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

Continued on page 3

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

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

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

BY ABBAS RANA

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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,

Continued on page 5
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 Ericks;* is set to explode onto the accidentally, backed by publisher University of Toronto Press. The book explores how immigration officials in post-Second World War Canada navigated our country’s multiculturalism, focused as it was on markers of middle-class traits, to succeed and, simultaneously, inequitably.

For even heavier fare, try *Commodity Politics: Contesting Responsibility in Cameroon* from authors Adam Sneyd, Steffi Imann, 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 monarch 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 McGill-Queen’s University Press, a thought-provoking delight.

And What We Can Do About It,* by the late Trinidadian-Canadian painter Denyse 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.”

Trevor Greenway, the editor of the paper, broke the story. The Quebec provincial law bans religious symbols worn by government employees deemed to be in positions of authority while at work, so Anvari, who wears a hijab, was removed from her position. Outpourings of support have come from around the country with think-pieces and articles questioning the law and its application. The Low Down took a more human approach to the story as well, featuring the teacher front and centre, while also exploring her “hopeful” feelings as well as the “heartwarming” reaction she’s received exploring her “hopeful” feelings as well as the “heartwarming” reaction she’s received.

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.”
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.

Continued on page P8

“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 rights, Liberal MPs told Canadians.

The law is popular in Quebec and Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) have spoken carefully when asked about the law, reluctant to put pressure on New Brunswick for failing to improve access to abortion. The government is 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 J.C. Lavoie, in which the federal government intended to protect the Quebec based construction company from criminal prosecution on fraud charges, shook the Trudeau government in its 2019 federal election. If the Liberal Party had lost that election, that scandal would have been a key reason.

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, in both federal and provincial races.

According to a mid-September poll by Léger, 35 per cent of Canadians supported Bill 21 while 27 per cent opposed it. In comparison, 78 per cent of Quebecers in the rest of the country were in favour of Bill 21 and 52 per cent against it. Quebecers came out in mid-September and had a margin of error of plus or minus 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 the official Opposition on how Bill 21 is trampling on the rights of their fellow Canadians.

He said Trudeau’s passionate Dec. 15 Question Period exchange with Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.) made it clear the Liberal Party strongly opposes Bill 21.

“Ultimately, it is a decision of the Quebec government’s to remove this legislation, and it’s up to the Quebec provincial government to reconsider their position on this law,” said Zuberi.

“Racism and bigotry have no place in Canada,” said the 42-year-old MP who represents the Pierrefonds-Dollard riding in the province. He drew attention to the inherent inequality and racism embedded in Bill 21.
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.

Continued from page 4 on the government during the last mandate, the cabinet committee agenda was 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 keep things moving, said Carlene Varian, an associate vice-president at Summa Strategies and a former Liberal cabinet aide with past roles including 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 work of the cabinet. The list included two 14-member cabinet committees for “economy, inclusion and climate,” which were divided into an A and B team.

The climate A committee is chaired by Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.), and the chair is expected to include a minister. The economic committee is Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.). The mandates for both committees, which are identical worded, state they are expected to consider “issues as sustainable and inclusive social and economic development, post-COVID-19 recovery, decarbonization, and the environment as well as improving the health and quality of life of Canadians.”

Varian 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 needs to 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 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 getting the attention of the cabinet committee they think will serve their constituency," said Varian. "I think everyone 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 overlap.

"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 it did say that policy changes will deliver results for Canadians by accelerating action on the government’s platforms and 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 builds a cleaner, greener future," said the statement emailed to The Hill Times by Cecily Roy, a PMO press secretary.

Varian 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 Parliament, which was perhaps a reaction to 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 agenda," she said. "It would becredible to speculate that this might be an effort to cut down on the workload a little bit, and also bring in an even wider spectrum of perspectives to those 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 cabinet committee was divided into two groups to allow faster work on the climate committees.

"I think from a lobbyist perspective, we’ll always be curious to try and find out … which committee a particular initiative may be going through," she said. "It’s difficult to know if the two committees are a different approach, but the motivation is based on the priority that the government has on those issues, and that the climate lens has to be applied to everything. The reason people know, I understand, is that so we don’t get bottlenecks and things more."

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; and 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.

Varian described the mandate letters as dense and “extremely ambitious.”

Qualtrough’s mandate letter said that she expects to seek out 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 workplace 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 towards the goal of being a world leader in clean technology, including by partnering with post-secondary institutions and indigenous organizations to accelerate development of 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 “economic policy” responsibilities.

Social policy relates to health and inclusivity in society, and economic policy relates to economic development, although the two policy areas can overlap, according to Brown.

Social policy-oriented departments include health, employment and social development, Canadian heritage, and Indigenous services, as well as related policy areas such as gender, seniors, families, and sport, according to Brown. In contrast, economic policy-oriented departments include innovation, science and economic development, agriculture, natural resources, transport, and the regional development agencies, he said.

"The ‘bones’ of the two committees could be divided between economic and social policy decisions, but the work may overlap, according to Brown. As an example, housing issues could 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 is responsible for Canada’s innovation and science and industry. That does kind of suggest that A, perhaps, is focusing more on environmental policy, policy B on the economic policy, but with license to run into each other. I don’t know."

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 created, there are at least two female ministers as a chair or a vice-chair, with the exception of the climate B committee, she noted.

“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 includes those you trust there,” she said. “One of the busiest guys in Ottawa for the next several years, according to Varyian. LeBlanc is listed as a member on six cabinet committees, which is more than any other minister. LeBlanc is chair of the committee of the prime minister, 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.”

"I think that the heavy assignment load he’s been given on cabinet committees reflects a reflection of the trust and confidence that the prime minister has in Domi-nic LeBlanc and Brown. He is very long-time confident and close friend of his for several decades," said Varyian. "The list of parliamentarians that he knows personally probably means that you’re not necessarily going to be everywhere at once, and the next best thing is to have someone who can do that.”

新闻

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

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

Churchill River MP Fergus and former minister of digital government Oliphant were sworn in as privy councillors on Dec. 10, 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.”

Delcourt suggested that Fergus and Oliphant’s swearing-in means they will have access to cabinet documents. “The digital component of this is going to be that much more important,” said Ashten Arsenault, a vice-president at Crestview Strategy and former minister of digital government.

“Fergus and Oliphant are the perfect people for stephen harper’s conservative government, that said assigning those roles to Fergus and Oliphant is a mark of respect for what they’ve been doing in previous roles. I think they just wanted to do it because they recognize that Fergus and Oliphant are the right people for this position.”

“Fergus and Oliphant have been instrumental in helping to advance the government’s agenda on digital transformation, and they have been very effective in making sure that the digital component of this is going to be that much more important.”

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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.

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, Freeland told us, “roaring back” with more than a million new jobs and a soaring 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 investments 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 probably 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, and 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 the 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 need an independent economic council that will provide us with the better 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.
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 Hill Times

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.

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“Stuff that concerned me was that there weren’t a lot of budgetary constraints that we could hold the government accountable to in this pandemic,” said Page. “There’s 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-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 higher 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.

“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 inflationary spike, which in last month at 4.7 percent—the highest level since 2013—Giroux said the government “can’t do anything” to ramp down temporary supports during the pandemic at a faster pace.

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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 semi-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 issue to ensure that they don’t offend Quebecers. But, earlier this month, they came under the spotlight after a Chelsea, Que., Grade 3 teacher Salomé 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 in 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. But, earlier this month, they came under the spotlight after a Chelsea, Que., Grade 3 teacher Salomé Anvari was removed from her role and reassigned to an administrative position.

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.

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, says expert.” 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 can 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—it’s 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.

Steve Colombo
Ecoview Consulting
Tecumseh, Ont.
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

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 of a total and complete disaster. 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 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.

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 move 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 rolling 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 management of 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 Mr. Chrystia Freeland as the inflation minister, most Canadians still don’t think the minister fits. As there is an inflationary pressure worldwide, it is pretty hard to hang that problem on a single minister. 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 rebuild 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 stop staking their hopes on reports about their team. The current messaging is so fixated on the leader that it is hard to imagine anyone else in the party who is able to guide the party back to a winning path.

Voters are looking for a political breakthrough—through in Ontario, where 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.

The Hill Times

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

Oakville, 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.

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 ashes 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 currently himself in the public domain with a strong election effort.

So why is it that Trudeau isn’t suffering a similar Biden-like polling Gotterdammerung? 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 seemingly never-ending COVID and inflation. 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 move 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 rolling inside the party, his freedom as a leader is certainly curtailed.

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The Hill Times

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 evacuation 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 debate marks 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 a devastating failure.

Another problem for Biden in his reality, is the left-wing of his Democratic Party led by “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 that 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 a party that puts political pragmatism ahead of progressive ideology.

So, yes, 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 Joe Biden, but in political terms, he governs in an alternate political universe. In short, Trudeau benefits from Canada’s less fervent political mood.

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

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.
**Letters to the Editor**

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

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, writes Grace Egan, a policy adviser at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Photograph courtesy of Pvizbay.

**Infrastructure investments critical to successful development in Canada’s North**

Infrastructure investments critical to successful development in Canada’s North were described in the government’s 2021 fiscal update as a “toolkit” to help reduce reliance on costly and high-emitting fossil fuels, Off-grids 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 users in the next generation of technologies.

Electricity production for Nunavut currently depends on diesel and while its four 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

**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 orphaned and injured wildlife, including eagles, falcons, hawks, 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. Making 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.

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

Opinion

OTTAWA—Elementary school teacher Fatemeh Anvari was forced out of her classroom in Chelsea because she wore 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 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 amauti, 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 25 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 knowl edge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.

The Hill Times
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.

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 overreaction 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. But, strategically wise or not, many Canadians, including some Quebeckers, 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 appointed by many Liberals and media: Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland. She 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 then taking that job away from the military; and, last week, issuing a genuine apology to past and present victims.

What this idle musings fail to take into account, of course, is whether Anand, or any other of the prime minister’s suspected to run as a no-nonsense communicator, the The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade
courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

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

Michael Harris

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.’

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 ambassadors 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 practices.

As for the Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzingers of the world, no points for honesty or ethics. Sixty-three per cent of Republicans want Trump to remain a major national political figure. If you asked people 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

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 damming 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 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 judicial 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

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 non-fossil share of electricity production, stuck at 15 per cent for so long, was 17 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 2028? 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 a far from 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.’

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Minister Anita Anand
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Québécois, the Green Party, and
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Dec. 3, on the best and worst of
get a better sense for the issues of
All Politics Poll survey to
to this year's survey, which was

t Presidential victory in September, once

cabinet on Oct. 26, moving Anand
prime minister announced his new
mension was one of the fiercest critics
in Ottawa and across
August 2020.
2019:...
LeBlanc, Fortier, Mendicino, Gould picked as most approachable cabinet ministers in 2021

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 Ran:
1. Mark Carney
2. Catherine McKenna
3. Lisa Raitt, Peter Mackay, Ralph Goodale

Favourite Up-and-Comers in the House:
1. Arielle Kayabaga
2. Julia Amos, Matthew Green, Pierre Poilievre, Raquel Dancho
3. Eric Duncan, Francis Drouin, Josie Lightbody, Marc-ien, Melissa Lanthan, Mike Moore, 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 Comebacks:
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 change
2. Economy
3. COVID

Issues Not Being Addressed:
1. Climate change
2. Housing
3. Poverty

Politics 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
3. 'Indian' in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power

Best Political Podcasts:
1. Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics
2. Public Finance National Security and Defence, Legal and Constitutional Affairs
3. 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. Public Finance National Security and Defence, Legal and Constitutional Affairs
3. National Finance, Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs and International Trade

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. The election
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
3. National Finance, Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Worst in 2021:

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

Canadian Armed Forces. Former heritage minister and now Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault finished second, followed by Development Minister Harjit Sajjan, left, topped the list of worst cabinet ministers in 2021. Former Matthew Green, top right, and Conservative MPs Pierre Poilievre and Raquel Dancho, bottom middle

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

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’ArcyMcGuigan’s, JOHY Rideau, and Taverns on the Hill in a four-way tie for third.

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 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

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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. Julia Amos, Matthew Green, Pierre Poilievre, Raquel Dancho
3. Eric Duncan, Francis Drouin, Josie Lightbody, Marc-ien, Melissa Lanthan, Mike Moore, 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 Comebacks:
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:
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Alex Marland offers 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 parity in legislatures. An intriguing chapter is “Black Women’s Hair Matters,” by Nadia Brown. The chapter is “Black Women’s Hair Matters,” by Nadia Brown.


Back when I was an undergraduate student at Carleton University, I took a course in Canadian federalism that included some heavy concentration on the Royal Commission on Dominion–Provincial Relations, which was constituted in 1954. I am struck that this body’s work is the subject of The Wollaston–Stroosom Commission and the Remaking of Canadian Federalism (UBC Press), by Robert Wardhaugh and Barry Fe如此. 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 how the groundwork for the federal government becoming officially bilingual. What is so curious about The Fate of Canada is that it is shaped around excerpts of the journal of poet F.R. Scott. It also took notes about the commission’s work.

Books are a must-read for anyone interested in Canadian politics, 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.

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 Michael McGregor, pays homage to the late University of Western Ontario professor. Across Boundaries brings together scholars looking at how success happens, how governments engage with each other, and how policies 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 Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments Shape Political Engagement (MQUP) by Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant and Peter de Geus. 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 election. Likewise, Electing a Mega-Mayor: Toronto 2014, by McGregor, Aaron Moore, and Laura Stephenson uses survey data to understand municipal voters.


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The Hill Times’ 100 Best Books in 2021


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


5. China Unbound: A New World Order and the Shaping of Canadian Nation-Making, by Benjamin Zyla and Laura B. Stephenson, University of Toronto Press, 488 pp., $34.95.

6. Call Me Indian: Asians in Canadian Memoir, edited by Flora MacDonald and Geoffrey Stevens, University of Toronto Press, 256 pp., $34.95.

7. Call Me Indian: Asians in Canadian Memoir, edited by Flora MacDonald and Geoffrey Stevens, University of Toronto Press, 256 pp., $34.95.


10. Open Federalism Revisited: Re-reading Federalism after the ID-19 Pandemic, by Peter H. Russell, University of Toronto Press, 312 pp., $89.95.


17. Pandemic Spotlight: Canadian Doctors at the Front of the COVID-19 Fight, by Ian Hamonacing, Douglas & Mc Intyre, 206 pp., $12.95.


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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 enmeshed in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, testifying 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 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.

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.”

I wanted to get across as best I could, how cabinet govern- ment works: what are some of the techniques and the tradecraft involved in cabinet government. And so the three perspectives that would be useful would be the prime minister, who chairs cabinet; being a minister; and then the aspects of being a deputy minister that involve supporting a minister in a cabinet government. There are other dimensions to being a prime minister; there’s other dimensions to being a minister, and there’s certainly other dimensions to being a deputy minister, but the core of my book is about... Canada’s model of cabinet gov- ernment, and how it works.”

Prime Minister Trudeau kept Chrystia Freeland as deputy prime minister and finance minister in his new cabinet. You devoted a couple of pages of your book to some of the pitfalls that come with appointing a deputy prime minister and Minister Freeland 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 at 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, and implementable policies and programs.

The work of the 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’?

“Well, I mean, I’ve given inter- views and written about things in my book, and I’ve op-ed writers who can give those kinds of perspectives to have a resource written third-person, indirect. And I thought it might be a contribution that would be useful would be a watchful eye on a number of decisions moving forward and stop it from derailing 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?

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**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)

Contact Lakshmi Krishnamurthi for a trial.  
Lakshmi Krishnamurthi, Subscriptions and Licensing Executive  
613-263-3013 • lkrish@hilltimes.com
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 and 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 protestors 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 will go away. And I made a very conscious and mindful decision to use that spotlight to talk about these issues.

“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.”

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—are 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.”
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.

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 LGBT2Q 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 gender justice pursued at a level, pace, and sophistication Canada has not yet known.

Paulette Senior

Opinion

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We need it baked into federal mandate letters, and we need it urgently. Not just for a handful of departments, but every department, 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
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. 29, 2021, on her way to the Conservative national caucus meeting in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building.
Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, pictured Nov. 22, 2021, on the first day of the new session of Parliament.

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

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

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


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.


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

Canada’s Chief of Defence Staff Wayne Eyre, pictured on Nov. 23, 2021, on his way into a cabinet meeting.
Defending democracy and confronting aggressors

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

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.

Andrew Meade photographs by The Hill Times
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 she worked as a protocol adviser for the City of Ottawa for 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.

Patel 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 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.

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 Élisabeth Brière, who represents Sherbrooke, Que., having started there after working on Brière’s successful 2019 election campaign.

Continued on page 30
Caldwell takes over as Bennett’s new comms head

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 (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.

Minister O’Regan adds to his team

Labour Minister Seamus O’Regan has added four more names to his new ministerial staff roster as 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 minister Kamal Khera 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 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 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 Van Drie is a senior policy adviser to Seamus O’Regan. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

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.

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The Hill Times

Laura Ryckewaert

Hill Climbers
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 Meadle

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 practical 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 percent 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 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.

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.
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our subscribers,
advertisers, partners,
and readers.

We wish you good
health and
good news.

Happy Holidays and
Happy New Year,
from everyone at
*The Hill Times*!