in many of these sentences.

To be sure, the government did many of the right things in responding to the pandemic and Canadians avoided a serious economic crisis. And the fiscal outlook quite properly recognized we are not over the pandemic and need continued supports—though better targeted—for those hardest hit.

Mostly, though, the fiscal outlook is an exercise of self-congratulation. Or, as Freeland said, “Canada has largely recovered from the economic damage inflicted by COVID-19 and is poised for robust growth in the months to come.” But unfortunately, not in the years to come.

It's one thing to have a short-lived bounce-back after the worst economic decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s. But it is quite another to build back better with the much higher productivity growth and new export industries needed to generate the wealth for longer-term prosperity. As the fiscal outlook shows, once we get past the bounce back this year and next, we will be returning to a much slower growth path of less than two per cent GDP growth, and the big problems we face won't have disappeared.

And this is the difficulty: the reluctance of Finance, or the government more generally, to engage in open analysis and discussion of the big problems we face. Instead, challenges are papered over. Freeland's fiscal outlook makes no mention of the urgent need to raise our potential growth rate so that we can meet the future needs of an aging population and the provision of the wide range of public goods and services that Canadians depend on. There's no analysis explaining the low level of business investment, spending on innovation and adoption of new technologies—and the resulting inadequate rate of productivity growth—or the failure of business to invest in upskilling for their employees.

We do know we are facing many looming and highly disruptive challenges, from new technologies that will radically change industries and jobs, to climate change that will threaten food and water security, trigger major migration, and bring new health risks due to intense heat waves, to geopolitical tensions as the U.S. threatens a cold war with China, to increased protectionism as nations compete for jobs and investment, and the risk of breakdown in global governance with a much higher risk of conflict.

If our government pretends all is well, despite contrary evidence, we will end up a poorer nation. This is a key reason why we need an independent economic council that will provide us with the analysis we must have for better decisions, and for all of this analysis to be in the public realm so that all Canadians are better informed. Freeland's rose-coloured view of the world does more harm than good because it induces complacency, which is the last thing we need. It will take much better analysis and harder thinking to achieve a better Canada.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.

The Hill Times

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Heather Rothman, Ottawa Property Shop Realty Inc.

More 'efficient, effective' future pandemic spending needed to keep deficit under control: Page



Former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page said the government's projected deficits are high, but coming down 'dramatically.'
The Hill Times
photograph Jake Wright

The government is projecting a swift decline to the federal deficit, but un-costed election promises or first-wave-style COVID supports could pump those numbers back up.

Continued from page 1

the deficit, say a current and former parliamentary budget officer.

"While the deficits are still very high, they are coming down—quite dramatically, actually," said Kevin Page, Canada's first PBO, of the numbers reported in the economic and fiscal update Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) delivered virtually in the House of Commons last Tuesday.

Should the Omicron variant slide the country into more business shutdowns, however, the federal government will need to find "more efficient and effective ways" to slow the spread, and provide financial relief to individuals, companies and organizations, he said.

"You can't keep doing this over and over again," said Page, of the government's debt-financed, broadly-targeted financial relief benefits during the first waves of the pandemic.

"The supply issues that we're dealing with that are creating

inflation are going to create enormous instability, so we'll have to get good at dealing with these sorts of shocks, including climate change."

Yves Giroux, who in 2018 was appointed the third parliamentary budget officer, said the government can "avoid putting fuel to the inflation fire" by ramping down COVID spending, instead of "opening the taps" in the way it did in the last fiscal year, he said.

Giroux said the Canadian economy became more resilient during the pandemic as time passed.

"It was highly affected during the first wave, significantly affected during the second wave, and became less and less affected as successive waves hit the Canadian economy, because we have come to know what we are faced with and have better adapted. Even before vaccines were widely rolled out," he explained.

"If we're in a fifth wave with Omicron, I'm not sure we'll need significant new supports in the event of limited, circumscribed lockdowns or new restrictions imposed on Canadians. But that depends on the severity of this new variant."

Freeland projects squashed deficit

In 2020-21, during the height of the pandemic's impact, the government recorded a \$327.7-billion deficit, representing about 15 percentage points of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP), as Page highlighted. This fiscal year, the deficit is forecasted to drop to \$144.5-billion, or almost six percentage points of GDP—"or, cut by more than half," he added.

"If you look at next year, the deficit is projected to be just under \$60-billion [\$58.4 billion], which is just a little over two percentage points of GDP, so it would be cut in more than half again," said Page.

Those deficit projections are also smaller than the projections made in April's federal budget, which pegged the figures at \$354.2-billion and \$154.7-billion, respectively.

"We remain committed to the fiscal anchors that we outlined in the spring budget, to reduce the federal debt to GDP ratio over the medium term and to unwind COVID-19 related deficits," Freeland said when she unveiled the fall update last week. "In October, we pivoted from necessary but costly broad-based support programs to more narrowly targeted, less expensive measures, as we had promised we would do."

"Our government will continue to be a responsible and prudent fiscal manager."

During her embargoed news conference prior to delivering the update, Freeland noted that Canada's GDP grew by 5.4 percent in the third quarter and "106 percent of jobs have been recovered since the depths of the COVID recession."

"That," she explained, "has a real impact on the bottom line, because when people are working we do not have to support them with our social welfare net and also when people are working they contribute to the economy."

Page agreed with the finance minister's assessment.

"I think that Minister Freeland is right. Things are being unwound and the government is trying to get deficits on a trajec-

tory that looks normal in a few years," he said.

"The government is pulling out a lot of support in this economy. Program spending was about \$600-billion in 2020-21, and it's going to drop to well under \$500-billion in 2021-22, and then drop another almost \$100-billion in 2022-23."

"The enormous changes in these numbers is the result of the lockdowns during the pandemic and the incredible fiscal supports [that came with it]," said the economist, who served as Canada's first PBO from 2008 to 2013.

He believes that government assistance was crucial.

"We would have had a depression if we didn't have those enormous fiscal supports where the federal government spent more than \$500-billion," said Page, the founding president and chief executive officer of the University of Ottawa's Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy.

"We're a \$2.5-trillion-dollar economy, so when you're spending that kind of money, you're plugging a lot of holes that were created by physical-distancing measures."

"You cannot lock down an economy and not provide fiscal support," said Page.

"The government has realized that if you want to build a resilient economy, you can't wait and deal with this retroactively, and that you have to minimize some of the damage as it is happening."

Accountability missing from fall update: Page

Page explained that the federal government was faced with a significantly different spending

dilemma in the early days of the pandemic during the spring of 2020, when there was no vaccine and little information existed on the transmissibility and lethality of the coronavirus disease.

"When you're acting with that massive amount of uncertainty during a global pandemic and you're shutting down the economy, I think the government strategically said it would be very open and generous with fiscal supports and that there would be some mistakes with the provision of these monies. It's a moral hazard issue," said Page.

He credited the government's economic update for providing a fiscal snapshot rather than costing out its 2021 campaign-platform commitments, which he said are better suited for inclusion in the 2022 federal budget.

"Stuff that concerned me was that there weren't a lot of budgetary constraints that we could hold the government accountable to in this document," said Page. "There is a lot of discussion in different parts of the world about appropriate fiscal anchors and targets."

"The government seems to be happy with the deficit and the debt-to-GDP going down, and that there's no need to have any constraint in this environment."

Liberal promises missing from the books: Giroux

Giroux said he was not surprised that last year's deficit is now projected to be lower than the government had previously expected.

On Aug. 16, a day after the last federal election was called, his office released cost-estimate projections of policy changes that political parties were proposing in their campaign platforms. In it, the PBO office estimated that the 2020-21 budgetary deficit would be \$334.7-billion.

"We knew that the economy was doing better than expected in the federal budget: that was demonstrated in employment numbers and economic growth," said Giroux, who is also an economist.

But Giroux said that there is no mention either in the fall update document or in any of its fiscal tables of how the Liberals are going to fulfil their election-platform commitments, which his office has estimated "could easily add \$53-billion on a net basis over five years."

"They were elected on a platform and that should be somewhere in their fiscal framework—unless the Liberals don't plan on implementing all of their platform commitments," said Giroux.

As to whether the Finance Department's economic update should have addressed the inflation rate, which as of last month at 4.7 percent—the highest level since 2003—Giroux said the government could have "ramped down temporary supports during the pandemic at a faster pace."

"But if you put the brakes on demand, it means that somebody is receiving less support from the government, so it's a difficult tradeoff to make," he explained.

Giroux said that his office will release a report next month on last week's economic update.

The Hill Times

Editorial

Editorial

Trudeau should lead from the front on Quebec's Bill 21

When it comes to analyzing the actions of any politician or a party leader, in almost every case, it all boils down to the ultimate objective: self-preservation and getting re-elected again. Since Quebec's divisive Bill 21 became a law in 2019, there have been two federal elections and the Liberals failed to win a majority government both times. In both cases, the seat-rich province of Quebec was a key part of the Liberal strategy to win their elusive majority.

Up until recently, the three federal leaders have gone out of their way to avoid taking a position on this divisive law to ensure that they don't offend Quebecers. But, earlier this month, they came under the spotlight after a Chelsea, Que., Grade 3 teacher Fatemeh Anvari was removed from her role and reassigned to an administrative position. The issue made national and international headlines and raised serious questions about Canada's credibility on lecturing other countries about their human rights when some of our citizens are excluded from certain public-sector jobs because they happen to wear a hijab, a turban, or a Kippah. And this is happening in 2021 when the so-called natural governing party of Canada is in power federally and has led the country for 69 years in the last century and 12 of the 21 so far in this century.

Even now, all party leaders are choosing their words very carefully, in

yet another effort to keep their powder dry with Quebec voters.

Under public pressure, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has started openly to oppose the law but is not yet making a firm commitment that the federal government would intervene if Bill 21 goes before the Supreme Court.

The prime minister must realize he's the leader of this country. Leaders lead from the front and not from behind like he, Conservative Party Leader Erin O'Toole and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh are doing. This is not a debate about whether Canada should be spending \$400-million or \$500-million in handling the pandemic. This issue goes to the fundamental core of Canadian values. This is a pivotal time in Canadian history and Trudeau's base of supporters and the entire country expect him to show leadership. The choice is his: he can continue playing politics like he's been doing or take a firm position by fighting it in the court of public opinion and before the court of law. If everything in politics is all about winning the next election, then perhaps by taking a strong position on Bill 21, Prime Minister Trudeau might win the next one with a majority. He has failed twice in this attempts by staying away from this issue. Perhaps he will succeed next time if he tries to show stronger leadership on this.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Omicron reveals need to close global vaccine gap, keep everyone safe, says Hildebrand

The Love My Neighbour movement, a collaboration of 35 faith communities and organizations, strongly agrees with the Dec. 13 article in *The Hill Times*, "Inevitable' rise of Omicron shows 'failed approach' to ending pandemic, say experts." Billions of global neighbours in low- and middle-income countries have yet to receive access to a single COVID-19 vaccine dose. It's estimated that 81.5 per cent of Canadians have received at least one dose, while 7.1 per cent of people in low-income countries have received the same. These statistics indicate a social inequity this diverse group cannot live with.

With Canada's privileged position comes an increased responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to their right to a healthy, safe life. The new variant, Omicron, reveals the need to close the global vaccine gap to keep everyone safe, in Canada and globally.

Millennium Kids and diverse faith groups from Jewish, Muslim, Zoroastrian, and Christian traditions have come together in advocacy and fundraising. We want to embody the compassion youth and Canadians of faith share for our global neighbours and the desire to ensure everyone can access life-saving vaccines. Across the country, Canadians are holding fundraisers, writing songs,

selling samosas and chai tea, decorating pumpkins and sidewalks, buzz cutting hair, swimming across Lac St-Pierre, requesting vaccine donations in lieu of wedding and birthday gifts, and collaborating with their Scouts' group, Girl Guides' Unit, school, youth group, neighbourhood or faith community, in support of global vaccination efforts.

Love My Neighbour has engaged in direct advocacy around vaccine access and raised over \$550,000 to help UNICEF fully vaccinate 22,050 people in low-income countries against COVID-19.

Our hopes are high for 2022.

Based on supplies, we could have comprehensive vaccine coverage of the world next year, but to do so we need a clear and financed plan that prioritizes the most vulnerable around the world. Canada is uniquely positioned to play a leading role, in the multilateral spaces in which we sit, to help create and implement a plan that includes patents and manufacturing, dose sharing, and health systems support.

We invite every Canadian to #giftavax to a global neighbour.

Sara Hildebrand
Project coordinator,
Love My Neighbour
Toronto, Ont.

Clear-cutting does not equal bad forestry practice, argues Colombo

Re: "Sustainable forest management' in Canada too loosely defined, writes Nature Canada," (*The Hill Times*, Nov. 29). As someone who has worked as a member of the forest science community for almost four decades, I take exception to Nature Canada's recent response regarding sustainable forest management in Canada. Nature Canada presents Canadians with the stark choice between sustainable forest management and protecting intact forests. In fact, Canadians can support both the protection of some of Canada's forests and the sustainable use of other parts to both conserve the values of natural forests while providing wood and non-timber forest products that contribute to the economic well-being of people and communities.

Nature Canada also wrongly maligns clear-cutting by equating it with bad forestry practice. Only a poor understanding of Canadian forest ecology would let one conclude that clear-cutting should always be avoided. The truth is that in Canada, clear-cutting is not simply unthinking

logging of a forest—its appropriate use requires forethought and planning and encompasses a range of approaches that are recognized by professional foresters as sound forest management.

The organization also claims that forest carbon accounting in Canada is biased and flawed. However, the international scientific community has widely used Canada's forest carbon accounting approach. Those same methods, applied in Canada's national forest carbon reporting to the UNFCCC, find that Canada's managed forests, where logging is one of the factors affecting carbon balance, are net carbon sinks, not large carbon sources. For those who follow science, establishing the "truth" requires a careful system of checks and balances that result in publications of methods and results in peer reviewed scientific publications, as is the case with Canada's forest carbon accounting.

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All parties have a chance to right their respective ships in 2022

In the end, the only party that really ended up ahead at year's end is the Bloc. But this party also has the benefit of never having to be held accountable for what it might do in government as it vows never to form government.

Sheila
Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—As the year draws to a close, it is time to reflect on politics past and future.

In the past year, the governing Liberals limped out of an election, barely making any inroads into their dream of a governing majority.

In the past year, the newly-minted Conservative leader dreamed

that this was his party's time to form government. He opened with a slick campaign brochure that promised change, but everything cratered during the campaign.

In the past year, the New Democratic Party leader was crowned by young people as the king of TikTok. But in the end, his clock ran out as too many followers simply did not turn out to vote.

In the past year, the Green Party leader went from breaking through a glass ceiling only to be covered in shards as her party imploded in internal infighting.

In the past year, the Bloc leader went from being almost forgotten in the House of Commons to reinserting himself in the public domain with a strong election effort.

In the end, the only party that really ended up ahead at year's end is the Bloc. But this party also has the benefit of never having to be held accountable for what it might do in government as it vows never to form government.

So the new year offers opportunity for all political parties. In the case of the government, being in command of a progressive agenda will heal a lot of the wounds caused by an aborted attempt at a majority.

The childcare agreements with almost every provincial and territorial government are a great place

One heck of a year: Justin Trudeau, Erin O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh, Yves-François Blanchet, and Annamie Paul. *The Hill Times* photos by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade



to start. In addition the all-party decision to move ahead with a ban on conversion therapy, showed that parties can accomplish much when they work together.

Continued management of the COVID situation will dominate politics for everyone in the new year, but if the government manages the Omicron threat well, the Liberals will be the greatest beneficiary of public support.

As for the Conservatives, the first step in the right direction was the unanimous support for the anti-conversion bill. The new year will provide opportunities for Erin O'Toole to continue to make movement toward the moderate middle. The only thing holding him back is the right-wing pull in his own party. And

with an 18-month review process roiling inside the party, his freedom as a leader is certainly curtailed.

His party also needs to moderate its image as a collection of angry, white men. The finance critic, Pierre Poilievre, while a wonderful wordsmith, simply creates the impression that his work is being done for Bay Street and not for Main Street. While Poilievre is anxious to tag Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland as the inflation minister, most Canadians still don't think the moniker fits.

As there is inflationary pressure worldwide, it is pretty hard to hang that problem on a single minister in a single government. Poilievre is no doubt banking on the fact that growing inflationary pressures will

become a potent political tool for the Tories. That remains to be seen, but in the meantime, his overheated rhetoric could not pass a reality test.

In the new year, the New Democrats need to flex their muscles in Parliament to ensure that any legislation gets their seal of approval. Otherwise they risk being eclipsed by the government in the field of progressive politics. They also need to start spreading the news about their team. The current messaging is so fixated on the leader that it is hard for anyone to recognize the bench strength in Jagmeet Singh's party. He has some excellent performers who need to take centre stage in the battle for the hearts and minds of Canadians.

In the new year, the Green Party needs to go back to the future, with emphasis on its roots and why the party was created in the first place. Internecine warfare based on Middle East politics is not going to win the party any support. And with a swathe of doctorates around the political table, one has to wonder who is able to guide the party back to a winning path.

With an unexpected breakthrough in Ontario, when Kitchener Centre sent Mike Morrice to Parliament, there is an opportunity to rebuild the party from scratch. Their interim leader, nonbinary astrophysicist Amita Kuttner certainly has her work cut out for her.

As we sweep out the old to ring in the new, all parties have a chance to right their respective ships. Happy Holidays.

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

The Hill Times

Trudeau and Biden exist in alternate realities

Justin Trudeau may inhabit the same continent as Joe Biden, but in political terms, he governs in an alternate political universe. In short, Trudeau benefits from Canada's less fervent political mood.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—When it comes to ideology, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Joe Biden have a lot in common, yet, when it comes to opinion polls, the two leaders seem to be worlds apart.

Whereas Trudeau is, more or less, holding his own in the polls,

Biden is currently in the throes of a popularity challenge.

Indeed, for the past few months, his polling numbers have been on a downward trend.

According to a recent NPR/Marist National poll, for instance, Biden's approval rating now stands at a mere 42 per cent, with a whopping 38 per cent of Americans saying they "strongly disapprove" of him.

So why is it that Trudeau isn't suffering a similar Biden-like polling Gotterdammerung?

After all, both Biden and Trudeau face some of the same daunting problems, such as the seemingly never-ending COVID pandemic and the high degree of economic anxiety that's currently plaguing both Canada and the U.S.A.

Yet, only Biden is in serious trouble.

The explanation for this, I'd argue, is that Trudeau and Biden actually exist in two distinctly different political realities.

One stark difference between those two realities, for example, is that for a whole host of reasons having to do with race, religion and culture, Biden's America is much more polarized than Trudeau's Canada.

So consequently, the day Biden took office he was already

basically hated by about half the country, meaning it wouldn't take much of a shift in public opinion to dramatically plunge his popularity ratings deep underwater.



By contrast, here in Canada, where voters are less intense in their political hatreds, I suspect Canadians—even those who cast ballots for non-Liberal parties—are more likely to cut Trudeau some slack when it comes to dealing with tough issues such as COVID and inflation.

In short, Trudeau benefits from Canada's less fervent political mood.

The other thing to remember about Biden's reality is that he basically leads the Free World, meaning he operates on an

extremely grand political scale, where success or failure can have massive implications.

We certainly saw this with Biden's trouble-plagued evacua-

When it comes to ideology, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Joe Biden have a lot in common, yet, when it comes to opinion polls, the two leaders seem to be worlds apart, writes Gerry Nicholls. *Photograph courtesy Flickr and The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

tion of Afghanistan this past summer, which rightly or wrongly, was viewed by many Americans as a total and complete disaster.

Basically, Biden looked weak, but worse, he made America look weak.

Not surprisingly then, the Afghanistan debacle marked the beginning of Biden's polling collapse.

Of course, Trudeau doesn't play in the super power league, so even if his international forays falter, he doesn't face the same risks as Biden.

I mean, so far, Trudeau's biggest failure on the world stage

was his comical costume-changing episode while visiting India.

It's embarrassing yes, but not devastating.

Another problem for Biden in his reality, is the left-wing of his Democratic Party pushing "woke" causes that are unpopular with the American public.

In fact, when asked why the Democrats lost the recent gubernatorial election in Virginia, Democratic strategist James Carville offered this blunt response: "What went wrong is stupid wokeness ... this 'defund the police' lunacy, this take Abraham Lincoln's name off of schools, people see that. And it really has a suppressive effect all across the country on Democrats."

This sort of thing isn't really an issue for Trudeau, since, even though the Liberal Party is on the left, it's also a party that puts political pragmatism ahead of progressive ideology.

Note how Trudeau has been careful to avoid speaking out too strongly against Quebec's controversial Bill 21, which bans civil servants from wearing religious symbols at work.

So yes, Trudeau may inhabit the same continent as Biden, but in political terms, he governs in an alternate political universe.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

A modern, national privacy protection law should be a priority for re-elected Trudeau government: Egan



Canadian businesses need the government to reintroduce privacy reform legislation as soon as possible to set a single national standard for privacy protection, writes Grace Egan, a policy adviser at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. *Photograph courtesy of Pixabay*

One issue sorely missing from the Throne Speech was the importance of privacy protection for Canadians and Canadian businesses. The privacy legislation businesses work with today was introduced over two decades ago—four years before Facebook was launched and just two years after Google was founded. It was written at a time when lawmakers were describing the internet as a “series of tubes.”

Today, the use of the internet is ubiquitous across Canada and we have seen the digitalization of both consumers and businesses rapidly increase since the COVID-19 pandemic began. With the new parliament, this should be our opportunity to introduce a modern privacy framework. However, it does not seem to be a priority issue for the current government.

Canada’s privacy framework is past its best-by date and it no longer reflects the reality of the digitalized world, nor does it take into account the need to protect the private information of Canadians from a growing number of cyber threats. The stakes are high and parliament isn’t listening.

For over a year, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has been calling for an updated privacy framework that protects both consumer privacy and supports the ability of companies to innovate and compete. We provided a submission on the Digital Charter Implementation Act (Bill C-11) after it was introduced in November 2020. Professional associations from all sectors agreed that privacy is an issue for businesses of all sizes in Canada. The creation of different provincial legislation that could result in a patchwork of privacy rules across the

country was overwhelmingly rejected by the 200,000-strong chamber of commerce network as an approach that would undermine the ability of businesses to address the issue of protecting the privacy of their customers.

Despite clear and compelling evidence from Canada’s business community, we saw such a patchwork emerging as Parliament stalled on Bill C-11 throughout 2021. Quebec adopted Bill 64 in September, and Alberta and Ontario requested feedback on their privacy consultations in the summer. Last month, British Columbia’s government proposed amendments to their Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, which has since been widely denounced. Creating different legislation on privacy without overarching federal direction will only cause confusion for businesses and their customers. While national privacy legislation needs to be interoperable with international laws like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), adding provincial interoperability challenges into the mix makes running a business an even greater challenge.

We need the government to reintroduce privacy reform legislation as soon as possible to set a single national standard for privacy protection. The privacy framework in Canada should reflect the needs of our increasingly digital world and support the security of Canadians and the future of our economy. It’s a priority for all Canadian businesses and the millions of Canadians they employ. It’s time it should be a priority in Parliament.

Grace Egan
Policy Adviser,
Canadian Chamber of Commerce
Ottawa, Ont.

Infrastructure investments critical to successful development in Canada’s North

The *Hill Times*’ policy briefing on the North (Dec. 8) rightly focused on the immense need for infrastructure supports in order for the region to truly reach its potential, and this is particularly true in the mining space.

Infrastructure development, or the lack thereof, is a key reason northern Canada is one of the most expensive places to mine in the world. As the largest economic driver in Canada’s North there is no question that the mining sector’s presence in the region is significant with the Conference Board of Canada estimating mining industry GDP contributions for 2021 for the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon at 27 per cent and 42 per cent and 12.8 per cent, respectively, totalling nearly \$3-billion. However, without significant improvements in infrastructure to enhance investment competitiveness, the immense potential of the region will remain unrealized.

Strategic investments in energy infrastructure specifically are essential to reduce northern reliance on costly and higher-emitting fossil fuels. Off-grid mining companies, which encompass almost all mining operations in the North, several of which are essential to supplying the critical

minerals vital to low-carbon technologies, are overwhelmingly dependent on liquid fuels for power generation and will remain so until a paradigm shift ushers in the next generation of technologies.

Electricity production for Nunavut currently depends on diesel and while its four operating mines have invested in best-in-class diesel energy infrastructure they still require significant amounts of it each year to power their mine sites. Currently, there are limited energy alternatives for Nunavut communities or industry, though a number of projects and applications which would support decarbonization are at various stages of development and partnership.

There is no question the future of Canada’s mining industry lies increasingly in the North, with its abundance of minerals and metals and committed local workforce, but strategic policy decisions are needed to help overcome both acute and longstanding challenges in order for the region to truly seize the opportunity before it.

Pierre Gratton
President and CEO,
The Mining Association of Canada

Canada Health Transfer needs to be balanced with conditional funding for targeted health-care programs, such as pharmacare: Staples

I was very surprised by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland’s suggestion that the \$4.5-billion announced in the economic and fiscal update to fight Omicron might not actually be used for this purpose.

“We are spending a lot of money on health care. We are trusting the provinces to use these tools to fight COVID,” the finance minister told CTV’s Evan Solomon.

My question is: should the federal government be transferring billions to provinces for health care and simply trust them to spend it as intended?

The Canadian Health Coalition has warned the federal government against making unconditional health-care spending boosts to provinces through the Canada Health Transfer. Once the cheque is cashed, provinces are largely free to spend the transfers any way they wish, including decreasing their share of health-care spending, buying pipelines, or even cutting corporate taxes.

We are fortunate the government can provide urgently needed funds quickly to fight the pandemic. At the same time, the Canada Health Transfer needs to be balanced with conditional funding for targeted health-care programs, such as pharmacare.

A national, universal single-payer public drug plan will help make life more affordable for people in Canada, improving health outcomes and relieving pressure on hospitals because patients can access their preventative medications, rather than ending up in the emergency room.

The finance minister said, “Our guiding principle will continue to be the conviction that the best economic policy is a strong health policy.” Targeted health-care programs, such as pharmacare, will play an essential role in achieving this goal.

Steven Staples
National director of policy and advocacy
Canadian Health Coalition
Toronto, Ont.

Taking the hectic out of Christmas, Vernon letter writer offers gift ideas

The Christmas season can be hectic, and finding the “right gift,” a mind-racking challenge. For several years, I have been making a donation to OWL in Delta, B.C., in the name of my family members. OWL (Orphaned Wildlife) Rehabilitation Society is a registered non-profit organization whose staff and volunteers are dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned raptors (eagles, falcons, hawks, ospreys, owls, and vultures) and to educating the public on the conservation and importance of them. For us, it is a good way to support Mother Nature’s miracles and also encourage environmental awareness. Mak-

ing a donation rather than buying “more stuff” is a nod to minimalism, i.e., an endorsement of living with only the things you really need.

Recently an environmentally conscious couple gifted a large parcel of land near Bella Coola, B.C., to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The property contains a pristine old growth forest and rich riverside habitats. The Nature Conservancy of Canada is a private, non-profit organization, and Canada’s leading national land conservation organization. Making a donation to it is also a good option for nurturing our little blue planet.

Lloyd Atkins
Vernon, B.C.

It's not the first time a government tried to restrict what people can wear

The threat to human rights under Bill 21 for some Quebecers is an alarming issue that demands the attention and support of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples know all too well what happens when government starts to infringe on clothing.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—Elementary school teacher Fatemeh Anvari was forced out of her classroom in Chelsea because she wears a hijab, thanks to Bill 21 which rules that civil servants not wear any religious symbols. Apparently, this is in the name of secularism, but let's be real. It's in the name of racism if it targets a certain group for additional restrictions on their human rights.

Isn't that the whole point of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms? To ensure we are equal in the eyes of the law? It's a sad day if we don't remember the other times that governments attempted to infringe on human rights. It's a sad day if we don't learn anything from it.

In 1914, church leaders and federal government bureaucrats agreed that the "Indians" (the word of that day and now an offensive term) really shouldn't do those Indian dances or ceremonies because they really should be 'civilized' and dress like English or Frenchman. As with most aspects of the Indian Act, this was intended to subjugate Indians as less-than.

It wasn't a great time. The amendments to the Indian Act in the first 30 years of the 1900s were harsh and detailed as to the restrictions placed on Indians: no dances or pow wows, no entry into pool halls, no leaving the reserve without a pass, no buying a homestead and more distressing clauses of Canadian law. And the Indian Act restricted the wearing of regalia—it wasn't allowed in public events.

Under Sec. 140(3): "Any Indian ... who participates in any show, exhibition, performance, stam-pede or pageant in aboriginal costume without the consent of



Demonstrators, pictured in downtown Ottawa on Feb. 24, 2020, out to support the Wet'suwet'en nation who are against the building of the Coastal pipeline through their traditional territory. One might wonder what would be Quebec's response if Indigenous school teachers showed up to work tomorrow in their Indigenous regalia? Imagine the beauty of the pow wow regalia, the Inuit Amauri, or the beaded moccasins, and the deep meaning of regalia worn proudly. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the superintendent general or his authorized agent ... shall on summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty-five dollars or to imprisonment for one month, or to both penalty and imprisonment."

Regalia. Not costumes. Regalia holds meaning in the knowledge system of the community—the colours, beads, feathers and design all combine to tell a story. The story might be about the role and connectedness of the individual in community or the special gifts recognized in the individual. Regalia has meaning. This is likely why the government wanted regalia banned. Regalia was also stripped off children entering residential schools.

Many of the more racist and illegal clauses of the Indian Act were amended in the 1950s, including the ban on regalia just for Indians. Canada signed on to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights which enshrined the basics of pluralism in states, to ensure we never allow a people to be subjugated because of their race, culture, or religion. Canada signed on to the declaration but did not include Indigenous peoples as they were not considered equal citizens. It was only due to the substantial international pressure that Canada finally relented and slowly gave some rights to

Indigenous peoples over the next decade.

Skip forward to today and we would agree that the government can't tell Indigenous peoples what they can wear. Because that would be wrong.

One might wonder what would be Quebec's response if Indigenous school teachers showed up to work tomorrow in their Indigenous regalia? Imagine the beauty of the pow wow regalia, the Inuit amauri, or the beaded moccasins and the deep meaning of regalia worn proudly. Would this be considered illegal for civil servants under Bill 21? Would Indigenous teachers in regalia be removed from their positions?

Except there are very few Indigenous teachers in Quebec schools. The Quebec Human Rights Commission found in 2020 that only 0.3 per cent of workforce was Indigenous in the province's health, schools, police, and public transit and municipalities. Visible minorities made up only 6.3 per cent of civil servants, even though about 13 per cent of Quebecers are visible minorities. For comparison, about 23 per cent of the Canadian population are visible minorities.

It seems there might be some barriers for Indigenous peoples and visible minorities to work in the Quebec government.

The threat to human rights under Bill 21 for some Quebecers is an alarming issue that demands the attention and support of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples know all too well what happens when government starts to infringe on clothing. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis groups and leaders should be speaking out against Bill 21 and adding our voices to the many who demand that the Charter is the law of our land.

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



Ms. Fatemeh ignites Bill 21 debate

Trudeau applauds protestors, but stays out of fight



Chelsea teacher 'hopeful' for Bill 21 change

By Trevor Greenway
Local Journalism Initiative

The Low Down to Hull and Back News in Wakefield, Que., broke what became a national story about elementary school teacher Fatemeh Anvari who was forced out of her classroom in Chelsea because she wears a hijab, thanks to Bill 21 which rules that civil servants not wear any religious symbols. *Image courtesy of The Low Down*

Politics

Your annual, year-end gift of aimless speculation on next Liberal leader

Unlike most of his cabinet contemporaries, Marc Miller rarely appears to be speaking from a script. This makes him interesting, which is hardly ever the case with senior ministers.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Marc Miller's leadership ambitions, if they even exist, exist primarily in the realm of idle speculation, particularly since Trudeau's successor has already been anointed by many Liberals and media: Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. *The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade*

defeat.) Freeland also faces enduring barriers to talented and ambitious women in politics. If they're too personable and friendly, they are not taken seriously. If they are too serious and intellectual, they are deemed not relatable.

Even if the time is right for a woman leader—in fact, long overdue—no one candidate ever seems perfect enough.

Another potential contender—at least in the fervid imagination of journalists writing year-end columns—is National Defence Minister Anita Anand. An impressive newcomer to politics after a successful career in law and academia, Anand won public gratitude for her efforts during the pandemic as procurement minister. Anand is a no-nonsense communicator who usually avoids cringeworthy boasting about her government's accomplishments, and doesn't waste much time responding to unserious criticisms from across the aisle. She comes across as mature, smart, and down-to-earth.

She was rewarded for her COVID-fighting efforts with an even tougher task: reforming the culture of the scandal-ridden defence department. She has wasted no time, first establishing independent civilian oversight of sexual harassment cases and taking that job away from the military, and, last week, issuing a genuine apology to past and present victims.

Minister of National Defence Anita Anand impressive newcomer to politics after a successful career in law and academia. She won public gratitude for her efforts during the pandemic as procurement minister and is a no-nonsense communicator. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



He did acknowledge the situation is complicated because provinces are responsible for natural resources, and few—including B.C.'s NDP government—appear ready to relinquish control.

Of immediate concern is the standoff in northern B.C. between heavily-armed RCMP and Wet'suwet'en protestors, and allies, who are trying to stop a gas pipeline from being built through traditional territory. Liberal front-benchers were left hiding behind the argument that politicians should not interfere in the operations of police when videos depicting RCMP over-reaction recently emerged. British Columbia ministers offered the same weak excuse. They all looked terribly uncomfortable, as they should.

As for Miller, he indirectly acknowledged the ugliness of the scene but also recalled a truthful, if unsatisfying, reality—namely, that there are unresolved conflicts within the Wet'suwet'en nation itself, between elected chiefs, whose power derives from the much-deplored Indian Act and who mostly favour the Coastal GasLink pipeline route, and hereditary or traditional chiefs, who do not.

The well-intentioned Carolyn Bennett was unable to resolve the standoff in her years at Crown-Indigenous relations and Miller's task will be no easier (and his response will have an impact on his future political prospects.) He doesn't occupy a portfolio traditionally seen as a stepping stone to higher office, but these calculations are changing. Trudeau has made Indigenous reconciliation a centrepiece of his government and has entrusted his old friend with a nearly impossible task: making enough progress towards reconciliation to satisfy

Indigenous leadership, without discomforting the well-meaning, but often complacent, majority. Or enraging the premiers.

Miller may be able to claim one important victory, however. Last week, he offered \$40-billion to resolve another festering issue, equally embarrassing for a government allegedly committed to healing a broken relationship. At issue is decades of underfunding of health and social services for children on reserves. Half the \$40-billion is earmarked for direct compensation to victims, the rest to reform the system with more control in the hands of Indigenous peoples.

This agreement still isn't approved but, if it happens by the end of month as expected, it will end years of judicial battles and resolve a string of Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rulings insisting the federal government pay individual reparations. Miller will deserve credit, and the gratitude of his colleagues, for closing this troubling chapter, with the help of special negotiator and former Indigenous senator, Murray Sinclair. A government at war with some of the country's most vulnerable children is not a good look.

Miller also denounced the recent re-assignment of a Chelsea, Que., elementary school teacher from a classroom for wearing a hijab. He called the act "cowardly," although other adjectives might be more germane, including arbitrary, unfair, and counter-productive. Former senator and journalist André Pratt warned that such language only inflames separatist sentiment in the province and the matter is better left to Quebecers to resolve—which is Trudeau's approach.

But, strategically wise or not, many Canadians, including some Quebecers, will applaud Miller's bluntness—and his willingness, along with a handful of Conservative MPs, to call out state-sanctioned discrimination, in this case Quebec's law 21, whatever the rationale.

That said, Miller's leadership ambitions, if they even exist, exist primarily in the realm of idle speculation, particularly since Trudeau's successor has already been anointed by many Liberals and media: Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. She is

formidably accomplished, trusted with important files that are seen as a prelude to promotion—U.S. relations in the Trump years and now finance. She obviously has the confidence of the prime minister and his entourage.

Whether her deliberate, slow, studied answers to questions will endear her to a broader public remains to be seen. She may fall into the Hillary Clinton trap, and come across, to some, as condescending. (Although Clinton has been amply vindicated since her

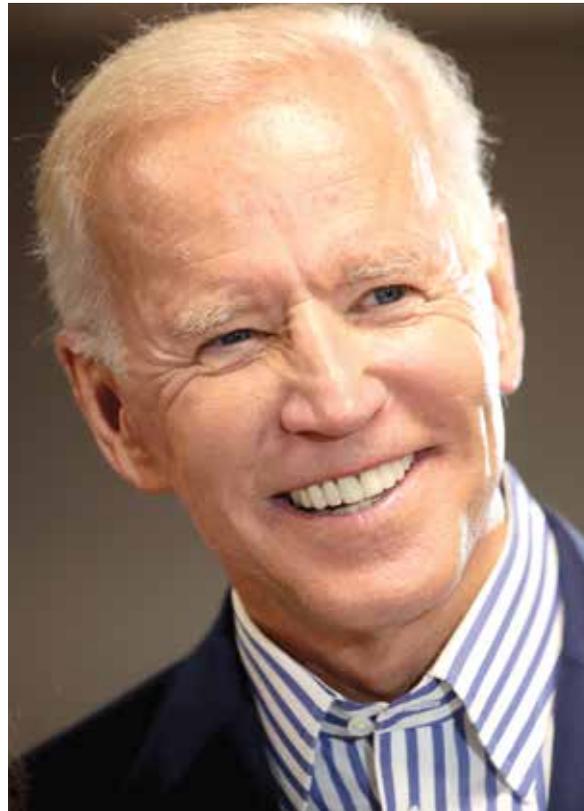
What this idle musing fails to take into account, of course, is whether Anand, or any other of the prime suspects, would be remotely interested in the top job. It can be massively disruptive to a person's health, family life, and—especially for women—sense of personal safety.

Not that Justin Trudeau is going anywhere. So, really, case closed.

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

The Hill Times

More than ever, democracy remains at bay in the United States



So who is the most important person in the United States today? It's not Joe Biden. It is Attorney-General Merrick Garland by a country mile. He is the only one who can stop the slide into autocracy, writes Michael Harris. *Photographs courtesy of Commons Wikimedia*

V-Dem, a Swedish based non-profit, tracks levels of democracy around the world. It found that the U.S. and its allies accounted for 'a significantly outsize share of global democratic backsliding.'

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—It is looking more and more like sunset for democracy in the United States. Canadians would be wise to pay attention.

When this elephant sneezes, Canada catches cold. Terrible changes are in the works in America. If they come to pass, Canada could find itself sharing the longest border in the world with an authoritarian state, where all bets are off when it comes to the "relationship." Remember the 25 per cent tariff on Canadian aluminum and steel?

If you asked people who is the most important person in the United States at this moment in time, a majority would probably pick U.S. President Joe Biden.

After all, he holds the keys to the Oval Office, gets to carry around the nuclear football, and speaks from the bully pulpit of the presidency whenever he chooses. He makes ambassa-

dors and judges, the way Queen Elizabeth confers knighthoods and lordships. Everyone takes his phone calls.

That is a lot of power for anyone, let alone someone pushing eighty. But the fact is that Biden and his party have weirdly become the most vulnerable people in the land, not the most powerful or the most important. The president himself looks exhausted and frustrated, nothing like the aspirational candidate who pledged to "build back better" from the ongoing ravages of the pandemic.

Despite all the revelations coming out of the congressional committee looking into the Jan. 6 riot on Capitol Hill, almost everyone expects the Democrats to lose control of at least the House of Representatives, and perhaps the Senate as well, in next year's mid-term elections.

Democratic Senator Joe Manchin has been a one-man

roadblock for Biden's biggest legislative plans. Even initiatives that wiggled through the filibusters and compromises, like the infrastructure bill, have been hopelessly watered down by the Republicans, and by factions within Biden's own party. That robs the president of his swagger, leaving him looking weak and ineffective. Raising the debt ceiling is not exactly something to crow about.

Meanwhile, the lie factory of Fox News continues to hum along, stoking the Republican base on behalf of their president-in-exile, Donald Trump. Despite all the audits, and all the lost court cases showing indisputably that the election was fairly won, Fox hosts like Tucker Carlson continue to peddle the big lie that somehow the 2020 election was stolen by the Democrats, and that Biden is an illegitimate president.

Interestingly, Carlson has admitted that he sometimes "lies" on television when he is "cornered." But it doesn't seem to matter. Next to Christmas, lying is the biggest business in America these days. It has been astonishingly effective, as well as lucrative.

Six out of 10 Republicans continue to believe that Trump won the 2020 election, according to a CNN poll. Go figure.

A Pew Research Survey found that 75 per cent of Conservative Republicans want Trump to remain a major national political figure.

Of that number, 49 per cent want him to run for president in 2024.

The Republican National Committee has even agreed to pay \$1.6-million of Trump's "private" legal bills connected to investigations into his private business practises.

As for the Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzingers of the world, no points for honesty or ethics. Sixty-three per cent of Republicans in the Pew survey didn't approve of elected officials who publicly criticize Trump. What's not to criticize?

Being twice impeached; lying thousands of times; letting hundreds of thousands of Americans die because of his slack dismissal of COVID-19 in the early days of 2020; and losing the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the White House after one term in office, doesn't usually translate into loyalty.

But it does in a country that may be tiring of democracy. In 1993, Lewis Lapham wrote *The Wish for Kings, Democracy at Bay*. In that book, he argued that the distaste for dissent, the widespread support for populist candidates, and the public's obsession with celebrity revealed a desire for autocracy.

More than ever, democracy remains at bay in the United States. V-Dem, a Swedish based non-profit, tracks levels of democracy around the world. It found that the U.S. and its allies accounted for "a significantly outsize share of global democratic backsliding."

In Trump's America, that has shown up as the suppression

of voting rights in several U.S. states, obvious gerrymandering of voting districts, pandering to racist outliers, and the politicization of the courts. V-Dem found a disturbing trend towards "illiberal democracies." In that form of government, elected leaders behave more like "strongmen," and "political institutions are eroded." Sound familiar?

The erosion of political institutions could not be more graphically displayed than it was on Jan. 6, when a mob assaulted the Capitol Building to stop the constitutional process of confirming the results of the 2020 presidential election. Five people died in the insurrection and lawmakers, including vice-president Mike Pence, had to go into hiding. The rioters even erected a gallows outside the Capitol to hang the vice-president for doing his constitutional duty.

So who is the most important person in the United States today? It's not Joe Biden. It is Attorney-General Merrick Garland by a country mile. He is the only one who can stop the slide into autocracy.

It is clear now that Donald Trump didn't lift a finger to stop the deadly riot on Capitol Hill. It is also clear that several people in the Trump entourage, including two of his enablers at Fox News, begged the president to call it off. One of his staffers even warned that if he didn't, people could die.

Most damning of all, a 38-page power point presentation turned over to the Congressional committee investigating the events of Jan. 6, laid out a detailed plan of how to overturn the election, and convince the public that the whole thing was fraudulent.

The man who circulated it, retired Army colonel Phil Waldron, says he met with Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, eight or 10 times to discuss it. Waldron has now been subpoenaed by the Congressional Committee.

And so back to the U.S. attorney-general. The standard tactic of Trump officials and enablers has been to ignore congressional subpoenas. That is just another way to de-legitimize government. Garland must prosecute each and every one of them to the fullest extent of the law regarding contempt of Congress.

To his credit, he has already done that with Trump minion Steve Bannon, and hopefully will do the same thing with Trump's former chief of staff, Mark Meadows.

If he doesn't vigorously prosecute the planners and perpetrators of Jan. 6, two critical American institutions will be further degraded, Congress and the Justice Department. The wish for kings prospers under that scenario. To prevent it, Garland needs to hold to account all the people responsible for the insurrection, no matter what position they once held.

Even if it turns out that this is a fish that stinks from the head.

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

Global

‘New normal’ may be far faster expansion of renewable energy than expected

If we can actually replace the world’s entire energy infrastructure in a single generation without even a major war or famine, I would gladly revise my views on the evolutionary fitness of the human race.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—The “new normal,” said International Energy Agency spokesperson Heymi Bahar last May, may be a far faster expansion of renewable energy than expected, driven mainly by market forces. So fast, in fact, that it raises a different kind of risk (but he didn’t mention that).

The good news is big and undeniable. There has been a step-change in the growth of wind and solar power, which jumped by 45 per cent worldwide in 2020—and despite the pandemic, this year’s growth will be even higher. Even more important, hardly any other source of energy is growing at all.

The old pattern was that the global economy grew by around



There has been a step-change in the growth of wind and solar power, which jumped by 45 per cent worldwide in 2020—and despite the pandemic, this year’s growth will be even higher. Even more important, hardly any other source of energy is growing at all, writes Gwynne Dyer. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

three per cent a year, and the demand for electricity grew a little bit faster. Renewables (mainly hydro, but some solar and wind) grew at around the same rate, but the share of renewables was not rising at all. And it was only 15 per cent of total electricity generation, compared to 85 per cent for fossil fuels and nuclear.

That’s why the overall global emissions of carbon dioxide have not been shrinking. Indeed, they have grown every year since

global heating was identified as a problem, and are now around 40 per cent higher than they were in 1990. There was no hope of cutting emissions until non-fossil energy sources were being produced in volume to take up the slack.

Never mind the campaigns of denial and doubt about climate change that were funded by the fossil fuel industry. They did some damage, no doubt, but coal, gas, and oil still ruled mainly because the non-fossil alternatives that

did exist were unable to expand further (like hydro) or were significantly more expensive (like nuclear, wind and solar).

Now that has all changed. Over the past decade the ‘levelized’ cost of renewable power has dropped by between around 60 per cent (wind) and 80 per cent (solar), making both of them cheaper than fossil fuels in most places. The trend has been visible for years, but now it is being reflected in actual hardware.

The non-fossil share of electricity production, stuck at 15 per cent for so long, was 27 per cent in 2020, it will be 29 per cent in 2021—and it will probably be 31 per cent next year. Solar accounts for more than half of that amount, and wind for most of the rest. And the IEA estimates that renewables will make up 95 per cent of new power capacity globally between now and 2026.

So if the share of renewables in total power generation is now growing at two per cent a year, what will it be in 2026? 40 per cent? And what might it be in 2030? Maybe 50 per cent. That would be a genuine revolution—with all the turmoil and upheaval that real revolutions involve.

Of course, many things could go wrong with this prediction. Soaring commodity and shipping prices are driving costs in the industry up sharply. For example, the price of polysilicon (used to make solar panels) has quadrupled since 2020. For some inputs like lithium and rare earths, there may even be a global shortage.

But costs are going up for rival sources of energy too, and so far renewables are retaining their price advantage. So the question remains valid: what would actually happen if fossil fuels go into an unexpectedly rapid decline, with around a third of their existing market vanishing by 2030 and most of the rest in the course of that decade?

The very good thing that would happen is an equally rapid decline in global carbon dioxide emissions, maybe even fast enough to enable us to stay below the +1.5°C threshold of warming through the 2030s. That would save some tens of millions of lives and a few trillion dollars in avoided fire, flood and storm damage.

The less attractive result would be chaos in ‘sunset’ industries on which the Sun is going down much too fast: no time for retraining and gentle transitions, just collapse. One can see the parts of the car industry that didn’t turn electric fast enough going down that route, together with the entire coal industry.

The gas industry’s free pass as a less polluting ‘transitional’ fuel would evaporate, and the oil industry would split between the few very low-cost producers in the Gulf, who would stay in business by cutting their prices radically, and the rest, who would go to the wall. Then, around 2040, the remaining oil producers would go broke as well.

If you can’t get some geopolitical clashes out of that scenario, you’re not really trying, but it’s still the most promising scenario I have seen for a long time. If we can actually replace the world’s entire energy infrastructure in a single generation without even a major war or famine, I would gladly revise my views on the evolutionary fitness of the human race.

Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘The Shortest History of War.’
The Hill Times

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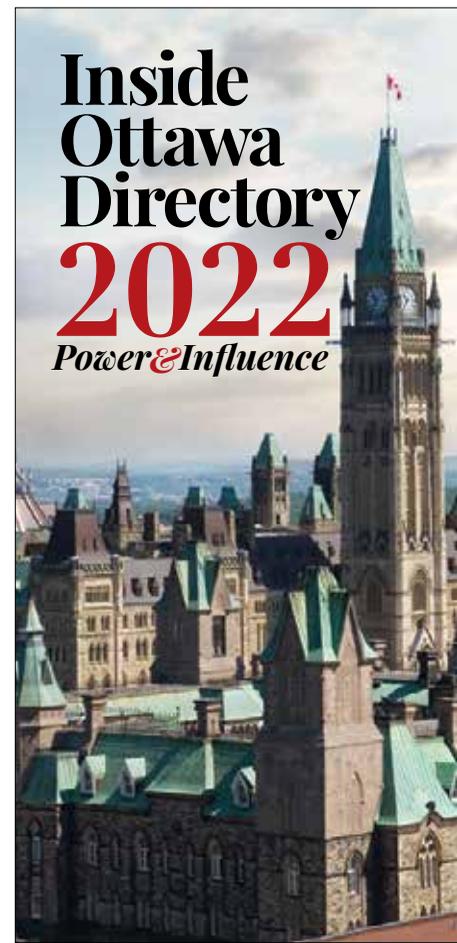
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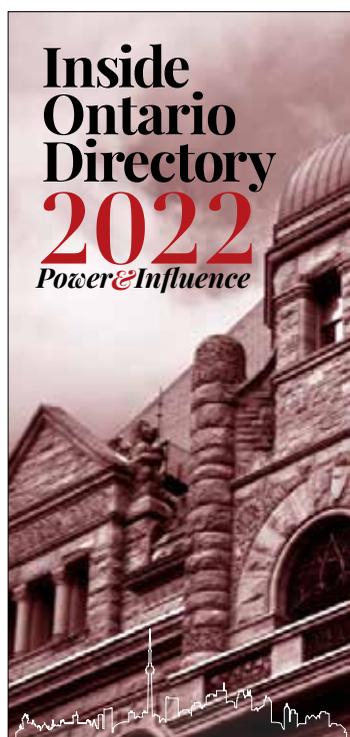
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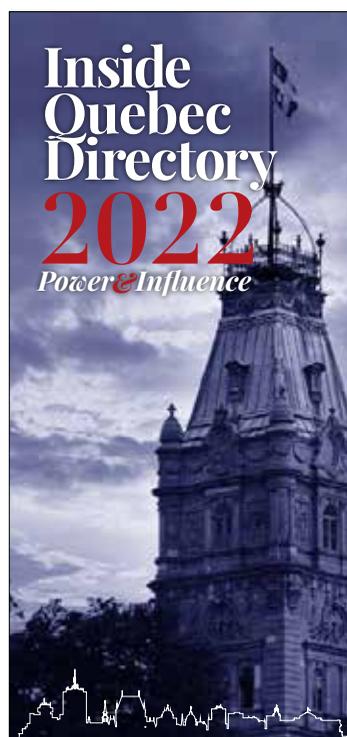
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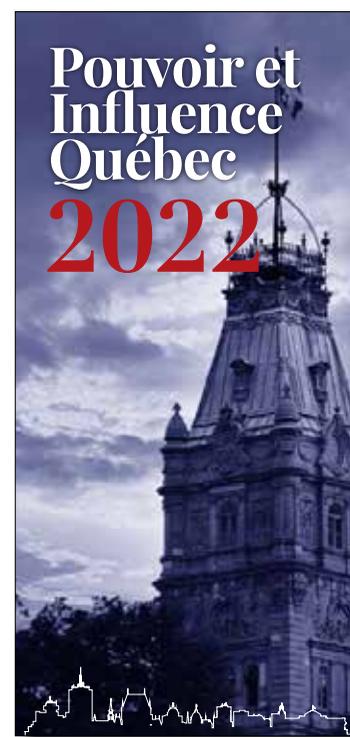
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Anand named most valuable politician, climate change voted most important issue in 23rd Annual All Politics Poll

Front-and-centre during COVID-19 pandemic, former public services and procurement minister and current Defence Minister Anita Anand took top billing as the most valuable politician in 2021. Climate change, the economy, and the pandemic came through as the most important issues during a particularly tumultuous year.

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Long story short, the 2021 Canadian political landscape was like no other in recent memory, and *The Hill Times* partnered once again with Forum Research Inc. for *The Hill Times*' All Politics Poll survey to get a better sense for the issues of the day, the people in power.

Some 82 people responded to this year's survey, which was conducted online from Nov. 22 to Dec. 3, on the best and worst of federal politics in 2021. Among the respondents were 40 who identified as belonging to the Liberal Party, 18 to the Conservative Party, six to the NDP, and one from the Bloc Québécois, the Green Party, and the Rhinoceros Party respectively. Some 15 respondents did not identify by political party.



Least valuable in 2021: Conservative MP and his party's finance critic Pierre Poilievre, right, was voted the least valuable politician, followed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and People's Party of Canada Leader Maxime Bernier, centre. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Former public services and procurement minister and current National Defence Minister Anita Anand took the crown as the most valuable politician. Elected to office for the first time only two years ago in the 2019 federal election, Anand was immediately moved into cabinet, and became a central figure in the government's fight against COVID-19.

Like so many other countries caught off guard by the sheer demand for medical supplies at the outset of the pandemic, Canada engaged in a sprint to procure swathes of personal protective equipment for front-line health-care workers in what would quickly emerge as an incredibly competitive global market.

Anand stood front-and-centre in one of the largest and most complicated federal procurement effort in history. And then came COVID-19 vaccines. After a sluggish start to the vaccine procurement campaign that initially saw the federal government widely panned and this country's lack of production capacity questioned, Anand moved to secure one of the largest per-capita supplies of the inoculation.

Most valuable politician in 2021: Former public services and procurement minister and current National Defence Minister Anita Anand took the crown as the most valuable politician in this year's Annual All Politics survey. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Slightly more than a month following the 2021 election, the prime minister announced his new cabinet on Oct. 26, moving Anand into the defence portfolio where she is now tasked with addressing the sexual misconduct crisis within the military that also dominated headlines in 2021.

Fresh off his third straight electoral victory in September, once again in a minority government, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) came in second as both the most valuable and least valuable politician, according to respondents.

The events of 2021 will likely define much of this prime minister's legacy. Trudeau was (and still is) criticized for calling an 'unnecessary election' by the opposition, continues to deal with a number of climate-related crises throughout the year, and has been confronted head on with Indigenous reconciliation following a number of tragic discoveries on the sites of former residential schools across Canada.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the capacity of the federal government like no other event since World War II. On Dec. 14, the prime minister held his 35th call with provincial and territorial premiers on addressing the pandemic.

To say it's "been a year" would be an understatement. And although the prime minister has said he will lead the Liberals into the next election, speculation has already picked up that the last election may have been Trudeau's last, but we'll see.

When asked about the prime minister's legacy at this point, Forum Research president Lorne Bozinoff said "it's pretty ambiguous."

"I say it's ambiguous because I don't think there's a consensus about his future. Is he staying or is going? Is he now on the downswing?" said Bozinoff in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "Within the party, [now] is the type of time



when they start to look for what's next and what's coming up and what's around the corner."

Finance Minister and Deputy Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) took third spot as most valuable politician in 2021. Once dubbed the "minister of everything," Freeland has been at the helm of record federal government spending since she replaced former finance minister Bill Morneau following his resignation in August 2020.

Topping the list as the least valuable politician, Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) who's known in Ottawa and across Canada as one of the fiercest critics of the government day-in-and-day-out—and someone who's good at grating on your nerves, when the need arises.

A winner in seven straight elections since 2004, Poilievre served as the party's finance critic from 2017 until February of this year, and a brief stint as critic for jobs and industry before Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.) moved him back into the all-important opposition finance critic role following the election.

Fond of using the term "Justification" of late in his consistent attack on the Liberals as Canadians increasingly feel the squeeze from rising inflation, Poilievre knows how to get his message across, knows how government works, and knows how to be an uncomfortable



thorn in the Liberal government's side in Question Period and in the media.

Coming in hot as the third least valuable politician, People's Party of Canada Leader Maxime Bernier, who didn't win a seat in the last election, once again garnered disproportionate attention on the 2021 campaign trail—but once again failed to pick up even a single seat for the second election in a row.

Bernier, a former Conservative cabinet minister under former prime minister Stephen Harper, most recently sank to a new low following attacks on three Canadian journalists where he tweeted their emails and urged supporters to "play dirty."

Similar to one former U.S. president who immediately comes to mind, Bernier had his Twitter account frozen following his outlandish online behaviour—albeit only for 12 hours.

Most important issues in 2021

Three enormously complicated files—any one of which would test the mettle of even the most efficient government and effective leadership—made the list of the most important issues in 2021, with climate concerns just edging out economic concerns for top spot.

From last summer's extreme wildfires that many experts say are part of the "new normal" and that



Biggest political comebacks in 2021: Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole, top left, tied with Defence Minister Mélanie Joly, top right, for biggest political comeback in 2021. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, bottom left, finished second in voting, followed by Tourism Minister Randy Boissonault, bottom right. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

wiped our town Lytton, B.C., in a matter of minutes, to devastating flooding and landslides, Trudeau noted that "there is not much of a debate anymore about whether or not climate change is real" in a late October press conference.

In third, unsurprisingly, came the COVID-19 pandemic, including vaccinations and measures to re-open the economy after on-again-off-again public health measures that are starting to re-emerge with the recent upsurge of the Omicron

variant. Some 77 countries had reported cases of the variant as of Dec. 16, with the World Health Organization's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noting that Omicron is "spreading at a rate we have not seen with any previous variant."

As policymakers and public health officials have repeated throughout this ordeal that continues to affect the day-to-day lives of every Canadian, so we're not out of the woods yet.

Most valuable politicians in 2021: Defence Minister Anita Anand, who was previously the public services and procurement minister prior to the September election, was named the most valuable politician, according to *The Hill Times*' 23rd Annual All Politics Poll. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau finished second on the list, followed by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Comeback stories, up-and-comers, and what could've been

Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.) tied with Defence Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) for making the biggest political comeback in 2021.

O'Toole had only been at the helm of the party for just over a year before the prime minister called the September 2021 election, in which the Conservatives once again found themselves in opposition. Embattled ever since by certain wings of the party who almost immediately jumped on the election loss as a reason to turf him as leader, O'Toole has a tough fight ahead of him to hold on to the top job in 2022.

Joly most recently made the move from the official languages minister to Canada's new foreign affairs minister, a big jump into a much higher profile and powerful role. From the China file that most recently saw Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig released following almost three years of detention in China, to what she has deemed Russia's "increased rhetoric" in its threats towards Ukraine, Joly has a steep learning curve ahead to get a handle on what will likely be an increasingly volatile international sphere in 2022.

Following closely, in a three-way tie for third place, were former deputy leader of the opposition Lisa Raitt, former Conservative minister and Progressive Conservative leader Peter MacKay, and Liberal stalwart Ralph Goodale, who served in the governments of former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, as well as under Trudeau, when he was public safety minister from 2015 through 2019 before he was defeated by Conservative MP Michael Kram in his riding of Regina-Wascana, Sask., in the 2019 election.

Respondents showed some nostalgia for former prime minister Stephen Harper, whom many would like to see make a comeback into the Canadian political scene, finishing first on the list. There's also some yearning for the return two other former Conservative heavyweights.

Former interim party leader Rona Ambrose, and former justice minister, defence minister, foreign affairs minister, and leader of the Progressive Conservative Party Peter MacKay tied for third in terms of which political figures respondents would like to see make a comeback. MacKay lost out to Mr. O'Toole in their bids for leadership of the Conservatives in 2020.

Speculation swirled that former governor of the Bank of England and the Bank of Canada Mark Car-



Would like to see make a comeback: Former prime minister Stephen Harper, left, finished first in voting for who survey respondents would like to see make a comeback into the Canadian political scene since his departure in 2015. Liberal MP Marc Garneau, who was most recently shuffled out of cabinet, finished second, followed by former Conservative Party heavyweights Peter MacKay and Rona Ambrose, who tied for third. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

ney would throw his hat into the ring for the 2021 election, but alas, it did not come to pass. Carney finished first in the list of public figures respondents would have liked to have seen run, followed by former environment minister Catherine McKenna.

Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc shared the top spot with Treasury Board President Mona Fortier on the list of most approachable ministers in this year's survey, followed by Marco Mendicino (Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.), former immigration minister who was named public safety minister following the election, and Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.), who was appointed families minister following her time as international development minister. LeBlanc also topped the list of

des-Soeurs, Que.), who tied for third spot.

Liberal MP Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.) took top spot as the survey respondents' favourite up-and-comer politician. She was elected into Parliament in 2021 following her time spent on London's city council. Immigrating to Canada as a refugee from Burundi, Kayabaga replaced outgoing Liberal MP Kate Young in the riding.

In second place, came a four-way tie between Liberal MP Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, N.B.) who crossed the floor from the Green Party to the Liberals earlier this year, NDP MP Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, Ont.), Conservative MP Poilievre, and Conservative MP Raquel Dancho (Kildonan-St. Paul, Man.).

In third place came a ten-way tie, including Conservative MP Eric



People who should run again: Former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney, top left, finished first as the public figure that respondents would have liked to have seen run in 2021. Former infrastructure minister Catherine McKenna, top right, finished second, with former deputy leader of the Conservatives Lisa Raitt, bottom left, former Conservative minister Peter MacKay, and former public safety minister Ralph Goodale in a three-way tie for third. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

cabinet ministers who most respect Parliament, closely followed by Freeland in second place, followed by former foreign affairs minister Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Que.), who was shuffled out of cabinet following the election, and Crown-Indigenous services minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-

Duncan (Stormont-Dundas-South Glangarry, Ont.) Liberal MP Francis Drouin (Glangarry-Prescott-Russell, Ont.), Liberal MP Joel Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Que.), Gender Equality Minister Marci Ien (Toronto Centre, Ont.), Conservative MP Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.),

Feature

LeBlanc, Fortier, Mendicino, Gould picked as most approachable cabinet ministers in 2021



Most approachable cabinet ministers: Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc, top left, tied with Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, top right, on the list of most approachable ministers. Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino, bottom left, finished second, with Families Minister Karina Gould, bottom right, finishing third. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia



Favourite up-and-comers: Liberal MP Arielle Kayabaga, left, is the favourite up-and-comer politician of survey respondents in 2021. Also on the list includes Liberal MP Jenica Atwin, top middle, NDP MP Matthew Green, top right, and Conservative MPs Pierre Poilievre and Raquel Dancho, bottom middle and middle right, respectively. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia, and handouts



Worst cabinet ministers in 2021: Former defence minister Harjit Sajjan and current International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan, left, topped the list of worst cabinet ministers in 2021. Former heritage minister and now Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault finished second, followed by former Crown-Indigenous Relations minister and current Mental Health and Addictions Minister Carolyn Bennett, who tied with former gender equality minister Maryam Monsef for third on the list. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Continued from page 17

Green Party MP Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, Ont.), Treasury Board President Fortier, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.), Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, B.C.), and Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Ont.).

As for the weakest cabinet ministers, former defence minister and current International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan topped the list following a year of public and political pressure to get a grip on a series of sexual misconduct allegations that reached the highest ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces. Former heritage minister, now Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.) finished second on the list, followed by Mental Health and Addictions Minister Carolyn Bennett (Toronto—St. Paul's, Ont.) and former gender equality minister Maryam Monsef (Peterborough—Kawartha, Ont.), who was shuffled out of cabinet.

Jean Chrétien topped the list as the former prime minister most admired by respondents, followed by the current prime minister's father, Pierre Trudeau, as well as the most recent *primus inter pares*, Stephen Harper.

"There's a lot of 'Harperites' in the party," said Bozinoff, alluding to those parts of the party that haven't come from the Progressive Conservative wing.

"They harken back to the good old days and that success, but I think they miss the fact that that type of social conservatism is kind of passe," he said. "Andrew Scheer got nowhere as 'Stephen Harper 2.0,' and then poor Erin O'Toole tried to bring the party into the 21st, and look what he got for his trouble internally."

On the literary front, former justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould's new book "Indian" in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power edged out former clerk of the privy council Michael Wernick's *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics* as best political book of the year. Both played outsized roles in the SNC-Lavalin scandal that dominated headlines in 2019, with Wilson-Raybould resigning from cabinet in February that year, a move which was quickly followed by Wernick, who stepped down in March.

Dinner, anyone?

Former U.S. president Barack Obama topped the list as someone respondents would most like to invite to dinner. Obama was also the preferred dinner date in both 2018 and 2017. The prime minister came in second, with Queen Elizabeth II, who will be turning 96-years-old in April 2022, coming in a close third.

As for local eateries here in Ottawa, which have more than felt the crunch from the pandemic as tens of thousands of public service workers have been working from home for months, respondents picked the Métropolitain Brasserie at the corner of Rideau St. and Sussex Dr. as their favourite place to catch happy hour. The Rabbit Hole and Brixton's Pub, both on Sparks St., tied for second, with the Bier Markt, D'Arcy McGees, JOEY Rideau, and Tavern on the Hill in a four-way tie for third.

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The Hill Times

The Hill Times' 23rd Annual All Politics Poll Results/ Best & Worst in 2021:

Most Valuable Politicians:

1. Anita Anand
2. Justin Trudeau
3. Chrystia Freeland

Least Valuable Politicians:

1. Pierre Poilievre
2. Justin Trudeau
3. Maxime Bernier

Public Figures Who Should Have Run:

1. Mark Carney
2. Catherine McKenna
3. Lisa Raitt, Peter MacKay, Ralph Goodale

Favourite Up-and-Comers in the House:

1. Arielle Kayabaga
2. Jenica Atwin, Matthew Green, Pierre Poilievre, Raquel Dancho
3. Eric Duncan, Francis Drouin, Joel Lightbound, Marci Ien, Melissa Lantsman, Mike Morrice, Mona Fortier, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Patrick Weiler, Yasir Naqvi

Biggest Political Comebacks:

1. Erin O'Toole, Melanie Joly
2. Justin Trudeau
3. Randy Boissonnault

People Who Should Make Comeback:

1. Stephen Harper
2. Marc Garneau
3. Peter MacKay, Rona Ambrose

Issues Politicians Have Shamelessly Exploited:

1. COVID
2. Vaccinations
3. Inflation

Most Important Issues in 2021:

1. Climate
2. Economy
3. COVID

Issues Not Being Addressed:

1. Climate change
2. Housing
3. Poverty

Political Promises Least Likely to be Kept:

1. Climate change
2. Electoral reform
3. Reconciliation

Best Political Books:

1. 'Indian' in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power, by Jody Wilson-Raybould
2. *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics*, by Michael Wernick
3. *Can You Hear Me Now?* by Celina Caesar-Chavannes; *State of Terror*, by Hillary Clinton and Louise Penny

Favourite Talking Heads:

1. Chantal Hébert
2. Rosemary Barton
3. Steve Paikin

Talking Heads You'd Most Like to Silence:

1. Rosemary Barton
2. Pierre Poilievre
3. John Ivison

Most Admired Former Prime Ministers:

1. Jean Chrétien
2. Pierre Trudeau
3. Stephen Harper

Best Cabinet Ministers:

1. Anita Anand
2. Chrystia Freeland
3. Patty Hajdu

Weakest Cabinet Ministers:

1. Harjit Sajjan
2. Steven Guilbeault
3. Carolyn Bennett, Maryam Monsef

Cabinet Ministers Who Most Respect Parliament:

1. Dominic LeBlanc
2. Chrystia Freeland
3. Marc Garneau, Marc Miler

Most Approachable Cabinet Ministers:

1. Dominic LeBlanc, Mona Fortier
2. Marco Mendicino
3. Karina Gould

Biggest Problems Facing Parliament:

1. Lack of professionalism
2. Lack of cooperation or compromise
3. COVID-19

Biggest Political News Stories in 2021:

1. The election
2. COVID
3. Erin O'Toole

Best House Committees:

1. Finance
2. Health
3. Procedure and House Affairs

Best Senate Committees:

1. Social Affairs, Science and Technology
2. National Security and Defence, Legal and Constitutional Affairs, National Finance, Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Waste of Time Committees (Senate and House):

1. Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics
2. All of them
3. The Senate Committees

Favourite Dinner Guest:

1. Barack Obama
2. Justin Trudeau
3. Queen Elizabeth II

Favourite Happy-Hour Place:

1. The Métropolitain Brasserie
2. The Rabbit Hole, Brixton's Pub
3. Bier Markt, D'Arcy McGees, JOEY Rideau, Tavern on the Hill

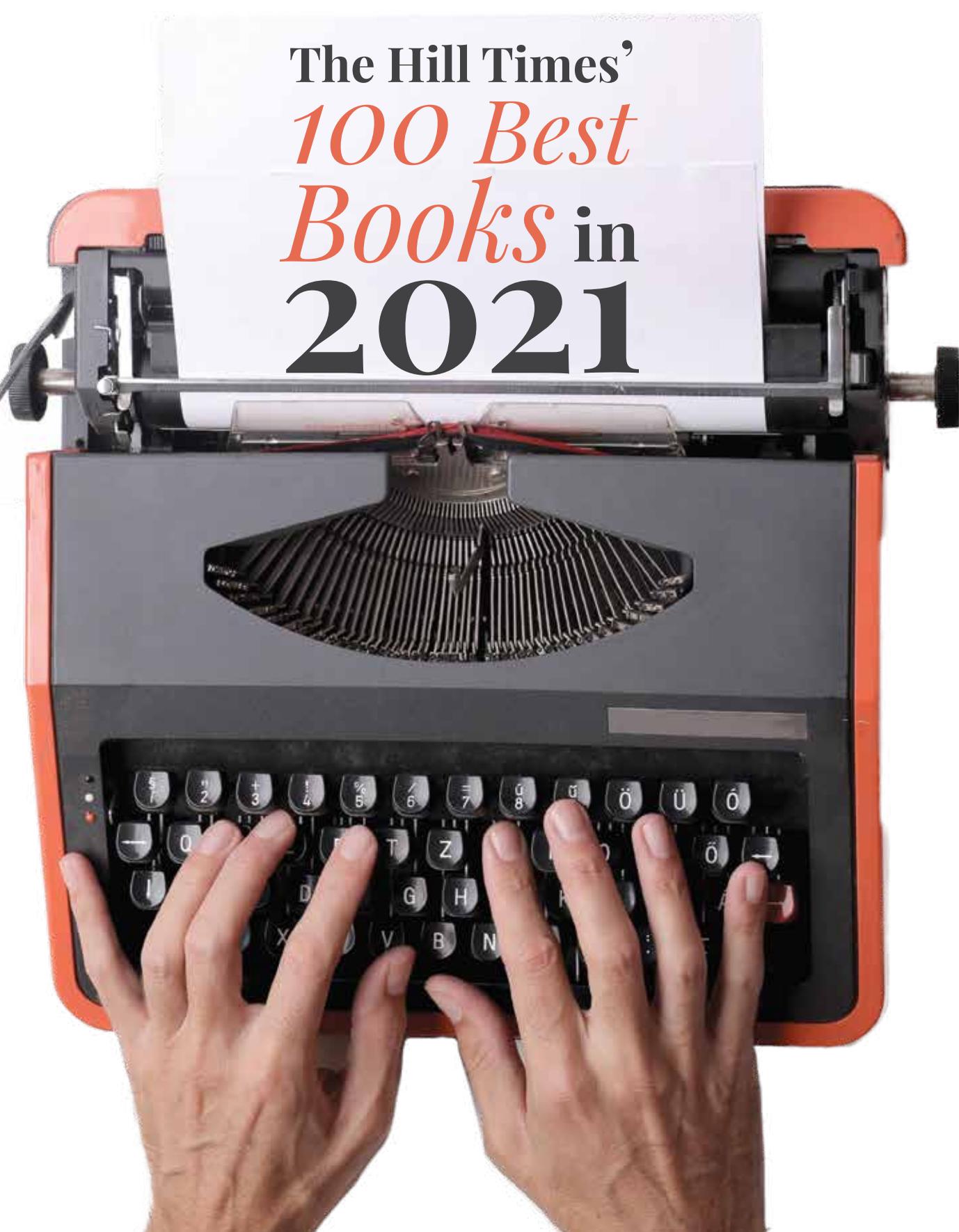
The Annual All Politics Poll was conducted by Forum Research from Nov. 22 to Dec. 3

The Hill Times

BEST BOOKS 2021

Michael Wernick talks about his handy and dandy book, *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics*

Alex Marland offer his top picks *in 2021*



Best Books

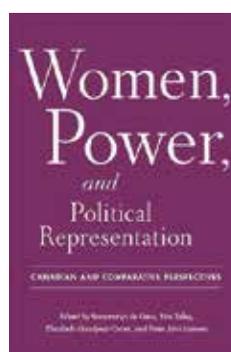
Some interesting reads about Canadian politics in 2021

Here's a sample published by three of Canada's largest academic publishers: University of British Columbia Press, University of Toronto Press, and McGill-Queen's University Press.

BY ALEX MARLAND

Political scientists authored many interesting books about Canadian politics in 2021. Here's a sample published by three of Canada's largest academic publishers: University of British Columbia Press (UBC Press), University of Toronto Press (UTP), and McGill-Queen's University Press (MQUP). I am going to begin and conclude this synthesis with women and Canadian political books, for reasons that I will explain later.

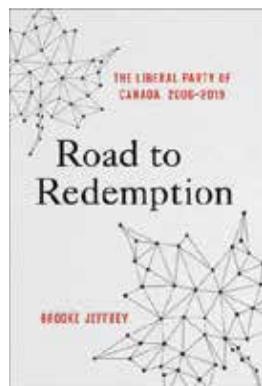
Women, Power, and Political Representation: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives (UTP) looks at challenges that women face in the political arena, ranging from cabinet to elections to gender quotas in legislatures. An intriguing chapter is "Black Women's Hair Matters," by Nadia Brown. The book is edited by Roosmarijn de Geus, Erin Tolley, Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Peter Loewen.



Women, Power and Political Representation: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives, by Roosmarijn de Geus, Erin Tolley, Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Peter Loewen, University of Toronto Press, 214 pp., \$14.98.

I am quite interested in reading *A Liberal-Labour Lady: The Times and Life of Mary Ellen Spear Smith* (UBC Press) by Veronica Strong-Boag. When the pandemic forced professors to teach remotely, I spruced up my lecture materials for a Canadian executive-level government course at Memorial University by researching news stories from the early 20th century about Smith. She was British Columbia's first woman MLA, but really stands out for being the first woman to be a cabinet minister in Canada

and in fact the entire Commonwealth. *A Liberal-Labour Lady* promises to introduce this important yet under-appreciated Canadian political figure to a broader audience.



Road to Redemption: The Liberal Party of Canada, 2006-2019, by Brooke Jeffrey, University of Toronto Press, 336 pp., \$39.95.

Brooke Jeffrey offers up another inside account of Liberal Party politics in her latest book *Road to Redemption: The Liberal Party of Canada, 2006-2019* (UTP). It is a follow-up, of sorts, to her earlier book that documented Liberal Party infighting during the Chrétien-Martin era. This time she relies a bit more on media reports to provide a chronology of events under the leadership of Stéphane Dion, Michael Ignatieff, Bob Rae, and Justin Trudeau.

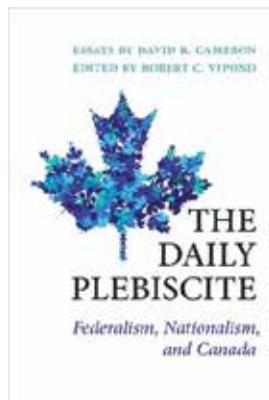
Another book that caught my eye is *Behind Closed Doors: The Law and Politics of Cabinet Secrecy* (UBC Press), by Yan Campagnolo. Naturally, those who follow Canadian politics are bound to be interested in what goes on in cabinet meetings. Yet anyone who studies politics knows that it is exceptionally difficult to get information about those forums because of the legalities of cabinet confidentiality. *Behind Closed Doors* adds to limited public knowledge about executive decision-making by examining the overzealous secrecy in Canadian government, and makes a case for more transparency.

An intriguing book about Indigenous rights and treaty making is *Beyond Rights: The Nisga'a Final Agreement and the Challenges of Modern Treaty Relationships* (UBC Press), by Carole Blackburn. This is a case study of the Nisga'a treaty, which was an agreement between the Nisga'a people, the Government of British Columbia, and the federal government that took effect in 2000. *Beyond Rights* documents the legal and political path that the Nisga'a nation forged to achieve this landmark agreement.

It used to be said that only in Canada will you find a book about federalism at an airport. Perhaps one such tome destined for weary travellers is *The Daily Plebiscite: Federalism, Nationalism, and Canada* (UTP), by David Cameron and edited by Robert

Vipon. The book weaves together Cameron's observations and musings about Canadian federalism and constitutional negotiations from the latter 20th century. *The Daily Plebiscite* will interest those looking for a historical journey through a period of heated national unity discussions.

Another new book about federalism is *Open Federalism Revisited: Regional and Federal Dynamics in the Harper Era* (UTP), edited by James Farney and Julie Simmons. The collection features chapters by political scientists from across Canada about regional differences and institutional changes during the Harper years. I'm looking forward to the chapter titled "Stephen Harper's PMO Style: Partisan Managerialism," by Jonathan Craft and Anna Esselment.

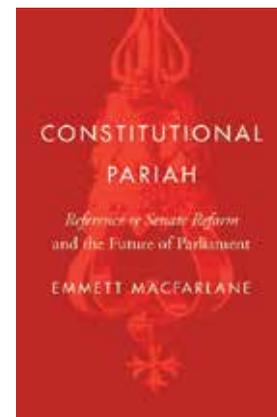


The Daily Plebiscite: Federalism, Nationalism, and Canada, by David R. Cameron and edited by Robert C. Vipond, University of Toronto Press, 326 pp., \$29.95.

Back when I was an undergraduate student at Carleton University in the 1990s, I took a course in Canadian federalism that included some heavy conversation about the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations, which was constituted in the late 1930s. I am struck that this body's work is the subject of *The Rowell-Sirois Commission and the Remaking of Canadian Federalism* (UBC Press), by Robert Wardhaugh and Barry Ferguson. It deals with the origins of fiscal federalism and how the provinces tapped into the federal government's spending power.

On the topic of royal commissions, an intriguing work is *The Fate of Canada: F. R. Scott's Journal of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1963-1971* (MQUP), edited by Graham Fraser. The Bi and Bi Commission conducted a pivotal inquiry into the presence of the French language and culture in Canadian society, and laid the groundwork for the federal government becoming officially bilingual. What is so curious about *The Fate of Canada* is that it is shaped around extracts of the journal of poet F.R. Scott who took notes about the commission's work.

A must-read for anyone interested in the Senate is *Constitutional Pariah: Reference re Senate Re-*

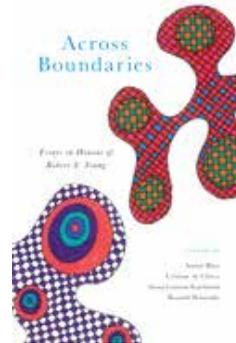


Constitutional Pariah: Reference re Senate Reform and the Future of Parliament, by Emmett Macfarlane, UBC Press, 198 pp., \$27.95.

form and the Future of Parliament (UBC Press), by Emmett Macfarlane. Grounded in the Supreme Court's reference decision in 2014 about electing Senators and setting term limits, *Constitutional*

Pariah branches into a detailed examination of the role of the Senate and the fallout of that landmark decision.

A special word about *Keeping Canada Running: Infrastructure and the Future of Governance in a Pandemic World* (MQUP), by Bruce Doern, Christopher Stoney, and Robert Hilton. The book looks at Canadian infrastructure projects, the pandemic "build back better" mantra of the federal government and the future of infrastructure in an era of climate change. Sadly, author and Carleton University professor Chris Stoney passed away this month, leaving behind a large circle of students, colleagues, and friends. *Keeping Canada Running* will be part of his scholarly legacy.



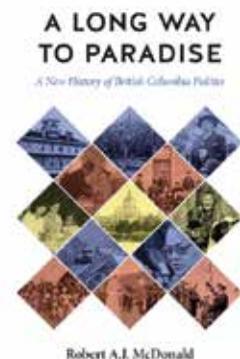
Across Boundaries: Essays in Honour of Robert A. Young, edited by André Blais, Cristine de Clercy, Anna Lennox Esselment and Ronald Wintrobe, McGill-Queen's University Press, 232 pp., \$34.95.

In academia, scholars sometimes honour a distinguished colleague by publishing a collection of essays in their friend's honour. This is known as a Festschrift. *Across Boundaries: Essays in Honour of Robert A. Young* (MQUP) edited by André Blais, Cristine de Clercy, Anna Lennox Esselment, and Ronald Wintrobe, pays homage to the late University of Western Ontario professor. *Across Boundaries* brings together scholars looking at how succes-

sion happens, how governments engage with each other, and how politics intersect with the economy. Among the contributors is former Liberal leader and minister Stéphane Dion.

Those interested in public administration will want to consider *Take a Number: How Citizens' Encounters with Government Shape Political Engagement* (MQUP) by Elisabeth Gidengil. The author is renowned for her meticulous assessment of Canadian elections data.

Big City Elections in Canada (UTP) draws on public opinion data from elections in eight municipalities to illuminate voting behaviour in Canadian municipal elections. Editors Jack Lucas and Michael McGregor have assembled a book wherein each co-authored chapter is a case study of a recent municipal contest. Likewise, *Electing a Mega-Mayor: Toronto 2014*, by McGregor, Aaron Moore, and Laura Stephenson uses survey data to understand municipal voters.



A Long Way to Paradise: A New History of British Columbia Politics, by Robert A.J. McDonald, UBC Press, 428 pp., \$39.95.

Some new books about regional politics in Canada are worthy of mention. *A Long Way to Paradise: A New History of British Columbia Politics* by Robert McDonald explores the sometimes wacky nature of BC politics from 1871-1972. *Neoliberal Parliamentarism: The Decline of Parliament at the Ontario Legislature*, by Tom McDowell argues that since the 1980s democracy has weakened in Ontario due to neoliberal rules and approaches.

On a final note, I had hoped to prepare a summary of academic books that would feature an equal balance of men and women authors. I was struck that men appear to have published books disproportionately more in 2021. If that impression is right, it might be further evidence of women experiencing more challenges than their male counterparts during the pandemic. Academic presses might want to consider this when encouraging Canadian scholars to submit book proposals.

Alex Marland is a professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland and author of a number of books, including the award-winning, *Whipped: Party Discipline in Canada*.

The Hill Times

The Hill Times' 100 Best Books in 2021

1. *Across Boundaries: Essays in Honour of Robert A. Young*, edited by André Blais, Cristine de Clercy, Anna Lennox Esselment and Ronald Winrobe, McGill-Queen's University Press, 232 pp., \$34.95.

2. *A Liberal-Labour Lady: The Times and Life of Mary Ellen Spear Smith*, by Veronica Strong-Boag, UBC Press, 288 pp., \$89.95.

3. *A Long Way to Paradise: A New History of British Columbia Politics*, by Robert A.J. McDonald, UBC Press, 428 pp., \$39.95.

4. *A Matter of Equality: The Life's Work of a Senator*, by Don Oliver, Nimbus Publishing, 215 pp., \$29.95.

5. *An Embarrassment of Critch's*, by Mark Critch, Viking, Penguin Random House Canada, 224 pp., \$32.95.

6. *Assisted Suicide in Canada: Moral, Legal, and Policy Considerations*, by Travis Dumsday, UBC Press, 208 pp., \$75.

7. *Behind Closed Doors: The Law and Politics of Cabinet Secrecy*, by Yan Campagnolo, UBC Press, 352 pp., \$89.95.

8. *Be Kind, Be Calm, Be Safe*, by Dr. Bonnie Henry and Lynn Henry, Allen Lane Canada, 216 pp., \$19.95.

9. *Beyond Rights: The Nisga'a Final Agreement and the Challenges of Modern Treaty Relationships*, by Carole Blackburn, UBC Press, 202 pp., \$89.95.

10. *Big City Elections in Canada*, edited by Jack Lucas and R. Michael McGregor, University of Toronto Press, 280 pp., \$32.95.

11. *Breaking Barriers, Shaping Worlds: Canadian Women and the Search for Global Order*, edited by Jill Campbell-Miller, Greg Donaghy, and Stacey Barker, UBC Press, 240 pp., \$89.95.

12. *Breaking Through: Understanding Sovereignty and Security in the Circumpolar Arctic*, by Wilfrid Greaves and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, University of Toronto Press, 278 pp., \$16.48.

13. *Call Me Indian*, by Fred Sasakamoose, Penguin Random House Viking Canada, 288 pp., \$32.

14. *Canada 1919: A Nation Shaped by War*, edited by Tim Cook and J.L. Granatstein, UBC Press, 338 pp., \$32.95.

15. *Canada as Statebuilder? Development and Reconstruction Efforts in Afghanistan*, by Benjamin Zyla and Laura Grant, McGill-Queen's University Press, 352 pp., \$39.95.

16. *Canada in NATO, 1949-2019*, by Joseph T. Jockel and Joel J. Sokolasky, McGill-Queen's University Press, 328 pp., \$42.95.

17. *Canada to Ireland: Poetry, Politics, and the Shaping of Canadian Nationalism, 1788-1900*, by Michele Holmgren, McGill-Queen's University Press, 258 pp., \$39.95.

18. *Canada's Holy Grail: Lord Stanley's Political Motivation to Donate the Stanley Cup*, by Jordan B. Goldstein, University of Toronto Press, 342 pp., \$24.71.

19. *Can You Hear Me Now: How I Found My Voice and Learned to Live with Passion and Purpose*, by Celina Caesar-Chavannes, Penguin Random House Canada, 280 pp., \$29.95.

20. *China Unbound: A New World Disorder*, by Joanna Chiu, House of Anansi Press, 304 pp., \$24.99.

21. *Coloniality and Racial (In)Justice in the University: Counting for Nothing?* edited by Sunera Thobani, University of Toronto Press, 422 pp., \$26.95.

22. *Colour Matters: Essays on the Experiences, Education and Pursuits of Black Youth*, by Carl E. James, University of Toronto Press, 390 pp., \$39.95.

23. *Constant Struggle: Histories of Canadian Democratization*, edited by Julien Mauduit and Jennifer Tunnicliffe, McGill-Queen's University Press, 504 pp., \$39.95.

24. *Constitutional Pariah: Reference re Senate Reform and the Future of Parliament*, by Emmett Macfarlane, UBC Press, 198 pp., \$27.95.

25. *Constitutional Politics in Multinational Democracies*, edited by André Lecours, Nikola Brassard-Dion, and Guy Laforest, McGill-Queen's University Press, 240 pp., \$37.95.

26. *Damaged: Childhood Trauma, Adult Illness and the Need for a Health Care Revolution*, by Robert Maunder and Jonathan Hunter, University of Toronto Press, 232 pp., \$29.95.

27. *Dangerous Opportunities: The Future of Financial Institutions, Housing Policy and Governance*, edited by Stephanie Ben-Ishai, University of Toronto Press, 208 pp., \$34.95.

28. *Did You See Us? Reunion, Remembrance, and Reclamation at an Urban Indian Residential School*, by survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School, edited by Andrew Woolford, University of Manitoba Press, \$24.95.

29. *Disorientation: Being Black in the World*, by Ian Williams, Penguin Random House Canada, 216 pp., \$25.

30. *Electing a Mega-Mayor: Toronto 2014*, by Michael McGregor, Aaron A. Moore, and Laura B. Stephenson, University of Toronto Press, 208 pp., \$24.71.

31. *Federalism in Canada: Contested Concepts and Uneasy Balances*, by Thomas O. Hueglin, University of Toronto Press, 384 pp., \$54.95.

32. *Fiscal Federalism in Multinational States: Autonomy, Equality, and Diversity*, edited by François Boucher and Alain Noël, McGill-Queen's University Press, 304 pp., \$37.95.

33. *Flora! A Woman in a Man's World*, by Flora MacDonald and Geoffrey Stevens, McGill-Queen's University Press, 328 pp., \$34.95.

34. *Global Development and Human Rights: Sustainable Development Goals and Beyond*, by Paul Nelson, University of Toronto Press, 256 pp., \$27.95.

35. *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics*, by Michael Wernick, UBC Press, On Point Press, 211 pp., \$21.95.

36. *Health and Healthcare in Northern Canada*, edited by Rebecca Schiff and Helle Moller, University of Toronto Press, 450 pp., \$49.95.

37. *Indian in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power*, by Jody Wilson-Raybould, Harper Collins Canada, 352 pp., \$34.99.

38. *Inequality in Canada: The History and Politics of an Idea*, by Eric W. Sager, McGill-Queen's University Press, 488 pp., \$37.95.

39. *Innovation in Real Places: Strategies for Prosperity in an Unforgiving World*, by Dan Breznitz, Oxford University Press, 288 pp., \$29.95.

40. *Joseph Roberts Smallwood: Masthead Newfoundland 1900-1949*, by Melvin Baker and Peter Neary, McGill-Queen's University Press, 248 pp., \$34.95.

41. *Keeping Canada Running: Infrastructure and the Future of Governance in a Pandemic World*, by G. Bruce Doern, Christopher Stoney, and Robert Hilton, McGill-Queen's University Press, 442 pp., \$39.95.

42. *Life in the City of Dirty Water: A Memoir of Healing*, by Clayton Thomas-Müller, Allen Lane, 240 pp., \$22.95.

43. *Making and Breaking Settler Space: Five Centuries of Colonization in North America*, by Adam J. Barker, UBC Press, 312 pp., \$89.95.

44. *Mass Capture: Chinese Head Tax and the Making of Non-Citizens*, by Lily Cho, McGill-Queen's University Press, 272 pp., \$39.95.

45. *My Stories, My Times: Volume 2*, Random House Canada, by Jean Chrétien, 288 pp., \$34.95.

46. *Muskrat Falls: How a Mega Dam Became a Predatory Formation*, edited by Lisa Moore and Stephen Crocker, Memorial University Press, 300 pp., \$27.95.

47. *Neglected No More: The Urgent Need to Improve the Lives of Canada's Elders in the Wake of the Pandemic*, by André Picard, Penguin Random House Canada, 208 pp., \$19.95.

48. *NISHGA*, by Jordan Abel, McClelland & Stewart, 288 pp., \$32.95.

49. *Nothing Less Than Great: Reforming Canada's Universities*, by Harvey Weingarten, University of Toronto Press, 232 pp., \$26.95.

50. *Off The Record*, by Peter Mansbridge, Simon & Schuster, 368 pp., \$29.99.

51. *On Borrowed Time: North America's Next Big Quake*, by Gregor Craigie, Goose Lane, 248 pp., \$22.95.

52. *Open Federalism Revisited: Regional and Federal Dynamics in the Harper Era*, by James Farney and Julie M. Simmons, University of Toronto Press, 358 pp., \$32.21.

53. *On Property*, by Rinaldo Walcott, Biblioasis, 112 pp., \$14.95.

54. *Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling*, by Esi Edugyan, House of Anansi Press Inc., 248 pp., \$32.99.

55. *Nothing But the Truth: A Memoir*, by Marie Henein, Signal, Penguin Random House Canada, 288 pp., \$32.95.

56. *Pandemic Societies*, edited by Jean-Louis Denis, Catherine Régis and Daniel M. Weinstock, with Clara Champagne, McGill-Queen's University Press, 356 pp., \$34.95.

57. *Pandemic Spotlight: Canadian Doctors at the Front of the COVID-19 Fight*, by Ian Hanomansing, Douglas & McIntyre, 256 pp., \$22.95.

58. *Peyakow: Reclaiming Cree Dignity, A Memoir*, by Darrel J. McLeod, Douglas & McIntyre, \$22.95.

59. *Permanent Astonishment: A Memoir*, by Tomson Highway, Doubleday Canada, Penguin Random House Canada, 344 pp., \$32.95.

60. *Reconciling Truths: Reimagining Public Inquiries in Canada*, by Kim Stanton, UBC Press, 268 pp., \$89.95.

61. *Return: Why We Go Back to Where We Come From*, by Kamal Al-Solaylee, HarperCollins Canada, 320 pp., \$32.99.

62. *Rez Rules: My Indictment of Canada's and America's Systemic Racism Against Indigenous Peoples*, by Chief Clarence Louie, McClelland & Stewart, Penguin Random House Canada, 352 pp., \$34.95.

63. *Road to Redemption: The Liberal Party of Canada, 2006-2019*, by Brooke Jeffrey, University of Toronto Press, 336 pp., \$39.95.

64. *Royally Wronged: The Royal Society of Canada and Indigenous Peoples*, edited by Constance Backhouse, Cynthia E. Milton, Margaret Kovach and Adele Perry, McGill-Queen's University Press, 336 pp., \$39.95.

65. *Saga Boy: My Life of Blackness and Becoming*, by Antonio Michael Downing, Viking, Penguin Random House Canada, 344 pp., \$26.95.

66. *Send Them Here: Religion, Politics, and Refugee Resettlement in North America*, by Geoffrey Cameron, McGill-Queen's University Press, 256 pp., \$37.95.

67. *Shaping the Futures of Work: Proactive Governance and Millennials*, by Nilanjan Raghunath, McGill-Queen's University Press, 256 pp., \$95.

68. *Sharing the Land, Sharing a Future: The Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, edited by Katherine A.H. Graham and David Newhouse, University of Manitoba Press, \$31.95.

69. *Sir Mackenzie Bowell: A Canadian Prime Minister Forgotten by History*, Barry K. Wilson, Loose Cannon Press, 364 pp., \$21.28.

70. *Slut-Shaming, Whorephobia, and the Unfinished Sexual Revolution*, by Meredith Ralston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 232 pp., \$34.95.

71. *Social Service, Private Gain: The Political Economy of Social Impact Bonds*, edited by Jesse Hajer and John Loxley, University of Toronto Press, 424 pp., \$19.98.

72. *Sovereignty: The Biography of a Claim*, by Peter H. Russell, University of Toronto Press, 192 pp., \$14.98.

73. *Spin Doctors: How Media and Politicians Misdiagnosed the COVID-19 Pandemic*, by Nora Loreto, Fernwood Publishing, 368 pp., \$35.

74. *Stand on Guard: Reassessing Threats to Canada's National Security*, by Stephanie Carvin, University of Toronto Press, 424 pp., \$17.98.

75. *Talking to Canadians: A Memoir*, by Rick Mercer, Doubleday Canada, Penguin Random House Canada, 329 pp., \$32.95.

76. *Telecom Tensions: Internet Service Providers and Public Policy in Canada*, by Mike Zajko, McGill-Queen's University Press, 240 pp., \$34.95.

77. *The Daily Plebiscite: Federalism, Nationalism, and Canada*, by David R. Cameron and edited by Robert C. Vipond, University of Toronto Press, 326 pp., \$29.95.

78. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, by David Graeber and David Wengrow, Signal, Penguin Random House Canada, 704 pp., \$32.95.

79. *The Day the World Stops Shopping: How Ending Consumerism Saves the Planet and Ourselves*, by J.B. MacKinnon, Penguin Random House Canada, 352 pp., \$32.95.

80. *The Devil's Trick: How Canada Fought the Vietnam War*, by John Boyko, Knopf Canada, Penguin Random House Canada, 256 pp., \$32.

81. *The Fate of Canada: F.R. Scott's Journal of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1963-1971*, edited by Graham Fraser, McGill-Queen's University, 384 pp., \$37.95.

82. *The Four Lenses of Population Aging: Planning for the Future in Canada's Provinces*, by Patrik Marier, Uni-

versity of Toronto Press, 368 pp., \$22.48.

83. *The Gatherings: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*, by Shirley Hager and Mavopiyane, University of Toronto Press, 304 pp., \$29.95.

84. *The Laws and the Land: The Settler Colonial Invasion of Kahnawà:ke in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, by Daniel Rück, UBC Press, 336 pp., \$39.95.

85. *The Least Possible Fuss and Publicity: The Politics of Immigration in Postwar Canada, 1945-1967*, by Paul A. Evans, McGill-Queen's University Press, 344 pp., \$90.

86. *The Platform Economy and the Smart City: Technology and the Transformation of Urban Policy*, edited by Austin Zwick and Zachary Spicer, McGill-Queen's University Press, 352 pp., \$39.95.

87. *The Rowell-Sirois Commission and the Remaking of Canadian Federalism*, by Robert Wardhaugh and Barry Ferguson, UBC Press, 350 pp., \$45.

88. *The Rural Entrepreneur: John Bragg, The Force Behind Oxford Frozen Foods and Eastlink*, by Donald J. Savoie, Nimbus Publishing, \$27.95.

89. *The Symbolic State: Minority Recognition, Majority Backlash, and Secession in Multinational Countries*, by Karlo Bastra, McGill-Queen's University, 272 pp., \$37.95.

90. *The Two Michaels: Innocent Canadian Captives and High Stakes Espionage in the U.S.-Cyber War*, by Fenn Hampson and Mike Blanchfield, Sutherland House, 282 pp., \$24.95.

91. *The Unconventional Nancy Ruth*, by Roman Lumpkin, 454 pp., Second Story Press, 285 pp., \$28.95.

92. *Top Secret Canada: Understanding the Canadian Intelligence and National Security Community*, edited by Stephanie Carvin, Thomas Juneau, and Craig Forcese, University of Toronto Press, 328 pp., \$36.95.

93. *Transformative Media: Intersectional Technopolitics from Indymedia to #BlackLivesMatter*, by Sandra Jeppesen, 312 pp., \$89.95.

94. *Twice Migrated, Twice Displaced: Indian and Pakistani Transnational Households in Canada*, by Tania Das Gupta, UBC Press, 214 pp., \$89.95.

95. *Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance*, by Jesse Wenthe, Allen Lane, Penguin Random House Canada, 208 pp., \$29.95.

96. *Values: Building a Better World for All*, by Mark Carney, Signal, Penguin Random House Canada, 608 pp., \$39.95.

97. *Where Beauty Survived: An African Memoir*, by George Elliott Clarke, Knopf Canada, 336 pp., \$24.

98. *Women at the Helm: How Jean Sutherland Boggs, Hsio-yen Shih, and Shirley L. Thomson Changed the National Gallery of Canada*, by Diana Nemiroff, McGill-Queen's University Press, 552 pp., \$44.95.

99. *Women, Peace, and Security: Feminist Perspectives on International Security*, edited by Caroline Leprince and Cassandra Steer, McGill-Queen's University Press, 256 pp., \$37.95.

100. *Women, Power and Political Representation: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives*, by Roosmarijn de Geus, Erin Tolley, Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Peter John Loewen, University of Toronto Press, 214 pp., \$14.98.

—Compiled by The Hill Times' editor Kate Malloy, the 100 Best Books List is based on Canada's non-fiction bestsellers' lists, book reviews, opinions, and publishers' lists. The books are listed in alphabetical order.

kmalloy@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Best Books

Michael Wernick on governing, political journalism, and his Machiavellian inspiration

‘I was pissed off, and I thought it needed to be called out:’ the former top civil servant talks to Peter Mazereeuw about his explosive committee testimony following the Yellow Vest protest on Parliament Hill, and a whole lot more.

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

Michael Wernick spent 38 years working in Canada’s non-partisan public service. For the last three of those years, from 2016 to 2019, he served as the clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet, a role in which he was the most senior civil servant in the government, and one of the prime minister’s closest advisers.

Wernick took an early retirement in April of 2019, after he became embroiled in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, testified in front of the House Justice Committee about it, and was accused of partisanship by some opposition MPs.

He recently authored a book about the inner workings of government, entitled, *Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics*, and made an appearance on *The Hill Times’ Hot Room* podcast in October to discuss the book and his time in government. The following is an edited version of that interview.

So let’s start at the beginning. Why did you decide to write this book?

“It happened over the last Christmas holiday, my daughter was home from university, and she had some reading to do for the next term. She was taking a classic political theory course. And one of the books that she had to read at the time was Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, which is, as you probably know, a guide to statecraft. And it was just one of those moments where I thought, ‘Hmm, maybe that’s the kind of book I could write.’

“I’d been thinking about writing during my retirement period, but I didn’t want to write a memoir. I didn’t want to write a first-person narrative. Most of my best stories, I’m never going to tell, because they’d break the confidence of the, you know, the incidents I’d be talking about.

“But this just seemed to unlock the possibility of writing something that would be useful, particularly to political science stu-

dents, like my daughter. I looked at her reading list for some of her courses, and most of what’s available to students about Canadian government and politics is written by academics and journalists. Not that there’s anything wrong with that. But very few of them, if any, have been in the cabinet room, or briefing a prime minister, or briefing a minister, so they’re always third-person, indirect. And I thought it might be a contribution for those students and their professors to have a resource written by a practitioner. There aren’t that many around.”

Most of your book is devoted to three segments: advice to a prime minister, advice to a minister, advice to a deputy minister. Why did you choose that format, in particular?

PM, especially one who’s also finance minister: scheduling conflicts, trouble with the flow of documents, gossip about the PM succession, jealousy in cabinet. How do you manage that tension as a prime minister or as a clerk, and stop it from derailing the cabinet’s work?

“Well, I think what I say in the book in more detail is that if you’re a brand new prime minister, feeling your way along, you probably don’t need a deputy prime minister. And you should leave that decision until later in your mandate, when you have a clearer sense of what a deputy prime minister could add, or what role he or she could play. And that’s what several prime ministers have done over the years. It creates a new dynamic within the cabinet, and I’m sure that the

main pressure is to keep the flow of decisions moving forward and to keep some traction underneath the government’s agenda.”

But there are all kinds of people who are going to want you to ‘put a word in with [the] PM for me,’ you know, push things in this direction or that. How do you respond when you get those kinds of requests?

“Well, it’s a position of considerable responsibility, where your judgment obviously matters a great deal. So it’s important to have a good fit between the prime minister and the clerk; between the prime minister, the chief of staff, and the political office; and between the clerk and the chief of staff. That triangle is really important to how Canadian government works.”



Michael Wernick served as clerk of the Privy Council between 2016 and 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and implementable policies and programs.

“So most of the work of senior public service is about how to move things forward. It would be presumptuous to advise whether they should do that or not. The accountability is to Parliament and to the voters.”

But you must run into situations—I’m not going to ask you to dig into specifics—but situations where you think, ‘You know, this is just going to be very difficult to do, in practical terms.’

“Yeah, and that’s ... your job is to point out, you know, here are some of the [challenging] aspects...that’s the due diligence function of cabinet. And there’s a very elaborate process of due diligence on initiatives going towards cabinet, of which there would be a couple hundred every year. It could be costing, it could be legal challenges, it could be international implications, it could be federal-provincial relations, it could be relationships with Indigenous peoples. There’s a lot of due diligence involved in the cabinet process, and the art of it is to make sure that it doesn’t become something that bogs things down, and makes moving forward, you know, too difficult.

“So it’s really about that flow of issues through cabinet that I try to open up a little bit in the book.”

In your section about advice to administer, you wrote: ‘most people who leave governing feel that they have left projects incomplete, and wish they had done more.’ You were talking about cabinet ministers, but it leads me to wonder whether that applies to you as well, after more than 30 years in government? Is there anything you left behind in your to do list that you still think about?

“Oh, dozens of things, I mean, you leave a job, whether it’s abruptly or even on your own time, [and] there will be projects that are half-finished or incomplete. So I left all kinds of things that I would have liked to have spent more time on. It’s a long list, but every job comes to an end one way or another.”

Anything you’re free to share?

“Well, I mean, I’ve given interviews and written about things in other fora. So, you know, I keep a watchful eye on a number of issues. And there are things now which I can spend more time on as a retired guy. But I’m not going to weigh in on, you know, what the government should do. Your publication is full of pundits and op-ed writers who can give the government advice on that. I think the contribution I can make, perhaps, is some of my experience about how things work. And that was the purpose of the book.”

prime minister and Minister Free-land are mindful of that and, you know, they’ll find a way through it.”

You wrote a lot in the book about the pressure that members of cabinet inevitably come under from other people, but not as much about the pressures faced by top civil servants. So when you’re the PCO clerk, how much pressure do you feel from other civil servants, cabinet ministers, lobbyists, and political staffers, to do what they want you to? And how do you manage that?

“Well, the clerk of the Privy Council is the secretary to cabinet, so what I focus on in the book is the role of the clerk in supporting the prime minister as the prime minister’s deputy minister, and then in ensuring that the cabinet function works as well as it can. You’re literally the secretary to cabinet when you’re in that job. So, you know, the

Let me give you a hypothetical scenario just for fun. A new government has come into power, elected on a promise that sounds good to voters, but which you, as a senior public servant, know will be very difficult to implement, or might just be bad policy for reasons that are not obvious. In that circumstance, what does a clerk of the Privy Council say to a new prime minister when he or she arrives ready to make good on that promise?

“Well, it’s never the role of the public service, in my view, to tell a government what it should do, or whether it should do something. The government has a democratic mandate; it’s just come back from an election with a mandate to do the things that it promised Canadians in the campaign. So, you know, that’s our job in the public service, is to translate that into actionable choices at a cabinet table, and the way forward,

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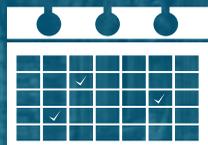
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- A daily look ahead of what's going on in Canadian federal politics for the next day



Regulations:

- The nitty-gritty of regulations of laws enacted after legislation



Directory:

- A frequently updated list of all MPs and Senators with all of their contact details



QP Report:

- Summary of what happened in Question Period the day before (when the House is sitting)
- A bulleted list of what was discussed and who/what was mentioned



In Parliament:

- A quick glance at what legislation may be debated (when the House is sitting)



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Best Books

Michael Wernick on governing, political journalism, and his Machiavellian inspiration



Michael Wernick, then clerk of the Privy Council, pictured swearing in Karina Gould as Canada's minister of democratic institutions in 2017. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Continued from page 22

One of the things you wrote about, speaking of how things work, is the sort of rationalization for centralized control, for why the Prime Minister's Office does things like pick staff for cabinet ministers. The centralization of power in the PMO is something that gets talked about a lot in Ottawa among the pundit class, usually not in positive terms. Do you think it's desirable, or even possible, to move away from that in the future, and give ministers more independence?

"Centralization is your word, not mine. There has to be a coordination across the government. You have 30 to 35 ministers, each with an agenda. All of the meaningful issues of our time are multi-minister issues. If it was climate change, or Indigenous reconciliation, or how to deal with China, or what to do you know about any number of issues, even something as straightforward as cannabis legalization, you have to coordinate the efforts of multiple ministers. There are over 300 federal entities in the federal government. So I think of it more as alignment and coordination. It may feel like control to some of the people. And I was a line deputy minister at Aboriginal Affairs for eight years. But that tension back and forth between looking at the government as a whole and, you know, the initiatives and the interest of any of its component pieces, that's the dynamics of Canadian government. They're not going to change. You know, prime ministers rule their cabinets with a lighter or tighter hand, and that's their prerogative."

Since I've got you here, I want to ask for your perspective on journalism in Canada, and how journalists cover the federal government. What do we get wrong most often in our coverage, and what deserves more of our attention?

"Well, the thing I've noticed about journalism, which has been observed by others, is a tremendous erosion of capacity over the last 10 years. I think the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Ottawa is less than half the size it was 10 years ago. There was a time when the major news outlets had time for people to really get depth on particular fields. There was something called a beat reporter, people would cultivate knowledge and contacts, and be able to write about issues.

"Now there's a smaller number of people, stretched thinner. They tend to be generalists covering a whole range of issues. So they skim from one thing to another, and it's difficult for them. I don't have any easy answers for that. ... So it's really that, you know, that depth.

"I hope that my book might be useful to some reporters who come to Ottawa to cover politics and government. I did a lot of background briefings for journalists in my time, mostly explaining how things work, and who to go and see, and, 'Here's a resource,' and 'Do you realize this happened three years ago?'

"I think a main feature of journalism—it's not a criticism, it's, again, it's just the way the world is—is the memory is very short. And anything that happened more than about two years ago is ancient history. So it's sort of always, always in the present,

always chasing today's story and today's headline, and a very, very low attention span. And so you don't see issues pursued in depth.

"When I was [at] Aboriginal Affairs, I would have liked to have had journalists pursue issues in greater depth and for more length, but they kind of flit in for a few days and then leave, in most cases."

One of the toughest parts of covering the federal government from the outside, as a journalist, is trying to decipher when a decision has been made primarily for political reasons—possibly even at the expense of the public interest—and when there's something else at play, maybe some kind of logistical barrier to action that the government isn't talking about. Now, I would argue it's important for Canadians to know which is the case, but how can we tell? Or how can we find out?

"Well, ultimately, it's up to voters to judge what's the public interest. You know, the outputs of government are laws, regulations, policies, programs, agreements, those are all there to see. There's been more, there's more proactive disclosure of the outputs and the processes of government than [at] any time in our history. Everything's there, on proactive disclosure, whether it's contracts or grants and contributions, staffing actions, military promotions: the whole workings of government are more transparent than they've ever been.

"So I think what you're referring to, and this comes up, is how much access should there be to the deliberative processes before a decision. And that's one of the things I do talk about in the book."

The last time many Canadians will have heard your name was shortly before your retirement in the spring of 2019, when you testified to the House Justice Committee about the SNC-Lavalin scandal. You took an early retirement afterwards, and said at the time that you didn't believe you could continue serving as clerk after some opposition MPs accused you of partisan behaviour. So looking back now, do you think you should have done anything differently in the lead up to that?

"I think that I was drawn into the story and became part of the story, and became part of the targeting and the crossfire, and I really don't see how that could have been avoided in the way things unfolded. So I was going to leave the job at some point anyway, and I was very conscious of its institutional role, particularly in an election year, when you are responsible for continuity of government.

"We had just set up the mechanism for calling out foreign interference in an election campaign and made the clerk the main whistleblower on that. And you need to basically have the trust of opposition parties and leaders that you are a steward during the election period. And if they are lucky enough to win the election, that you're there to receive them and help onboard them. And I, I definitely felt that I had crossed a line where I couldn't have that trust from the opposition parties. And so I had to step out of the job."

You started off your testimony before that committee with a warning about the direction in which the country was headed, and the 'rising tide of incitements to violence in Canada,' particularly around politics. You were criticized in some corners afterwards for making those remarks. An op-ed in *The Globe and Mail* have called them partisan and alarmist. And the following year, a man stormed the grounds of Rideau hall with loaded guns, looking for the prime minister. And in this election campaign, we saw protesters throw rocks at the prime minister, and a right-wing, fringe party triple its share of the vote. What did you know when

you made that speech in 2019, that the rest of us didn't?

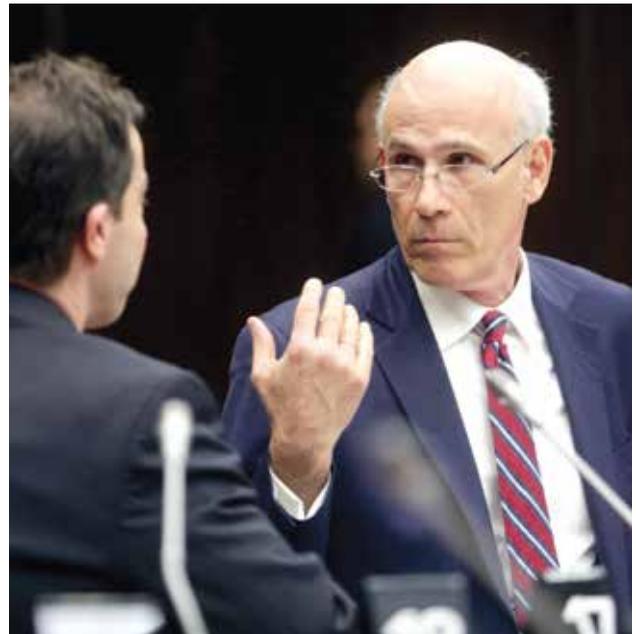
"Well, I made those remarks the day after the yellow vest rally on Parliament Hill, where people were carrying around signs saying, 'Trudeau traitor.' And that's what really triggered, you know, my intervention. I am a student of history, and I know what happens in other countries when people start using the words 'patriot' and 'traitor.' Now that virus has infected Canada, but it's also infected other countries. And I don't think it was alarmist; I knew I was going to have some attention because of what was going on at the time, and I made a very conscious and mindful decision to use that spotlight to talk about these issues.

"What I knew that, you know, maybe has only come out more in the intervening years, is I knew that a lot of the ministers, particularly the women ministers, were getting incredible abuse, and personal attacks and threats of violence. And the default setting back in those days was, 'let's not talk about it, because it might just encourage copycats,' but I knew, you know, the kind of vile things that were going on, to ministers, and in some cases, political staffers.

"And frankly, I was pissed off, and I thought it needed to be called out. And, you know, sadly, what's happened over the last two years has only demonstrated it is a real issue. What I talked about in the book is, this is now a permanent feature of coming into public life. To become a minister—certainly prime minister, but even an ordinary cabinet minister—there is a price of exposing you to this, this kind of abuse, and cyber bullying and personal attacks, and to some extent, some real physical danger to you and your family. And over a period of time, I think we will find that fewer people want to come into public life, or that the people leave public life because they can't take it anymore. And that's a kind of form of adverse selection. We will find a cost to that, in terms of our democracy."

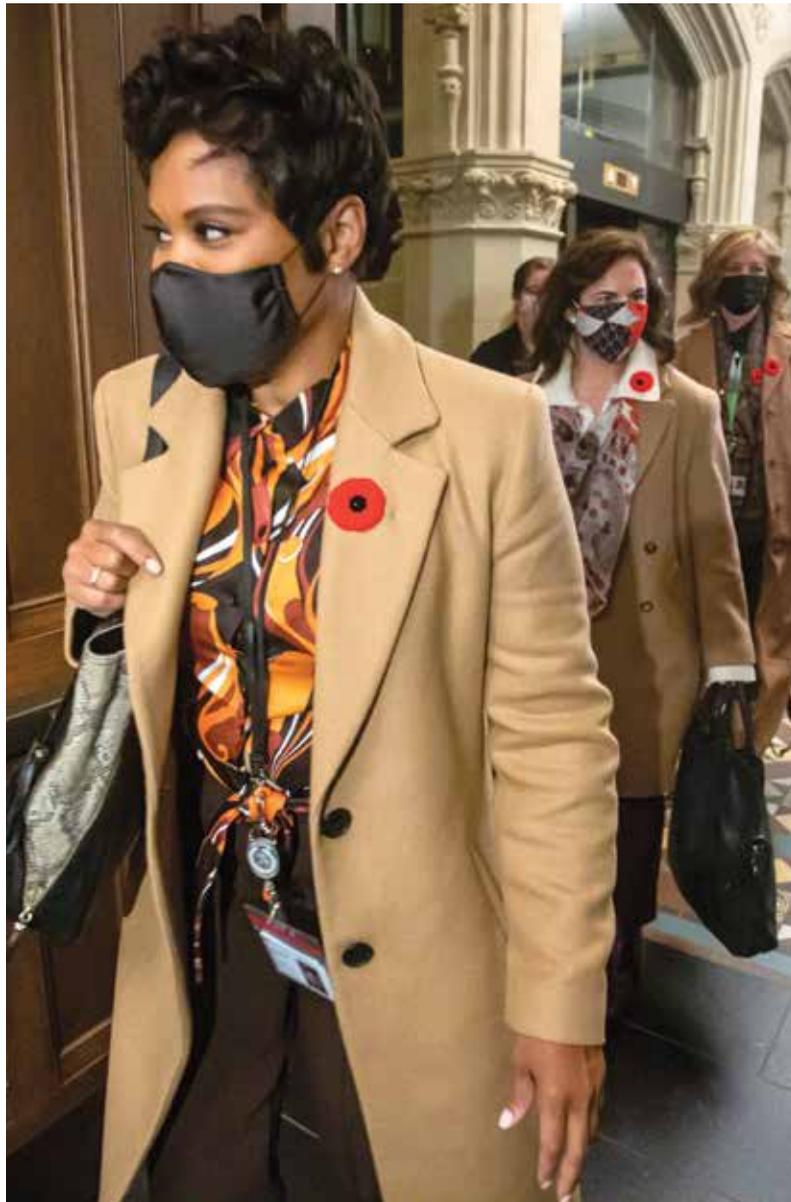
***Governing Canada: A Guide to the Tradecraft of Politics*, by Michael Wernick, UBC Press, On Point Press, 211 pp., \$21.95.**

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The Hill Times



Michael Wernick, then clerk of the Privy Council, appears as a witness at a House Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights meeting on Feb. 21, 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The state of gender justice



Minister for Women and Gender Equality Paulette Senior, pictured Nov. 8, 2021, arriving for the Liberals' caucus meeting in the West Block in Ottawa. 'We need gender justice to be positioned as a central goal in government, and it can't just be a matter of remedial responses. We need a sea change,' writes Paulette Senior. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ment, in every ministry. And that prioritization needs to be mirrored in provinces and territories, right to the level of municipalities, the government bodies closest to our daily lives.

We need gender justice pursued at a level, pace, and sophistication Canada has not yet known.

So many of the common gender inequity issues we have faced are rooted in the way we've treated women. We have framed gendered inequities as largely private matters. We have left mothers to take care of unpaid childcare and marginalized women to take care of underpaid care work, banking the economy on their backs. We have built a nation on colonial abuses and placed Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people at astronomical risk of violence. Black women, women with disabilities, and migrant women have faced high rates of discrimination across so many sectors—health, education, housing, leadership. The research and poll findings come out year after year to prove this. Yet the expenditures on the right solutions do not match the scope of the barriers.

There's a long history to overcome, rooted in broad gendered dynamics we

have historically taken for granted in governance.

We need to keep asking the hard questions. Why should women and gender-diverse people live at such great risk of abuse, most often by men they know? Why are long-called-for national childcare plans and national action plans on gender-based violence moving forward only now? Why are most of the calls to action and justice on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and truth and reconciliation left unfulfilled? Why should "women's work" be so underpaid and under-protected when all of our lives depend on it? Where are the plans and policies and tax expenditures that will make a real difference for the most marginalized women, girls, and gender-diverse people?

Why, in 2021, do we not get the rights and respect we deserve?

The crisis continues, and we will face more challenges ahead. The project of rebuilding lost gains, pushing past the pre-pandemic point, impacts us all and crosses all party lines. Government commitments in 2022 need to unequivocally centre on the most pressing matter of gender justice.

Paulette Senior is president and CEO of the Canadian Women's Foundation.

The Hill Times

We need gender justice pursued at a level, pace, and sophistication Canada has not yet known.

Paulette Senior

Opinion



Risk of gender-based violence such as intimate partner abuse and sexual assault has also increased. In 2020 and 2021, in fact, the rate of femicide has spiked.

And, in the pandemic, Indigenous women more often reported experiencing high rates of discrimination and unfair treatment, as well as the LGBTQ2 community.

Gender injustices didn't start in the wake of COVID-19 Canada. But they've meant that women, girls, and gender-diverse people have faced a disproportionate onslaught of the pandemic's worst impacts.

Given where we are and how much we've lost, a great deal of rebuilding has to happen into 2022. In fact, the rebuilding of gender equity efforts must be the focus of our political priorities.

Promising announcements have been made on key areas such as childcare, pay equity, and housing. Emergency investments have been made to help ensure survivors of abuse can access gender-based violence services in the pandemic.

But we need gender justice to be positioned as a central goal in government, and it can't just be a matter of remedial responses. We need a sea change.

We need it baked into federal mandate letters, and we need it urgently. Not just for a handful of departments, but every depart-

At the end of 2021, it's clearer than ever that 30 years of progress on gender equality is at risk.

There are three areas that give us a sense of the scope of the challenge we face today: economic opportunity, safety, and discrimination.

Almost half a million women in Canada lost their jobs by January 2021, working in sectors most affected by the pandemic. Unemployment rates were worse for racialized women and women with disabilities. Job losses particularly impacted women with small children.

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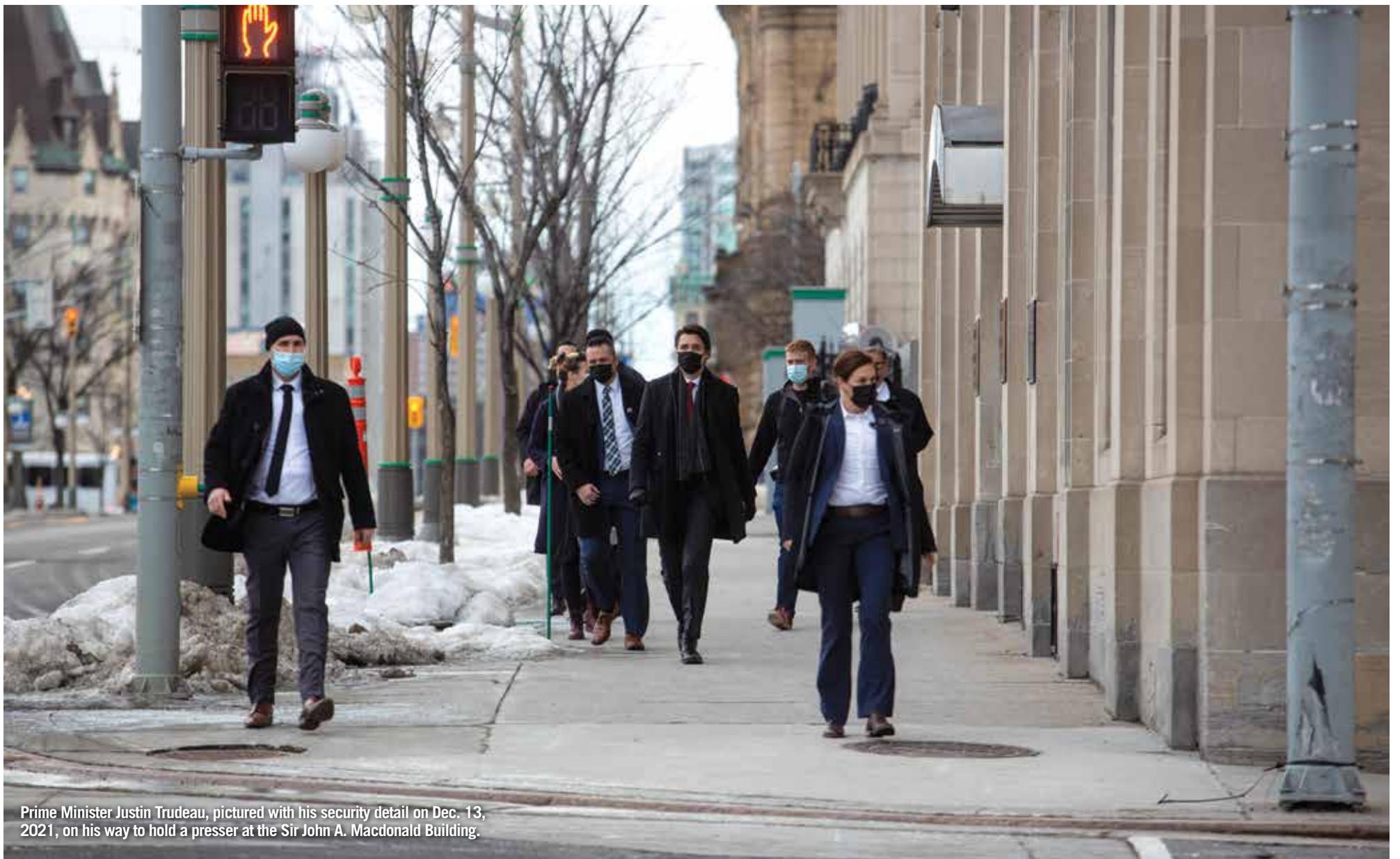
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Feature

It was the year of the mask on the Hill, again

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured with his security detail on Dec. 13, 2021, on his way to hold a presser at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building.



Liberal MPs Pam Damoff and Rob Oliphant, pictured on Dec. 2, 2021, giving former Liberal MP Scott Brison a big hug.



House of Commons Clerk Charles Robert, pictured Dec. 9, 2021, in the West Block.



Conservative MP Candice Bergen, pictured right, on Nov. 24, 2021, on her way to the Conservative national caucus meeting in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building.

Feature



Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, pictured Nov. 22, 2021, on the first day of the new session of Parliament.



Liberal MP David McGuinty, pictured Nov. 30, 2021, checking out the new VIA trains.



NDP MPs Daniel Blaikie and Leah Gazan, pictured Nov. 22, 2021.



Privacy Commissioner Daniel Therrien, pictured Dec. 9, 2021, after releasing his final report in Ottawa.



Liberal MP Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, pictured Dec. 14, 2021, in the West Block.



NDP MPs Randall Garrison and Charlie Angus, pictured Nov. 22, 2021.



Conservative MP John Williamson and other Conservatives, pictured on Nov. 22, 2021, on the opening day of the new Parliament.



Conservative MPs Michelle Rempel Garner and Blaine Calkins, pictured Nov. 22, 2021, on the first day of the new Parliament.



Transport Minister Omar Alghabra, pictured Dec. 2, 2021, on the Hill.



Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray, pictured on Nov. 22, 2021, on the first day of the new Parliament.



Canada's Chief of Defence Staff Wayne Eyre, pictured on Nov. 23, 2021, on his way into a cabinet meeting.



International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan and Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski, pictured Dec. 2, 2021, on their way to Question Period.

Opinion

Defending democracy and confronting aggressors



Canada needs to match our words with action. The mandate letters for Defence Minister Anita Anand and Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly will set the tone, but the prime minister must lead the charge, writes David Pratt. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

If all we offer up as a nation is lofty words and stirring phrases about why democracy is so important, then we condemn ourselves to a role as spectators in what will be a defining question of the 21st century.

David Pratt



Opinion

OTTAWA—Very few in Canada would argue with a recent *Globe and Mail* editorial that, “It’s never a bad time to fight for

democracy.” Democracy, even among some of our so-called NATO allies, is hanging by a thread. It must be vigorously defended.

An important question not addressed by the editorial is: “What does it mean to fight for democracy?” If all we offer up as a nation is lofty words and stirring phrases about why democracy is so important, then we condemn ourselves to a role as spectators in what will be a defining question of the 21st century.

It is no coincidence that China is threatening Taiwan and the Russians Ukraine. Both see signs of American weakness at home and abroad and a lack of resolve among the Western allies. When push came to shove, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan badly miscalculated Allied intent and the world paid a terrible price. Our strategic environment is very different now. Weapons systems and the technology of destruction have advanced exponentially. These same systems have largely deterred major aggression, but we live in terror that they might actually be used. While technology

has advanced, sadly the foreign policies of some countries, both democratic and authoritarian, are stuck in the 1930s.

It is said that history doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme. The Sudetenland Crisis of 1938 has eerie parallels with Taiwan and Ukraine. The aggressive, revanchist policies being carried out by the Chinese in the South China Sea and the Russians in Ukraine are ringing alarm bells in Western capitals. These moves must be countered by more than righteous editorials and political speeches. While economic sanctions are important, they may not be enough. Collectively, we need to be crystal clear in our intent to defend democracy.

Putin, like Stalin before him, is playing a very dangerous game by using massed armoured divisions as an active tool of foreign policy. And like Stalin, he is unlikely to be moved by blandishments calling for peace, stability, and reduced tensions. “Remind me,” Stalin reportedly said at Yalta, “How many divisions does the Pope have?” Putin speaks the same language.

What does it mean for Canada to fight for democracy? Quite simply, we need to match our words with action. The mandate letters for Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly and Defence Minister Anita Anand will set the tone, but the prime minister must lead the charge.

For Joly, it will mean working in lock step with our allies to confront the aggression of China and Russia on land and sea, in the air, space, and cyberspace. More can and should be done to support peacekeeping and international aid. Almost five years after “Strong, Secure and Engaged,” Canada’s defence policy, it is high time for both a foreign and defence policy review. And while the minister needs to uphold the letter and intent of the Arms Trade Treaty, she also needs to fix an export permit process that is unduly long, lacks transparency and is causing real harm and lost opportunities for many Canadian companies.

For Anand, the challenges are enormous. Fixing the toxic institutional culture of sexual abuse in the Canadian Forces is mission critical. It will take time, determination and committed

leadership to accomplish. Second on the list must be our sclerotic defence procurement process. The system desperately needs reform with one Minister in charge for improved accountability. The Canadian Forces need a new fighter aircraft that will allow us to work with our closest partner and ships that are both affordable and capable. We need both on an accelerated schedule to match an operational tempo which is bound to increase. A bigger budget, enhanced recruitment and continental defence are also key priorities.

None of this will be easy in a time of constrained resources. Canadians of all political stripes should hope these ministers enjoy unbridled success. In the fight for democracy, peace and stability, the government’s new mandate would be a terrible thing to waste.

David Pratt is a former federal defence minister and the principal of David Pratt & Associates. His consulting firm supports large and small companies in the defence and security sector with government relations, marketing and communications.

The Hill Times



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

Most of Bennett's staffers follow her to new mental health and addictions cabinet post, including her chief of staff Sarah Welch

Plus, Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan has added four more staffers to his new team since Hill Climbers last checked in, including press secretary Daniel Pollak.

After moving into a brand new portfolio, Mental Health and Addictions Minister **Carolyn Bennett** has opted to keep much of her old ministerial team, including chief of staff **Sarah Welch**, who's been working for the minister since 2016.

Welch first became chief of staff to Bennett as then-minister of Crown-Indigenous relations in 2018. Before then, she'd been Bennett's director of policy, starting at the beginning of 2016 during the minister's time heading the Indigenous and northern affairs portfolio, which was rejigged in 2017.

A veteran staffer, Welch worked under the **Paul Martin** Liberal government as a special assistant to then-heritage minister **Hélène Scherrer**. She went on to work as an assistant to then-Ontario Liberal MP **Roger Valley**, and later served as director of finance and administration in **Michael Ignatieff's** office as Liberal leader.

Welch was deputy national tour director for the federal Liberals during the 2011 election, after which worked as a protocol adviser for the City of Ottawa for about a year before moving to British Columbia, where she spent time as an aide to then-B.C. multiculturalism minister **John Yap**. Prior to joining Bennett's team, Welch spent roughly two-and-a-half years, starting in the summer of 2013, as a senior policy adviser to then-Ontario aboriginal affairs minister **David Zimmer**.

Shaili Patel continues as director of policy to Bennett in her new role.



Kaitlyn Forbes continues as a policy adviser to Carolyn Bennett in her new portfolio. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Patel first took on the title in Bennett's office as Crown-Indigenous relations minister at the beginning of 2020, having spent the last 11 years prior as an aide to then-Saskatchewan Senator **Lillian Eva Dyck**, starting in 2009 when she was in her early 20s. Dyck retired from the Upper Chamber a few months later in August 2020. While working for Dyck, Patel studied law at the University of Ottawa and she also has a



Walk this way: Mental Health and Addictions Minister Carolyn Bennett is pictured with her communications director, Zachary Caldwell, on her way into a Liberal caucus meeting in the West Block on Dec. 14. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

bachelor's degree in political science from Ohio Northern University.

Working under her so far is policy adviser **Kaitlyn Forbes**, who joined Bennett's old Crown-Indigenous relations team as a policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser in early 2020. Before then, Forbes had been a constituency assistant to Bennett as the Liberal MP for Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont. She's also a former riding staffer to Liberal MP **Julie Dzerowicz**, who represents Davenport, Ont. Forbes has a bachelor's degree in political studies and gender studies and a master's degree in gender studies from Queen's University.

Vincent Haraldsen remains director of parliamentary affairs to Bennett.

Haraldsen has been overseeing parliamentary affairs for the minister since the early days of the 42nd Parliament. Before then, he'd tackled legislation, policy, and communications in Bennett's MP office since 2012.

A longtime staffer, Haraldsen was an adviser in interim Liberal leader **Bob Rae's** office prior to his time with Bennett. He first began working on the Hill in 2003, coming fresh from Owen Bird Barristers and Solicitors in Vancouver, where he'd been an associate, to become chief of staff to then-environment minister **David Anderson**. Haraldsen studied law at the University of Saskatchewan and also has a bachelor's degree in political science at Simon Fraser University.



Harrison Paul is now a legislative assistant to Bennett. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Harrison Paul has similarly followed Bennett to her new post, taking on the title of legislative assistant. He previously was a special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs in her Crown-Indigenous relations office, starting in early 2020. Paul spent the recent election as a media monitor at Liberal Party headquarters. A former 2018 summer intern in then-public services minister **Carla Qualtrough's** office, Paul has also been a 2016 summer intern with

the Nova Scotia Liberal Party and spent multiple stints as a student assistant for the provincial Liberal caucus while studying for a bachelor's degree in political science at Acadia University.

Chloe van Bussel continues as director of operations. She's been working for Bennett since October 2018, starting as an assistant to her parliamentary secretary as the minister for Crown-Indigenous relations. She later became a Quebec regional affairs adviser and manager of operations to the minister, and was promoted to director last March.

Previously, from 2016 until joining Bennett's office in 2018, van Bussel worked at Quebec's national assembly, starting as a political aide to **Geoffrey Kelley** as the then-Liberal MNA for the provincial riding of Jacques Cartier, Que. She later served as a political adviser in Kelley's office as minister for native affairs. Kelley retired from politics in 2018, ahead of the provincial election in October of that year.

Jeremy Proulx has also followed Bennett from Crown-Indigenous relations to her new portfolio, continuing as an issues manager, a role he's filled since September 2020. Before then, he spent a year as an assistant to Liberal MP **Elisabeth Briere**, who represents Sherbrooke, Que., having started there after working on Briere's successful 2019 election campaign.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Caldwell takes over as Bennett's new comms head



Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan, pictured with Liberal MP Churence Rogers, left, on Nov. 22, has added four more staff to his ministerial office since Hill Climbers last checked in. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Julia Van Drie is a senior policy adviser to Seamus O'Regan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

then, after working on his 2019 election campaign, Pennella spent two years as an assistant to then-Toronto Liberal MP **Adam Vaughan**, during which time he served as the parliamentary secretary for housing to then-families minister **Ahmed Hussen**.

It's been a busy year for Pennella. Along with joining Schulte's office, she volunteered on the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation panel, was a youth mentor through the Liberal Party's Summer Leadership Program, did opposition research and wrote candidate biographies for the Liberal Party ahead of the fall election, worked on Schulte's ultimately unsuccessful re-election campaign in King-Vaughan, Ont., and took charge of membership recruitment for the King-Vaughan Ontario Liberal riding association in August, as noted on her LinkedIn profile.

Among other past experience, she's also a former volunteer in Vaughan-Woodbridge, Ont., Liberal MP **Francesco Sorbara's** office, a former freelance writer for the magazine *Panoram Italia*, and former president of GTA Sanitation Solutions.



Julia Pennella is now an issues manager to O'Regan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

As previously reported, **Paul Moen** is chief of staff to O'Regan, **Miles Hopper** is director of policy and stakeholder relations, **Mark Duggan** is director of issues management and senior Atlantic adviser, **Damien O'Brien** is director of parliamentary affairs, **Udita Samuel** is director of operations, **Michelle Johnston** is director of communications, and **Courtney White** is executive assistant to O'Regan and Moen.

During the 2020-21 fiscal year, which ended March 31, the labour minister's office under Tassi spent a total of \$1,313,748, according to the 2021 Public Accounts tabled on Dec. 14. Almost all of that—\$1,306,880 to be exact—was spent on personnel.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Continued from page 29

Before that year's election, Proulx spent the summer of 2019 as an intern in then-international development minister **Maryam Monsef's** office. He's also a former political aide at Quebec's national assembly.

Zachary Caldwell is a new addition to Bennett's roster as director of communications.

He's spent the last almost two years working for then-national defence minister **Harjit Sajjan**, starting in March 2020 as a senior parliamentary affairs adviser. He was promoted to director of parliamentary affairs in that office at the beginning of this year.

This isn't Caldwell's first time working for Bennett; he previously spent almost half a year as a parliamentary affairs adviser in her office as Crown-Indigenous relations minister prior to joining Sajjan's team. Before then, Caldwell was a senior parliamentary affairs and communications adviser to then-science and sport minister **Kirsty Duncan**, having earlier been a special assistant in Duncan's office as just minister of science. In between those roles, he worked at Queen's Park, briefly as a special assistant for operations in then-Ontario premier **Kathleen Wynne's** office before joining then-Ontario attorney general **Yasir Naqvi's** office as a legislative assistant and issues manager. (Naqvi now represents Ottawa Centre, Ont., in the House of Commons.)

Among other past experience, Caldwell is also a former constituency assistant to then-Ontario MPP for Ottawa West-Nepean **Bob Chiarelli** and spent roughly four months in 2015 as a research assistant in Bennett's office as Indigenous and northern affairs minister.

Maja Staka is another new aide to Bennett, taking on the role of press secretary. Staka has spent the last almost two years as a communications adviser in the Liberal research bureau, where she liaised with

ministers offices and worked to plan and write the office's caucus-wide newsletter, *The Grit*.

From August 2018 until his election defeat in October 2019, Staka tackled communications for Liberal MP **Randy Boissonnault**, who reclaimed his seat as the MP for Edmonton Centre, Alta., in this year's election (and is now Minister of Tourism and Associate Finance). Staka spent the recent election as a digital marketing co-ordinator for the national Liberal campaign.



Maja Staka is Carolyn Bennett's new press secretary. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Minister O'Regan adds to his team

Labour Minister **Seamus O'Regan** has added four more names to his new ministerial staff roster since *Hill Climbers* last checked in, including press secretary **Daniel Pollak**.

Pollak joins O'Regan's team from the seniors minister's office. He joined then-minister **Deb Schulte's** team as press secretary in March 2020, and until recently had been helping to support new minis-

ter **Kamal Khara** during the post-election transition.

Following a four month co-op placement with the Canadian Medical Association's intergovernmental affairs and advocacy team during the summer of 2019, Pollak served as press secretary for now-Ontario Liberal Leader **Steven Del Duca's** successful leadership campaign, after which he joined Schulte's office on the Hill.

Dakota Burgin joined O'Regan's team as a digital communications adviser earlier this month. He previously spent close to a year and a half as an assistant to now-Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu** in her office as the Liberal MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.

Burgin was part of the 2021 Liberal campaign's digital creative team and has overall been working on the Hill since 2016. For roughly half a year in 2017, he was a special assistant for communications to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**.

Julia Van Drie is officially staying on board in the labour minister's office as a senior policy adviser. She first joined the office under then-minister **Filomena Tassi**, who's now the Minister for Public Services and Procurement, in January 2020.

Van Drie got her start on the Hill as an intern in 2016, returning in May 2017 to work as a special assistant in Hajdu's office as the then-employment minister. A year later, Van Drie joined the Liberal research bureau as an outreach assistant, and that fall, she moved over to then-small business and export promotion minister **Mary Ng's** office as a special assistant for policy and stakeholder relations. She has a bachelor's degree in history from Carleton University.

Most recently, on Dec. 15, **Julia Pennella** started on the job as an issues manager to O'Regan.

Like Pollak, she comes from the old seniors minister's team, where she'd been an issues adviser since last March. Before

Parliamentary Calendar

House has adjourned until Monday, Jan. 31, 2022



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured on Dec. 14, 2021, arriving for the Liberals' national caucus meeting in the West Block. The House will return on Monday, Jan. 31, 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the objectives of the international development sector. Development actors aim to reduce poverty and inequalities, uphold rights and bring about positive change. They help improve access to health services, clean water, education, and livelihoods while promoting gender equality, climate action, and peace. Date: Jan. 25 to 27, 2022. This event will be fully virtual: international-forum.ca/about/

SATURDAY, AUG. 20—FRIDAY, AUG. 26, 2022

65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference—One of the largest annual gatherings of Commonwealth Parliamentarians will take place in Aug. 20-26, 2022, at the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the CPA Canada Region in Halifax. The annual flagship event will bring together over 500 Parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and decision makers from across the Commonwealth for this unique conference and networking opportunity. The conference will be hosted by the CPA president (2019-2021), House Speaker Anthony Rota. All eligible CPA Branches will be contacted with further information and invitations.

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MONDAY, DEC. 20

House Sitting—The House has adjourned and will resume sitting again on Monday, Jan. 31, 2022.

TUESDAY, JAN. 4, 2022

Outlook: 2022—The Canadian Club Toronto and the *National Post* host "Outlook: 2022." Expert panellists will gather for a forecast luncheon on the economy, the markets and political issues that will affect Canadians in the year ahead. This event will take place

at The Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., Toronto. Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tickets available at canadianclub.org.

TUESDAY, JAN. 18—WEDNESDAY, JAN. 19, 2022

Annual Conference on Crown Corporate Governance—The Canadian Institute's 17th Annual Conference on Crown Corporate Governance takes place on Jan. 18-19, 2022, in Ottawa, with a livestream option. This conference brings relevant and practi-

cal discussions to achieving board excellence for Crown corporations and the public sector. Reserve your seat among the chairs and board members of leading federal and provincial Crown corporations, as well as government and public sector executives who will impart knowledge on the political framework for the upcoming year. View the full agenda and list of distinguished speakers and register today. Online: <https://bit.ly/2ZkMShv>; email: customerservice@canadianinstitute.com; phone: 1-877-927-7936. *The Hill Times'* readers save 10 per

cent with registration code: D10-389-389GX01.

TUESDAY, JAN. 25—THURSDAY, JAN. 27, 2022

WUSC International Forum 2022—Power lies with people. Throughout history, social movements have contributed to some of the greatest global societal shifts. These movements put beliefs, people, institutions, and systems in motion toward a more equal and just society. Social change outcomes are also greatly aligned with

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.

