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NEWS

If snap election happened, Conservatives would win 141 seats and Liberals 139, say Fournier and Nanos

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals should be worried that the progressive vote is not united behind them at this time, and this will be the key deciding factor in the next election.

BY ABBAS RANA

If an election were to happen now, the Conservatives and the Liberals would end up with almost the same number of seats, a political deadlock where two of the three parties from the NDP, Bloc Québécois and the Green Party would hold the balance of power.

According to polling aggregator Philippe Fournier, who runs the website 338Canada.com, if an



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. If a federal election were to happen now, the Liberals and the Conservatives would end up in a political deadlock, say Philippe Fournier and Nik Nanos. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade/illustration by Neena Singhal

NEWS

Canada needs to do more to support extremely vulnerable Afghan refugees in Pakistan who fear being detained and deported, say refugees and advocates

BY CHELSEA NASH

After reports of Pakistan jailing and deporting undocumented Afghans emerged at the end of 2022, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is facing pressure to do more for Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban to Canada.

One Afghan refugee who fled the Taliban after working for a Global Affairs Canada-funded initiative for the empowerment of women and girls said she is terrified to leave the house she is staying at with her four children for fear of being stopped by Pakistan police, detained, and deported back to Afghanistan. Sadia—whose real name *The Hill Times* is not using to protect her identity—said in a phone interview that

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Chelsea Nash

Heard On The Hill

Federal party leaders get poor grades for their records on fighting hate



The group Canadians United Against Hate graded each of the federal party leaders on their efforts to fight hate and defend human rights in 2022: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (D), Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (F), Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (F), and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (C-). *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

One anti-hate organization has given federal party leaders poor marks when it comes to their records on fighting hate and defending human rights in 2022, with Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** and Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves François-Blanchet** both failing every category of the evaluation.

Canadians United Against Hate, a national grassroots activist group founded by **Fareed Khan**, issued an end-of-year report card to each of the party leaders.

“Canada’s federal party leaders have shown that their commitment to fighting hate and racism is weak or at times non-existent when push comes to shove, and that they will support the Charter rights of Canadians only when it is politically convenient,” said Khan in the press release he issued along with the report.

The leaders were evaluated in their commitment to a federal anti-hate strategy, addressing systemic racism, supporting Indigenous rights, fighting white supremacy, defending Charter

rights, and Quebec’s Bill 21 and 96—its secularism and language laws.

Poilievre received Fs across the board when it came to his record on fighting hate and supporting human rights, with the report citing the Conservative Party’s history of playing ‘footsies’ with white supremacists.

Blanchet, too, failed in all categories, with the report skewering the BQ leader for favouring “a toxic ethno-nationalism and French language supremacy in Quebec” over the rights of marginalized groups, including religious minorities, as the report took Blanchet’s unwavering support for Quebec’s Bill 21 into account.

For that matter, each of the federal leaders were given Fs on the issue of Quebec’s Bill 21.

“While claiming to be against Quebec’s Bill 21 law, **Justin Trudeau’s** Liberals have done nothing as a government to challenge it in the courts or to support private groups that have mounted Constitutional challenges to the law, despite the fact that people’s lives are being torn apart by it,” the report reads in its evaluation of the prime minister.

Despite earning Bs and Cs in other categories, NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** also failed on Bill 21. His overall score of C- was the highest overall score among the leaders, which did not include

Green Party Leader **Elizabeth May** or her co-leader **Jonathan Pedneault**.

Singh himself scored highest in the “supporting Indigenous rights” category, where he was awarded a B+.

“Of all the parties the NDP has been consistent when it comes to Indigenous rights and the relationship that Canada must have with Indigenous people,” the report reads.

Singh was given a B- when it came to fighting white supremacy, losing marks for failing to use his party’s balance of power position in Parliament to pressure the Liberal government to act, and received Cs in other categories.

Overall, Trudeau received a D. His highest mark was, like Singh, in the supporting Indigenous rights category, a C. That should hardly be considered a win, though, as his track record on this issue was seen to be hypocritical.

Trudeau got Ds in each of the categories dealing with racism and white supremacy. The Trudeau government was commended for its efforts in designating groups like the Proud Boys as terrorist entities, and for sponsoring summits on Islamophobia, but the report called for more concrete action rather than the symbolism the government engages in on this issue.

David E. Smith, ‘an absolute giant in Canadian political science,’ dies

David E. Smith, the illustrious Canadian scholar and Donner Prize-winning author, died on Jan. 2 at the age of 86 at his home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. Constitutional expert **Emmett Macfar-**

lane called him a “an absolute giant in Canadian political science,” on Twitter and said Smith wrote the leading books on the Crown in Canada, the Senate, the House of Commons, federalism, the opposition, and more. Macfarlane, a political science professor and an award-winning author in his own right, said Smith’s work “remains vital” for those studying the institutions of government. “He was also exceptionally gracious and kind to everyone, especially junior scholars (I was a junior scholar when I first met him). I will miss getting to chat with him. Condolences to his family and friends,” Macfarlane wrote.

Smith’s book, *The People’s House of Commons: Theories of Democracy in Contention*, won the Donner Prize for the best book in Canadian public policy in 2007. His book, *Across the Aisle: Opposition in Canadian Politics*, won the Canada Prize in Social Sciences in 2014. He was also an Officer of the Order of Canada, a member of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, according to his obituary. His friends, colleagues, and former students have also established the David E. Smith Memorial Scholarship in Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Donations can be made at www.usask.ca/give.

Patrick Doyle, former *Toronto Star* Hill reporter, dies

Patrick Doyle, 79, former *Toronto Star* Hill reporter during the **Brian Mulroney** years, died on Dec. 15, 2022, at the Ottawa Civic Hospital of



Patrick Doyle. Photograph courtesy of Facebook

Myelodysplastic syndrome, according to his obituary. Doyle was also a reporter for the *Montreal Gazette*, CBC Radio, CBC TV, and a public servant. More recently, he worked as a psychotherapist at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre and served on advisory and governing boards, including Concordia University’s School of Community and Public Affairs, St. Paul University, the Children’s Aid Society, and the Clinical Hypnosis Society of Canada. Doyle was a large man and cut an imposing figure on the Hill in scrums back in the 1990s. His personal motto was “humour in the face of adversity,” and, his final request in lieu of flowers was “to take someone you care about to dinner, and tell them you love them.” His family is planning a remembrance at a later date, according to his obit.

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Monday’s photo

That’s not good:

Minister of Foreign Affairs **Mélanie Joly**, pictured in an animated conversation with Liberal MP **Bardish Chagger**, chair of the House Affairs Committee in the West Block on Dec. 13, 2022. Joly was called before the committee to answer questions about China’s alleged interference in Canada’s 2019 federal election.

The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



My new year's predictions for reconciliation

This year will also be about growing recognition that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples are doing some amazing things that benefit all Canadians. This is the year that Canadians start to lean on the leadership of Indigenous peoples.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—I looked to the ravens and I talked with the bears and this is what they told me.

Okay, that's not entirely accurate. Elder Woody Morrison said that the past is in front of us, the future is behind us. Imagine standing knee-deep in a river and looking downriver—that is the past and we can see it. But the future is behind us like the current rushing towards our back, we can't see it. So making predictions is full of risk and fun.

This year will be about the recognition that the departments of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Services Canada are not the best options to lead reconciliation. There is a stable force within the *Department of Indian Affairs* (whatever it happens to be called today) that believes Indigenous peoples lack the capacity, and are unable to manage themselves and will forever need the 'sophisticated' direction of knowledgeable policy leaders. This year will be the one in which this myth is named for what it is: pure and unadulterated racism. If anybody in the federal government wants to make real progress in reconciliation, then go ahead and do it in your department. Don't wait for the nay-sayers in *Indian Affairs* to stop progress or block your moral obligation to do better for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people this year.

This year will be about public outrage about the lack of improvement in First Nations and Inuit well-being, despite many news releases of federal funding programs of hundreds of millions of dollars. Beware of funding announcements as the sum



Indigenous women, pictured Feb. 24, 2020, protesting against the the Coastal GasLink pipeline which will run from Dawson Creek through the Rockies, and through First Nations' land, to Kitimat where the gas will be exported. 'Maybe 2023 is the year in which Canada realizes it is really an Indigenous federation,' writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

announced never gets fully dispersed to the communities who need it. For every million dollars in funding announced, the

first \$400,000 goes to Indigenous Services Canada's own salary and benefits, communications, building maintenance and the

like. Keep in mind that those very salaries, benefits, and building maintenance are rarely covered in said funding for recipient First Nations. Imagine trying to run a community health clinic without the funds for a building or its maintenance, or reasonable funds to compete to hire staff in a competitive market. When you try to write a proposal for construction, some of those 6,800 employees in Indigenous Services Canada tie you down in years-long processes and hoops.

This year will be the year that Canadians will start to advocate loudly for Indigenous well-being like they care. Because Canadians do care, deeply. It may come as quite the surprise to some decision-makers in this fair city of Ottawa that inequitable funding for Indigenous well-being will no longer be acceptable. It may come as quite a shock to some departments that the tens and tens of steps to release some funding to Indigenous recipients will be outed as racist.

Why do Indigenous recipients have more oversight than any other Canadian recipient? When it smells like differential services/restrictions based on race, then it's institutional racism. It has been like that for decades, and the only thing that will change it is public outrage.

This year will also be about growing recognition that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples are doing some amazing things that benefit all Canadians. From Métis National Council President Cassidy Caron showing what exemplary leadership can do, to the T'Sou-ke First Nation on Vancouver Island having the most solar energy by a community, to Siila Watt-Cloutier leading on climate change based in Inuit knowledge, to Governor General Mary Simon leading us all with grace. This is the year that Canadians start to lean on the leadership of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Maybe 2023 is the year in which Canada realizes it is really an Indigenous federation.

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

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News

Conservative Party's outreach chair Khanna to duke it out with Conservative MP MacKenzie's daughter Tait and former senior ministerial staffer Roth in the coveted riding of Oxford, Ont., nomination

Deborah Tait, daughter of outgoing Conservative MP Dave MacKenzie, says she does not know if Arpan Khanna has any ties with Oxford, Ont., and says it will be 'very difficult' for a 'parachute candidate' to win the riding.

BY ABBAS RANA



The Conservative Party's outreach chair Arpan Khanna; Woodstock city-county councillor Deb Tait; and vice-president of Global Public Affairs Rick Roth are seeking the Conservative nomination in the safe and coveted riding of Oxford, Ont. Photographs courtesy of Twitter, City of Woodstock and Global Public Affairs

The safe and coveted Conservative rural riding of Oxford, Ont., will open up on Jan. 28, but already a divisive political brawl is brewing among Conservative candidates seeking their party's nomination.

After serving as an MP for 18 years, Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, Ont.) announced last month that he would step down from his seat on Jan. 28. MacKenzie's daughter, Deb Tait, who is a longtime Woodstock, Ont., city-county councillor, has thrown her hat in the ring. Arpan Khanna, national outreach chair for the Conservative Party, who ran unsuccessfully in Brampton North, Ont., in the 2019 election, is planning on challenging Tait for the nomination, and so is Rick Roth, a former senior ministerial staffer who now is the vice-president of strategic communications at Global Public Affairs.

In a brief interview with *The Hill Times*, Khanna, a practising lawyer in Mississauga, Ont., confirmed that he was "definitely looking into" seeking the nomination in the riding. After this confirmation, Khanna said he would call back, but did not do so by deadline.

Tait, in an interview with *The Hill Times*, raised questions if Khanna has any ties with the riding. She said she briefly met with him at a Punjabi community event in Woodstock, but did not talk about the nomination contest.

She predicted that a "parachute candidate" would not receive a positive response from the riding.

"I don't think it's [going to be] a very positive reaction," she said. "We've had parachute candidates from other parties, and the reaction back from the constitu-

ents here has not been positive. It doesn't matter what party it is, it's just not a riding that you parachute into."

Tait argued that nomination meetings are all about personally knowing community members and the riding association members and being involved in community issues. Without this, she said, it will be a serious challenge for candidates from outside of the riding to sign memberships for the nomination contest.

Roth told *The Hill Times* that he moved to the riding when he was three years old and left after 16 years to go to university. He said he did all his pre-university schooling in the riding and played hockey there, too. Roth's father, a medical doctor, has been running a family medicine clinic in the riding for about three decades. Currently, he lives in Toronto along with his wife because of work reasons. Roth said that he would leave it up to candidates to explain their ties to the riding to the constituents.

After learning last month that MacKenzie would be stepping down as the MP, Roth's been campaigning in the riding for the nomination election. The Conservative Party will fix a nomination date after the riding opens up on Jan. 28. Roth said that prior to the start of the leadership election, the Conservative riding association had a membership of 400. During the leadership, it went up to 3,500—a high number for a rural riding—and the numbers will go up even more now that different candidates are signing up new members.

"I've got a variety of friends and fellow Conservative activists helping and obviously that's why I'm here in the riding to grow that team and to kind grow our reach into Woodstock and Ingersoll and kind of all the communities in between," said Roth. "And nominations by and large [are] a poll of all of your friends and contacts over a couple of decades in politics."

Roth served as director of communications to then-foreign affairs minister John Baird and to then-international trade minister Ed Fast's (Abbotsford, B.C.) office. In Doug Ford's Ontario cabinet, Roth served as chief of staff to then-Ontario environment minister Rod Phillips.

To prepare for the nomination election, which is expected to be

a nail-biter, Tait said she has also been signing up as many members as she can.

"I have a campaign manager and we're working on that," said Tait. "It's a very difficult battle for [someone who has no ties with the riding] to come in and try and sell memberships, because that's ultimately what the nomination meeting is about: Knowing the members and getting those people to vote for you."

The Oxford riding is a solid Conservative one. The nomination is expected to be hotly contested because the winner will be virtually guaranteed a seat in the House.

In 2019, Khanna ran unsuccessfully against Liberal MP

Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Ont.). In that election, he publicly apologized for making a homophobic remark on social media when he was a student.

Khanna served as Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's (Carleton, Ont.) Ontario co-chair in his successful leadership bid. In the Stephen Harper cabinet, he served a ministerial staffer under Jason Kenney who played a key role in the Conservative Party's outreach to visible minority communities.

MacKenzie, a seven-term MP, was first elected to the House in 2004, and won every election since with comfortable double-digit margins. Prior to 2004, then Liberal MP John Finlay represented the riding from 1993 to 2004.

Meanwhile, at least two other byelections are expected to take place this year: one in Winnipeg South Centre, Man., and the other in Calgary Heritage, Alta.

The riding of Winnipeg South Centre opened up after the recent death of three-term Liberal MP and former cabinet minister Jim Carr. Going back to the 1988 election, the Liberals have held this riding with the exception of the 2011 election when the Conservatives won a majority government. Carr's son, Ben Carr, confirmed with *The Hill Times* that he is considering running, but has not made a final decision.

The riding of Calgary Heritage opened up after Conservative MP Bob Benzen stepped down last month. Benzen won a byelection in 2017 following former prime minister Stephen Harper's resignation. Shuvaloy Majumdar, a former ministerial staffer in the Harper cabinet who now works for Harper & Associates, an international consulting firm, is one of the leading candidates for this nomination. Quinn Heffron, a former Conservative Hill staffer, is also seeking his party's nomination in this riding.

After a riding becomes vacant, the prime minister has six months to call a byelection and the writ period has to be between 36-50 days. Even though these three ridings have opened up at different times, all three byelections will likely happen on the same day. Political insiders don't expect any major surprise in the outcome of these byelections.

"Winnipeg South Centre is going to almost [certainly] stay Liberal," said Nelson Wiseman, a professor of political science at the University of Toronto. "And the other two ridings strike me as fairly solid Conservative ridings. So, I don't think we should expect anything different."

In the coming months, more MPs could announce their plans to step down as this could be an election year and all MPs elected in 2015 are eligible for their parliamentary pensions. The parliamentary pension requires a minimum of six years of parliamentary service.

In this Parliament, so far, only one byelection has been held—Mississauga-Lakeshore, Ont.—in which the Liberals were the incumbents and carried the riding. In the last Parliament, two byelections—Toronto Centre and York Centre—took place, both Liberal held, and Liberals were able to win both.

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The riding of Winnipeg South Centre, Man., opened up last month after the death of three-term Liberal MP and former cabinet minister Jim Carr. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada needs to do more to support extremely vulnerable Afghan refugees in Pakistan who fear being detained and deported, say refugees and advocates

A spokesperson for IRCC says the department is aware of media reports of arrests of undocumented Afghans in Pakistan and that it is 'working with Global Affairs Canada to confirm the details of the situation on the ground.'

Continued from page 1

she is nearly out of money to buy food, to see a doctor, and hasn't been able to pay rent for the one room she and her children have been living in for four months.

"We are playing between life and death. If we have [to continue] in this condition, we will die," Sadia said, explaining her family cannot sustain the level of stress they are currently living under, compounded by their lack of food.

"I don't know why the Canadian government isn't taking SIM applicants [seriously]," she said, referring to the Special Immigration Measures program Canada established as a route for Afghans who worked for Canada on the ground in Afghanistan to come to Canada as refugees after the Taliban took over the country in August 2021. Sadia worked for the Women Enterprise, Advocacy, and Training (WEAT) program, which was a five-year women's empowerment program funded by Global Affairs Canada. She said her manager at that program came to Canada in Oct. 2021 via the SIM stream, but she and other staff are still waiting.

Sadia has submitted her information to IRCC to be considered under the SIM stream, but has not yet received an invitation to apply. That program is now winding down as the government has very nearly reached its quota. Sadia said if she cannot come to Canada, she is at a loss for what she will do.

Sadia said the Taliban have her name on a "death list" for her work with the Canadian government, and said she would be killed if she returned.

"I cannot go back," she said, sounding emotional, as children could be heard in the background. At the same time, the room she is currently living in already feels



In a letter to Immigration Minister Sean Fraser, pictured scrumming with reporters on the Hill at the end of 2022, NDP MP Jenny Kwan voiced her concern about Afghan refugees in Pakistan. She has yet to receive a reply, she said. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

like a jail, she said, because she won't leave for fear of Pakistan police.

A spokesperson for IRCC noted the most recent statement from the Pakistan government was that it would not arrest people fleeing the situation in Afghanistan. In a statement, IRCC's Stuart Isherwood said the department is aware of media reports of arrests of undocumented Afghans in Pakistan and that it is "working with Global Affairs Canada to confirm the details of the situation on the ground."

On Dec. 23, 2022, IRCC told the *Toronto Star* that Pakistan had assured the Canadian government it would not arrest or deport Afghans.

"The government of Pakistan has indicated that the only enforcement action that could be taken against foreigners overstaying their visas will be the re-imposition of fines and potentially being blacklisted from returning to Pakistan," IRCC spokesperson Isabelle Dubois told the *Star*.

But on Dec. 29, international media, including the Associated Press, revealed that Pakistani police had conducted raids and detained at least 1,200 Afghan nationals without valid travel documents. Those detained included women and children, according to news reports.

Pakistan initially said it was giving undocumented foreigners an amnesty period until Dec. 31, 2022, before it would start detaining and deporting those without documentation or a clear pathway to leaving the country.

If Afghans can prove that they have plans to leave the country—such as a case number with a third country's immigration department—they are at a

lesser risk of being arrested and deported.

That's why it's so important for IRCC to at least respond to refugees who have submitted their information to IRCC to come to Canada, says NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.), her party's immigration critic and one of a handful of MPs who have been advocating for Afghan refugees since the Taliban took over that country.

Kwan, who is in contact with a network of people trying to help Afghans who assisted Canada, including some Canadian veterans, said Pakistan's actions have only escalated an already intense and precarious situation for Afghans in Pakistan.

"There are people who just walked out because they have to come out of hiding to get food and get necessities. And some of them have been stopped, and have been asked for documentation, and if they're not able to produce it, they have to find ways to bribe the officials, you know, so that they don't end up either being deported or put in jail," she said.

Kwan wrote an open letter to Immigration Minister Sean Fraser (Central Nova, N.S.) on Dec. 21, 2022, 10 days before Pakistan's amnesty deadline of Dec. 31, urging the minister to take action.

She says her letter, which was accompanied by screenshots of messages with Afghan refugees in Pakistan stating they were hearing about police raids, went unanswered as of Jan. 5.

"Reports of the increasing dangers for Afghans trying to flee the persecution of the Taliban has reached a fever pitch," Kwan wrote in her letter.

She wrote that people in Pakistan advised her that a hotel that

was being used as a temporary residence for some Afghans who have applied through Canada's Special Immigration Measures stream was raided by Pakistani police who were looking for people with expired visas.

Amanda Moddejonge, a Canadian Forces veteran who has been assisting Afghan refugees since the fall of Afghanistan in 2021, said she and five other people are personally financially supporting one refugee, Mustafa, and his family in Pakistan, and have advised him not to leave his room. *The Hill Times* is only using Mustafa's first name to protect his identity.

Mustafa, who worked with Canadian Forces in Afghanistan and does have an open case file number with IRCC, is still concerned he will be deported. Like Sadia, he is unable to work and is running out of funds. He lives in one bedroom with his wife, their three small children, and his brother.

"He had been stopped repeatedly before Dec. 16. And so we finally just said to him, 'Mustafa, stay in your house. Do not leave unless you absolutely have to.' He hasn't. He has not left his house since Christmas," she said.

"If he goes out again, they have told them, 'we're going to deport you,'" Moddejonge said.

Moddejonge said she has been trying to get Mustafa into International Organization for Migration (IOM) housing, where he will be safer. IOM housing is for refugees who are waiting for their applications to be completed so they can depart to their final destination. But a lack of resources means there's no spots available, so he remains living in precarity, Moddejonge said.

In his statement to *The Hill Times*, IRCC's Isherwood said the government has already moved thousands of Afghans through Pakistan to Canada, and that it continues to process applications as quickly as possible, having added more employees and resources at its foreign offices, including in Islamabad.

"We are navigating an extremely complex situation and there are significant challenges chartering flights in some regions. In addition to each individual requiring the permission of the Government of Pakistan to exit the country, each charter flight requires similar permission from Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan sets its own entry and exit requirements and determines when and if these requirements are changed," Isherwood said.

He noted that, to date, more than 28,345 Afghans have arrived in Canada, out of the 40,000 Canada intends to bring here.

Isherwood said he could not state how many Afghans with pending IRCC applications remain in Pakistan due to security concerns.

"Canada has and will continue to advocate for streamlined procedures and strengthened protections for vulnerable Afghans while working with the Government of Pakistan to facilitate the safe passage of Canada-bound Afghan refugees," Isherwood's statement said.

Kwan and Moddejonge also called for Canada's quota of 40,000 Afghan refugees to be extended as the government appears to be closing in on its limit of refugees, while some who first contacted the department in August 2021 still await a response or acknowledgement of receipt.

Through the Special Immigration Measures program, Canada has committed to resettling 18,000 Afghans whose "employment involved a significant and/or enduring relationship with the Government of Canada." That employment could have been, but is not limited to, those who provided interpreter services for the Canadian Armed Forces, or who worked as local staff at Canada's former embassy in Kabul.

Under that program, the government website states it has received 17,055 applications, and processed 11,270 of those, meaning it has 5,785 applications yet to be processed. Of those, 9,505 have already come to Canada. IRCC has confirmed that its quota for that stream, under which Sadia had hoped to come to Canada, has been filled, and that program is winding down. Sadia never received an invitation to apply, despite providing IRCC with her information several times over the last year and a half.

There are other streams under the 40,000 total, including a pathway to permanent residence for extended family members of former interpreters (5,000 people), and the special humanitarian program focused on resettling vulnerable Afghans (17,000 people). The latter also includes the special program to sponsor 3,000 Afghan refugees without refugee status from the UNHCR, but that program is also now full.

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News

'Targeted' budget requires aggressive lobbying campaigns to be heard, say lobbyists

The federal government's 2023 budget may prioritize pre-existing Liberal commitments, rather than issue new ones, according to former Liberal staffer Kevin Bosch, a managing partner with Sandstone Group.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT



Tourism and Associate Finance Minister Randy Boissonnault said Ottawa's top priority in this year's budget is 'to support Canadians who need it most, and to increase Canada's competitiveness and prosperity,' in a Finance Canada press release on Dec. 14. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Advocacy organizations face a tough fight for their priorities to be included in this year's federal budget, as the high levels of government spending that were typical in the pandemic years give way to a more restrained approach in the face of a recession, according to lobbyists.

"I think you're going to see a much more targeted budget than what we've seen in the last couple years. Reining in the spending, if you will, because the government doesn't want to be fuelling inflation or being seen to be fuelling inflation," said Kevin Bosch, a managing partner with Sandstone Group. "I think, from a lobbying perspective, you have to realize the government is going to have more limited funds. It's going to be a tighter budget than it has been previously. You have to make a case for why your spending has to happen and has to happen now."

Federal budgets during the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic reached levels no one has seen in recent history as the Liberal government tried to "keep the economy afloat," according to Bosch, who is also a former deputy director of the Liberal Research Bureau. With growing indications that Canada is headed for a recession in 2023, the Liberal government will likely change gears to not appear "spendthrift," he said.

Former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney warned that "a recession is both likely globally and most

probable in Canada," during an appearance before the Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy on Oct. 20. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said that 2023 will be tough, but Canadians will get through the year if they stick together, as reported by Global News on Dec. 25.

The Liberal government's 2023 budget is not likely to put much spending towards new priorities, and may instead focus on already established priorities, according to Bosch. These priorities could include implementing a national pharmacare program and developing Canada's capacity to manufacture and support electric vehicles, he said.

The Liberal government promised to pass a Canada Pharmacare Act by the end of 2023 in the supply-and-confidence agreement they signed with the NDP announced on March 22, 2022.

Although lobbying related to budget priorities was best in the fall, Bosch said organizations should keep arguing their case right up until the budget's release.

"There's always a point in approaching the government. Budgets have changed right up to the week before. We always say until it gets to the printer, there's a possibility of shaping the budget," said Bosch. "The squeaky wheel gets the oil, and if you're not continuing to squeak, they may forget about you. They may think you're a lower priority, particular-

ly if the pie is shrinking, which I suggest probably is shrinking."

Graham Milner, a public affairs counsellor for the Compass Rose Group, told *The Hill Times* that the 2023 budget will likely put focus on workforce development, and implementing a long-term vision that builds off the Liberal and NDP supply-and-confidence agreement.

"I would say that the government is going to continue to invest in areas that they think will help the economy grow. If that looks like a restraint budget compared to the last couple, maybe, but I also think that it will probably mean investments in more foundational areas of supply-chain resilience," said Milner. "[The Liberal government] have an opportunity here ... to put down some of the foundational pieces around the supply chain, around labour force, around greening the economy, that will really shape the future for the Canadian economy going forward."

Milner previously served as director of parliamentary affairs for Treasury Board President Mona Fortier (Ottawa-Vanier, Ont.) during her former roles as minister of middle class prosperity and associate minister of finance.

Jayne Wilson, a manager of government and public relations with Impact Public Affairs, told *The Hill Times* that the 2023 budget will differ greatly from the previous two budgets, but it should still address the "big-ticket

items" of housing affordability, Indigenous reconciliation, and climate change.

"There are still long-term drinking water advisories in First Nations [communities], which is something I would anticipate would need to be addressed before another possible election. That could and should be prioritized in the upcoming budget," said Wilson. "It's a really big issue for Indigenous peoples in Canada, and it is something that the government has committed to resolving time and time again."

Wilson is a former parliamentary assistant for National Defence Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) during her previous role as minister of Public Services and Procurement.

To gather input from the public regarding the 2023 budget, the Liberal government launched the website LetsTalkBudget2023.ca on Dec. 14.

"Our government's top priority is to support Canadians who need it most, and to increase Canada's competitiveness and prosperity for generations to come, by making smart and responsible investments today. As we prepare our upcoming budget, we want to hear from you on your priorities and your ideas on how the government can continue to create good jobs, grow the middle class, and drive economic growth that benefits everyone. I look forward to hearing directly from you," said Canada's federal Tourism and As-

sociate Minister of Finance Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Alta.) in a Finance Canada press release.

The House Finance Committee held three meetings in October for pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2023 budget. Between Oct. 5 and Oct. 26, the committee heard from witnesses representing 18 organizations, including the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Council of Canada (BCC).

Robert Asselin, senior vice-president of policy for the BCC, told the House Finance Committee on Oct. 26 that a change in fiscal policy is necessary because Canada is in "the midst of the riskiest economic policy landscape we've seen in decades." He argued Canada needs to adopt an industrial strategy that addresses labour shortages, helps attract investments, and promotes technological innovation.

For the 2023 budget, Asselin told *The Hill Times* he wants the Liberal government to move forward with initiatives from previous budgets, including the Canada Growth Fund and the Canadian Innovation and Investment Agency, which were proposed in the 2022 budget.

"It's been a year or more since these things have been announced, and we still don't know what they will do [or] who will lead them. For us, it's important to see these coming to life and ... see the details of how they will function and what they will do exactly. Details are few at this moment," said Asselin.

Keith Currie, first vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, appeared before the Finance Committee on Oct. 24. He said farmers are facing "tremendous financial pressure" because of skyrocketing fertilizer prices in the last year, exacerbated by the 35 per cent tariff Ottawa applied to fertilizer and other goods from Russia. The tariff, announced on March 3, 2022, by Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University—Rosedale, Ont.), was in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Currie said to the committee his organization's top priority is to see the revenue from tariffs reinvested into financial relief for farmers.

He told *The Hill Times* that the investments in the agriculture sector can help farmers improve the efficiency of their operations, which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Certainly, this government has a real focus on the environment, and more specifically on current climate change," said Currie. "Agriculture can play a big role in where the government wants to go, so we do need the tools in place to make sure that we get there. We want to make sure we have those really targeted and meaningful supports in place that are going to support ... agriculture, to realize its full potential as a climate change solutions provider."

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The Hill Times

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Editorial

Feds right to get civil servants to return to hybrid-style workplace

Treasury Board President Mona Fortier changed her tune when she announced last month, on behalf of the government, that federal public servants will be required to return to workplace two or three days a week by the end of March.

When you look at the wider picture, it's clear Fortier made the right decision not only for the benefit of government service, but also the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau. The public service unions plan to fight back, including PSAC which represents 230,000 workers, but it's been nearly three years since many public servants have been working remotely, and a part-time return to work is a fair and reasonable demand.

Federal public servants in all departments must start phasing in a return-to-work plan by this month, working 40 to 60 per cent of their week in the office. Full implementation of the plan will be overseen by the federal government's chief human resources officer, Fortier said.

"In-person work better supports collaboration, team spirit, innovation, and a culture of belonging," Fortier said on Dec. 15, 2022. "We're not going back to the way things used to be. We're reimagining our workplace."

Treasury Board had previously left the decision up to each department which Fortier said created confusion and inconsistencies. The move creates more consistency, and exceptions will be allowed as well.

Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Gatineau Mayor France Bélisle both voiced their support for the plan, with Sutcliffe indicating that "clarity around the future of its workforce is critical for our local economy. When public servants return to government offices, it will be beneficial to both our public transit system and our downtown."

Bélisle said the plan "is good news for Gatineau and the vitality of our downtown. This clear directive will allow merchants to better plans and optimize public transit."

The catch for Sutcliffe and Bélisle is they have to put this certainty to good use, and improve on public transit without making it more expensive for commuters. Public transit shouldn't be competing with the cost of a vehicle, and it shouldn't be so unreliable that people would prefer to sit in traffic than roll the dice on an LRT train.

There are valid reasons why public servants might not want to return to the office. Working from home offers better work-life balance, it costs less, and it's more convenient for child care. Certainly, the government should consider these factors before it decides to go further and mandate a five-day back-to-work plan. But for the sacrifice of a commute two-to-three days a week, public servants can have the best of both worlds: a collaborative and social work environment, and the flexibility offered by days spent working at home. This should be the new normal.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Imagine a better new year, and a better world: McElroy

Imagine a world where we supported companies making money by providing food and shelter to those who need it at prices they can afford. Imagine the swords of the military-industrial complex transferred over to plowshares to provide the food, the green energy, and medical support our planet is desperate for. Imagine the change that universal education and religious tolerance around the world could provide to make the management of this planet effective and provide a safe future for all. Imagine societies that look after people so that crime is not the only safety net available. Imagine a small fraction of the military budget carrying humans to the stars with a voluptuous

Earth continuing to be available for the decades or centuries needed to support that effort into the millennia.

We are all human. We all need the same things: Safety, clean water, housing, and a caring relationship. Let's get along and have more to share and waste less on ridiculously expensive, dangerous, and polluting weapons, and control and use the obvious strengths of the competitive marketplace to balance individual need and corporate greed. Educated citizens of democratic countries can do this. We just need to re-affirm that it needs doing and endeavour to do it!

Tom McElroy
 Toronto, Ont.

Conservatives won't win if they run on a Reform/Canadian Alliance platform, writes Winnipeg reader

Re: "Harper's ideals live on," (*The Hill Times*, Dec. 19, 2022). According to Gerry Nicholls, the Conservative base needs mobilizing and he suggests the only way to make that happen will be to resurrect the ideological fervour of the old Canadian Alliance Party (the Reform Party warmed-over), but Nicholls is wrong.

Recall that between 1993 and 2004, the Reform Party, which later morphed into the Canadian Alliance, never won a single federal election. Why? Because the Canadian public wasn't buying the far-out ideological nonsense that the Reform Party was offering. It wasn't until the Reform and Progressive Conservative parties amalgamated into the more moderate, at that time, new Conservative Party of Canada that Canadian Conservatives enjoyed

electoral successes in 2006, 2008, and in 2011. Further recall that in the 2015 election, when the CPC started sounding and acting like the far-out Reform Party, they lost that election, as well as the subsequent elections in 2019 and 2021.

The Conservative Party of Canada is not ever going to win a federal election if they run on a Reform/Canadian Alliance platform. They will win, however, if they propose sensible, moderate, centre-right policies that will appeal to the majority of the Canadian electorate, most of whom do not belong to any political party and most of whom do not stray too far, either right or left, from the so-called "mushy middle."

Jae Eadie
 Winnipeg, Man.

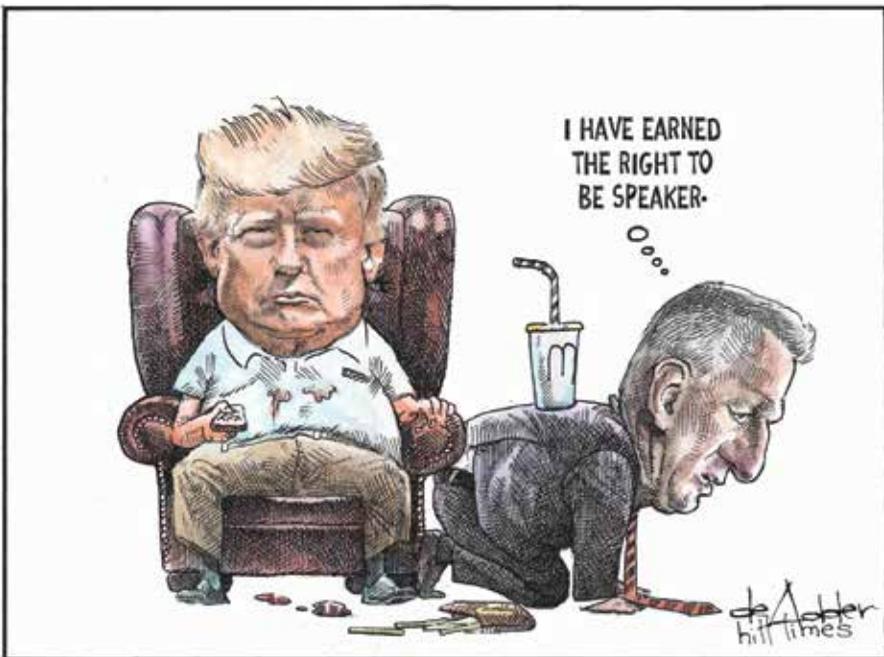
Conservatives should have elected Charest, says Calgary reader

According to a recent study by the Angus Reid Institute, just 33 per cent of Canadians have a favourable opinion of Conservative Party of Canada leader Pierre Poilievre, including just one in five people in Quebec (20 per cent), where positive sentiments towards the CPC leader are lowest. The study also found that Pierre Poilievre is viewed much more negatively than his predecessors Erin O'Toole, Andrew Scheer, and Stephen Harper. Finally, the study found that men are more likely than women to view Pierre Poilievre favourably.

I believe that the vast majority of voters—especially women, people of colour, new immigrants, and those living in Quebec, the GTA, and British Columbia's Lower Mainland—will reject Pierre Poilievre's predilection towards guns, cryptocurrency, small government, the war on drugs, and the illegal truck convoy blockades.

The CPC would be light-years ahead of the Trudeau Liberals by now, had they picked Jean Charest as their leader.

Lyle McNaughton
 Calgary, Alta.



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Don't count all your chickens before they hatch

By weakening the authority of the U.S. House Speaker, the 'Never Kevin' caucus has been trying to legislate changes that run parallel to the demands at the basis of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on Capitol Hill. Back in the 1800s, a similar Speaker vote required more than 100 rounds to reach a majority. That may be happening again. It gives democracy a black eye.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



be in tatters and the institution of Speaker will be considerably diminished.

This Washington circus is proof positive that a republican system is not always the best form of governance.

It just so happens that the American Republicans have fractured into the kind of government one gets when the solidarity of parliamentary caucuses is replaced with a system where each representative stands alone.

In recent years there has been much attention in Canada paid to constituent assemblies, where Members of Parliament are expected to ignore party promises and simply reflect the views of constituents.

In Canada, that political division breaks upon geographic

lines, with Alberta and Saskatchewan becoming increasingly isolated in their moves to the right.

In the United States, constituents are not defined by a geographic area of governance. They rally round a cause, and work politically to elect those who will simply espouse it.

In the case of Republicans who will determine McCarthy's fate, they don't really believe in government. Some are even rabid supporters of the Jan. 6, 2021, attempt to overtake the Capitol Hill Building and overthrow the Congress.

These extremists are able to pursue agendas as they see fit with no regard to caucus cohesion or the fact that their actions are leading to a weakening in public belief in democracy.

It was the first time in a century that the nominated speaker was not elected on the first ballot.

And the chaos on the floor of the House has been largely driven by the rump group in the Republican party that actually appeared emboldened by the situation.

"Freedom caucus" speaker nominee Byron Donalds of Florida characterized the mess as "an invigorating day for America."

To the rest of the world, watching this debacle unfold, it appears as though the American political system is broken.

There does not appear to be a way to build consensus and collaboration in government where the importance of internal political solidarity has been blown up.

Instead, the current focus appears on handcuffing colleagues and breaking down the structures of government, including the power of the Speaker.

In a parliamentary system, there are moments when one's personal point of view runs counter to the majority or to the direction charted by the leadership. In some instances, there is an irreconcilable internal division.

One good example in the case of the Liberals was the internal split over the Meech Lake Accord. It caused serious caucus rancour and eventually contributed to the defeat of a constitutional package that would have seen Quebec sign the Canadian Constitution.

On the caucus side, one quarter of Liberal members split from the leadership and voted against the accord. In the end, the agreement failed to receive endorsement from all the provinces.

But at the end of the day, the parliamentary system places a focus on solidarity and nurtures the importance of consensus within political parties.

Even in the British meltdown that faced Boris Johnson, his parliamentary caucus was quick to come together.

His successor suffered the ignominy of being turfed within months. But the British political system did not unravel.

In the United States, it feels as though the political system is unravelling.

The members of this freedom caucus seem to revel in the chaos that they have created.

On the Canadian front, the so-called 2023 "Freedom Convoy" has been cancelled.

One of the reasons cited for the cancellation was Ontario legislation that included heavy financial penalties for illegal convoys.

The only political party in Canada that supported the convoy was the Conservative party, but even that party has moderated its previously supportive rhetoric.

In the United States, it almost appears that the Group of 20 Republican congresspeople is actually trying to bring down their own majority.

By weakening the authority of the Speaker, the "Never Kevin" caucus has been trying to legislate changes that run parallel to the demands at the basis of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on Capitol Hill.

Back in the 1800s, a similar Speaker vote required more than 100 rounds to reach a majority.

That may be happening again. It gives democracy a black eye.

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

The Hill Times

Notley's policy gambit

Anyone who's expecting the Alberta election to be a battle of policy platforms will be sorely disappointed.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, will face off against Alberta NDP Leader Rachel Notley in the provincial election this spring. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright and courtesy of Flickr



vision for the future of Alberta and our vision for the future of Alberta and ... which one reflects the mainstream aspirations of Albertans."

That's the remark about which I'm dubious.

Why? Well, for one thing, I remember her track record.

Recall that in Alberta's last provincial election, Notley's NDP showed it was more than willing to make it personal when it came to defeating its then-opponent, Jason Kenney.

Indeed, the NDP did everything it could to portray Kenney as a women-hating, bible-thumping, right-wing troglodyte.

Now, keep in mind, in the next provincial election Notley's opponent will be Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who many perceive as even more right-wing than Kenney.

In other words, Smith has a controversial track record as a politician, (not to mention her record as a former radio host and columnist) that would make her a perfect target should the NDP

wish to degrade her personal brand.

As a matter of fact, I don't see how the NDP could possibly resist the urge to once again go on the attack.

Of course, it might be argued that since Notley lost to Kenney, she's decided to change tactics.

So, rather than demonizing Smith, she'll focus on promoting a positive vision for Alberta.

As Notley herself told the media, "We'll be focused on the policies and the record ... on how we'll be different."

In fact, the NDP has reportedly even enlisted a former ATB chief economist to advise its campaign.

So yes, maybe Notley is sincerely determined, at this point in time, to wage a campaign focused on policy.

But I'm willing to bet that once the election actually gets underway, this strategy won't survive the first week.

After all, while having a well-thought policy plan might be a good way to mobilize your base, it usually fails to motivate the greater voting masses.

And it's not hard to see why.

First off, most policy proposals are complex, meaning they can't adequately be explained in a 30-second TV ad.

True, you can spell out your plans in a detailed policy book, but no one will ever read it.

The other problem with relying on comprehensive policies is that you run the risk they might alienate voters who otherwise might have supported you.

A voter might say, "I was going to vote for Notley, but I didn't know she stood for that policy! I hate that policy!"

This, by the way, is why most campaigns keep their policy proposals as simple and generalized as possible, i.e., "make the rich pay" or "shut down the gravy train."

Anyway, the final problem with the NDP focusing on policies is that you better believe the United Conservatives will be doing everything they can to attack Notley, i.e., she'll be accused of being a radical "woke" socialist, a pawn of Eastern elites and an enemy to Alberta's energy sector.

If such attacks do damage (which they likely will), Notley would be forced to put aside her policy campaign and respond in kind with her own attacks, fighting fire with fire.

So, my point is, anyone who's expecting the Alberta election to be a battle of policy platforms will be sorely disappointed.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Politics

U.S. House Speaker debacle latest symptom of decaying democracy in North America

It didn't used to be unusual to see political rivals sharing a human interaction or a drink from time to time—now it's front-page news.

Michael
Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—You don't have to be a political junkie to realize that democracy is in peril these days.

In Canada, both in the last Ontario election, and then again in a recent federal byelection, voter participation was like the attendance at Twitter's first Christmas party under Elon Musk.

Then there are the extremist politicians. The hard-right leader of the Conservative Party of Canada is not so much opposing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as vilifying him. Pierre Poilievre has removed the middle ground in the country's national politics. Like Emmanuel Goldstein in the classic dystopian novel *1984*, Trudeau is the whipping boy of choice for every issue and every problem, or at least he is as far as Poilievre is concerned.



U.S. Republican Representative for California Kevin McCarthy is applauded by his colleagues after the ninth vote for Speaker of the House, in which no one garnered a majority of the votes, in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 5, 2023. Screenshot courtesy of C-SPAN

A case in point: Trudeau supports supervised injection sites for recovering drug addicts, as does the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Why? Because it saves and even restores the lives of a very vulnerable group of people.

Poilievre's take? The Liberal government is deliberately fueling the opioid crisis by flooding the streets with tax-payer funded "poison." Anyone whose reading material rises above the level of comic books and Twitter knows better than that.

In the United States, Republican rookie George Santos, a serial liar and electoral fraudster, is about to be seated in Congress as that body's first fictional member.

That is, if the House of Representatives can manage to elect a Speaker.

As of this writing, a portion of the nutbar wing of the Republican Conference is thwarting the will of 90 per cent of its colleagues. As a result, your average condominium board is more productive than the paralyzed federal legislative branch of the greatest democracy in the world.

Politics at its best is the civil mediation of different views between parties on issues big and small. Once upon a time, the keenest rivals could find enough middle ground to talk, rather than bludgeon, their way to an accommodation. It wasn't unusual to see political rivals sharing a human interaction or a drink from time to time.

Now it is front-page news if that happens—as evidenced by the national attention the joint appearance of U.S. President Joe Biden and Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell garnered when they united to praise recent bipartisan infrastructure legislation. It was as if the leaders of North and South Korea had become Huggy Bear and Kissy Face on New Year's Eve.

What is behind the hyper-partisanship that imperils democracy itself? Part of it comes down to the Vince Lombardi principle: winning isn't everything, it is the only thing. People like Republican Newt Gingrich started the political decline back in the 1990s by effectively ending bipartisanship in the U.S. Congress. During the period in which Gingrich

held the gavel in the House of Representatives, the Republicans became the party of "no."

Newt's nihilism turned legitimate opposition politics, which rightfully tries to hold the government to account, into non-stop obstructionism. The goal was no longer to improve legislation through debate and amendments. The goal was to stop anything that the other side might get credit for, and to turn every government initiative into a reason for holding an election. In Canada, think of it as Poilievre's "everything-is-broken" gambit.

Donald Trump put the politics of "no" on steroids. Unless you were with him to the point of personal debasement, and even illegality, you were against him. Any

party member who worked with the Democrats on anything was a RINO: Republican In Name Only. And since Trump called his adversaries in politics and his critics in the media "enemies of the people," that also meant that Republicans like Liz Cheney and Mitt Romney were collaborators.

How did the biggest congenital liar in American history win the presidency and get 75 million votes when he lost the White House four years later? Part of it comes down to what Republican political guru Arthur Finkelstein had to say about mass communication. Finkelstein, who helped Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush get to the White House, and Benjamin Netanyahu to his first stint as Israeli prime minister, pointed out that it was very difficult to tell the difference between truth and falsehood on the internet.

It was a place, he observed, where the public knew more and more about less and less. Social media platforms, with their dubious record of putting out lies under the fig leaf of free speech, were the perfect staging areas for spreading fundamentalist and partisan misinformation.

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt says that the social media cohort, Generation Zers, are in crisis because of that phenomenon. They flocked to Instagram after Facebook acquired it in 2012, and immersed themselves in the selfie era. Their lives were moved to their phones, and an ersatz world replaced the world of real relationships. The result was a generation of "weakened" children and teenagers with "extraordinarily high rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide and fragility."

As well as harming Generation Z, Haidt believes that the move into a virtual world has imperilled democracy. "Social media is incompatible with liberal democracy because it has moved conversation and interaction into the Centre of the Colosseum." We are not there to talk to each other. We're there to perform before spectators who "want blood."

And what tosses the most red meat to those "spectators?" According to Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen, the algorithm used by the social media platform puts more weight on "angry" reactions than regular likes. Emotional reactions make a bigger splash on social media than the merely factual.

As Pierre Poilievre tries to wear out the outrage and anger receptors of Canadians on social media with his half truths and baseless allegations, everyone would do well to remember the words of Nobel laureate Maria Ressa: "No integrity of facts, no integrity of elections."

In a healthy democracy, trading a good press conference for an incendiary tweet is a very bad move.

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



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. Poilievre has removed the middle ground in the country's national politics. Like Emmanuel Goldstein in the classic dystopian novel *1984*, Trudeau is the whipping boy of choice for every issue and every problem, or at least he is as far as Poilievre is concerned, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



Donald Trump put the politics of 'no' on steroids. Unless you were with him to the point of personal debasement, and even illegality, you were against him. Photograph courtesy of Flickr

One more year to stop talking, start acting, on reducing emissions

The ongoing war in Ukraine is a wrenching issue, so is the lack of affordable housing in major cities; and, the COVID crisis is by no means over. Governments face myriad pressing challenges this year. But none is as frightening as climate change.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—So far, so good, 2023. The “Freedom Convoy’s” promise of a repeat performance in February is looking uncertain. There’s been barely a whisper from Donald Trump in months. Twitter’s reach appears to be shrinking. And, last week, there was finally some good news from the world of junior men’s hockey.

In addition, the recession expected this year is forecast to be “mild,” with minimal job losses. There are hints of a behind-the-curtains health-care deal between the Trudeau government and at least some provinces (after a lot of huffing and puffing, of course). Besides that, accumulated improvements to various social programs, by both Ottawa and the provinces—plus the introduction of a national child care program—should make it easier for struggling families to survive this year.

But there is an unaddressed crisis that persists, year-to-year and decade-to-decade, and you only need to glance out the window to see it. Climate change. Emissions continued to rise in Canada in 2022, after a two-year pandemic dip, and production in the oilsands continues to in-



Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, for instance, is supposed to be announcing the long-promised “just transition” plan in the coming months. This is intended to help oil and gas workers, mostly in Alberta and Saskatchewan, move to equally lucrative and engaging jobs in the burgeoning green energy sector. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

crease—if at a slower rate than in previous years. The federal government even approved a new oil project, Bay du Nord, off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, last year.

Yet the impact of a changing climate is everywhere evident; in ways large and small. Atmospheric rivers hit the California coast, while there is an unseasonal thaw in Central Canada, and elsewhere, that is transforming winter. Catastrophic floods, wildfires, and storms have become annual events. In Europe, ski hills are closing for lack of snow; in Montreal, outdoor ice rinks are shuttered.

Ottawa’s iconic Rideau Canal skate way—a key winter tourist attraction—may never open at this rate. In fact, as “climate events” become increasingly damaging, hardly anyone, including the oil and gas sector, bothers to deny the reality of climate change. Just the urgency.

That doesn’t mean anyone in government is taking vigorous steps to contain emissions, or confront the oil and gas sector—unless you count endless consultations and thin official reports as “action.” Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, for instance, is supposed to be announcing the long-promised “just

transition” plan in the coming months. This is intended to help oil and gas workers, mostly in Alberta and Saskatchewan, move to equally lucrative and engaging jobs in the burgeoning green energy sector.

It is a chimera, a slogan, a bureaucratic exercise that will temporarily enrich certain vested interests and do nothing—zero—to lower oilsands emissions. Just a guess, based on years of observation.

First, there is no current employment crisis in the oil and gas sector, beyond a shortage of skilled workers. Many veterans of the industry have retired, or are approaching retirement; others moved back East when oil prices (and job site activity) took a nosedive starting in 2014. There simply aren’t that many unemployed oil and gas worker looking for different jobs, or languishing on welfare roles—not at the moment, at least.

Since the price crash, in fact, oil prices have rebounded—right through the roof—and companies are raking in record profits. But new investment remains stagnant and the future of the industry uncertain. Gone are the days when the promise of enormous salaries made the hardship of moving to northern Alberta, living in labour

camps, and periodically flying back to visit family, worth the sacrifice.

Of course, that uncertain future means that the 160,000-odd people directly, or indirectly, working in the fossil-fuel sector could be looking for more secure jobs before the decade is out. Like it or hate it, oil and gas is not a growth industry. So some federal assistance may be called for—as a political expression of concern, if nothing else.

That said, it is emphatically not called for by Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, who sees the “just transition” as a Trojan horse, an attempt by Justin Trudeau to “phase out the workforce for the largest industry in Alberta” without consulting the province, or even discussing plans with the new premier.

Beyond that, there is a question of what green jobs Ottawa plans to offer displaced oil workers. There is the promise of hydrogen, the lure of solar and wind projects, and, in the distant future, perhaps, opportunities for clean nuclear power. Both federal and provincial governments are also subsidizing a proposed carbon capture and storage network for the oilsands, that is unlikely to lower emissions enough, will cost a fortune, and could become

a white elephant when it is finally completed—just as demand for oil shrinks.

There are hints that Wilkinson’s “just transition” will provide money for unions and Indigenous groups to soften expected blows to their constituencies, plus the usual money for re-training, job searches, and enhanced retirements. In other words, the same supports offered to coal miners in Alberta communities as coal-fired electricity plants are phased out. Palliative, rather than reformative.

But will any of this help reduce emissions? Without knowing the details, it seems doubtful. In fact, Big Oil is bent on continuing, even increasing, production of fossil fuels for decades to come—even while global demand is expected to peak in 2030.

A recent study by University of Calgary Professor Kent Fellows disputes the common argument that oilsands crude will be the first to go as the world transitions to green energies (especially EVs), because the Alberta product is so polluting, and so expensive to extract and refine. Fellows counters that the steep upfront cost for oilsands mines—be they surface, or deep—means they have longer economic lifespans than conventional operations. He says the big players in Northern Alberta could continue to operate profitably, even expand a little, with oil at \$40 a barrel—and, in some cases, as low at \$15 per barrel.

This level of return isn’t endlessly sustainable, or course, and other studies suggest that a captive U.S. market will only buffer Alberta for so long. Even in the United States, even haltingly, oil use will decline. In the meantime, however, the damage to the global environment will continue and will be costly financially and in terms of human misery.

There is another hammer hanging over the industry, however, although it may be made of rubber. It is the feds’ long-delayed promise of an emissions cap, a belated effort at reducing greenhouse gases from the single most polluting sector in the economy, a sector that contributes 25 per cent of our national total.

Such a cap has been debated, denounced, and delayed for decades, by governments of all stripes. But now, federal Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault is promising details by the end of 2023. The end of 2023!

By then, we’ll be over our ankles in icy water.

The ongoing war in Ukraine is a wrenching issue, so is the lack of affordable housing in major cities; and, the COVID crisis is by no means over. Governments face myriad pressing challenges this year. But none is as frightening as climate change. That needs to be everyone’s unwavering focus, if 2023 is to live up to its early promise.

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

The Hill Times

Best photos of 2022

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, announces a ban on the sale, trade, and import of handguns in Canada on May 30, 2022.



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre delivers his victory speech in Ottawa on Sept. 10, 2022.



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh gets ready for a press conference on Dec. 7, 2022.



Commissioner Paul Rouleau listens to testimony during the Public Emergency Order Commission at the Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, Nov. 24, 2022.



Transport Minister Omar Alghabra arrives on the Hill on June 20, 2022.



Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and PM Justin Trudeau, at the unveiling of a plaque for General Foulkes at Beechwood Cemetery in Ottawa on May 13, 2022.



Defence Minister Anita Anand, delivers a keynote address at the CANSEC trade show in Ottawa on June 1, 2022.



A 'Freedom Convoy' protester on Kent Street in Ottawa on July 23, 2022.



Justice Minister David Lametti, centre, arrives at the Rouleau Commission in Ottawa on Nov. 23, 2022.



James Topp, a disgraced Canadian Army reservist, wipes a tear from his face at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, June 30, 2022.



Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, left, on her way to testify at the Rouleau Commission at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, Nov. 24, 2022.



The then-Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, arrive at the Ottawa International Airport for their Canadian tour on May 17, 2022.



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-Francois Blanchet walks past reporters on the Hill on Dec. 14, 2022.



Chile's President Gabriel Boric greets young supporters after a Q&A session with local high school students at the Museum of Nature in Ottawa on June 6, 2022.



Japanese ambassador to Canada Yamanouchi Kanji, pictured June 8, 2022.



A Freedom Convoy protest takes place at the intersection of Kent and Slater streets in Ottawa on Feb. 5, 2022.

News

Selecting Commons clerk needs ‘unanimity’ from all parties, say opposition MPs after critics pan past process

Former House clerk Audrey O’Brien says the role requires a candidate capable of performing a unique ‘balancing act.’

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Conservative MP Chris Warkentin says hiring the last House clerk was an “unmitigated disaster,” but he believes the government “understands the mistake” and—based on initial conversations with Liberal colleagues about the replacement process—there is “an appetite to not have the same situation happen again.”

“I believe that the government understands the mistake that was made last time, and I’m hopeful that they will undertake the process in a collaborative way,” said Warkentin (Grande Prairie-Mackenzie, Alta.), who serves as deputy whip and Question Period co-ordinator for his party.

“I think that they also recognize that this Parliament is different—they being a minority in Parliament—and that they would never get away with the process that they undertook the last time.”

On Dec. 7, House of Commons Clerk Charles Robert told the Board of Internal Economy that he would be stepping down from the role as of Jan. 13, in order to allow a successor to carry out a new strategic plan.

His hiring drew controversy when it took place in 2017. *The Hill Times* reported criticism from former clerks Robert Marleau and Audrey O’Brien, as well as several Conservative MPs, who expressed concerns that the process did not involve consultation with all parties and that it deviated from the convention of appointing the deputy or interim clerk to the permanent role—something O’Brien said helped to create a “career path” to develop the skills of House of Commons staff.

Robert, who was interim clerk of the Senate at the time, was selected instead of Marc Bosc, a former deputy clerk who had been serving in the interim role since O’Brien departed as clerk in 2015. Robert himself faced controversy last year, when CBC News reported that officials from the clerk’s office had accused



NDP House Leader Peter Julian, left, and Conservative Deputy Whip Chris Warkentin, right, are both calling on Government House Leader Mark Holland, centre, to ensure the process for hiring the new House clerk involves building a consensus among all parties. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, file photograph

him of partisanship favouring the Liberals, as well as falling asleep during Question Period.

Paul Thomas, a political science professor at the University of Manitoba who studies public administration, said the clerk’s role is officially a governor-in-council appointment, which “reflects the traditional assumption that governments are entitled to make this appointment” as a “gift of the prime minister.” But, he added, the House of Commons “in theory ... should belong to its members and they should control its operations.”

However, Thomas said “resources, rules, and procedures can become weapons,” and “competitive parties, especially their leadership teams, worry more about winning the daily battles and do not put a lot of thought and effort into making the House

of Commons more relevant and effective.”

The House amended the Standing Orders in 2001 to involve consultation from other parties, and the process was first used for the hiring of O’Brien in 2005. However, in 2017, Robert was selected by a four-person panel, comprised of one representative from the Prime Minister’s Office, two from the Privy Council Office, and one from the government House leader’s office.

Warkentin wants to see consultation and consensus building return to the process.

Minority brings different context, says MP Julian

“There needs to be unanimity of agreement between all recognized parties in the House of Commons with regards to the interim [clerk] and then the replacement,” he said, calling it “unprecedented” to have the entire official opposition caucus voting against the selection of Robert as clerk in 2017. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf islands, B.C.) also registered her dissent, with the final House tally 200-79 to approve Robert.

“That can’t happen again,” said Warkentin. “There has to be a level of trust that all members of Parliament believe that the new appointment is a nonpartisan individual—somebody who has a level of professionalism and excellence, and that will serve Canadians well in this unique responsibility.”

Warkentin said his party has been speaking with Government House Leader Mark

Holland (Ajax, Ont.) about what the process will be, and would be open to options such as a committee of the House leaders or a committee struck by the Procedure and House Affairs Committee comprised of members of all recognized parties.

NDP House Leader Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* his party shares the view that there was not enough consultation last time, but he expects a minority Parliament will force a different approach.

“I think the context of 2017 was a majority government, and I think it’s fair to say there wasn’t enough consideration given to the opposition parties,” he said. “We are in a minority context now ... and I think it’s fair to say that Mark Holland has been clear that he wants to work on a consensus moving forward.”

Julian said it is “early days” when it comes to establishing a process, and that dialogue is ongoing, but it is “fundamentally important” to have a “consensus of the recognized parties.”

In an email statement to *The Hill Times*, Holland’s office said he “has been in discussions with his counterparts from the other parties about next steps,” but did not provide responses to more detailed questions about how the government may design the process.

Job is a ‘balancing act,’ says ex-clerk

O’Brien, who served as clerk from 2005 to 2015, described the role as “difficult” and “challenging,” but “an absolutely fascinat-

ing one” that requires a particular skillset in two areas: procedure and administration.

On the procedural side, O’Brien said that because it is “a job with a costume,” some people may see the clerk as a “sort of vestigial thing from the Westminster Parliament,” despite the vital role the clerk plays in that area.

For the administrative aspect, which includes managing the House’s budget, she said that function is similar to that of a deputy minister. However, the skillset needed is different because the clerk must understand “what it’s like to be servant to all parties equally.” She said this is a “balancing act” not required of deputy ministers, who only serve a single political master at any one time, while the clerk of the House must serve MPs from all parties in the Commons.

O’Brien shared a story about this from her time working with Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.), who served as the House’s 35th speaker between 2011 and 2015.

She said the clerk can play a valuable role in helping a speaker understand how to navigate the challenges that may be posed by MPs from their own party when it comes to being independent.

“When I was clerking, Andrew Scheer was elected and he was not only the youngest speaker, but also the Conservatives were very excited at the notion that they had ‘their guy’ in the chair,” O’Brien recalled.

“I remember my first meeting with him, and saying to him, ‘you’re probably thinking now about how you’re going to deal with the opposition and so forth,’” she said. “But what you have to realize is that the people you’re going to have the most trouble with are going to be your own party—because they think you’re ‘theirs,’ and you’re not, in fact, theirs ... you belong to the House now.”

Thomas said that to promote greater independence and impartiality for the clerk, MPs could look to a process similar to the one used to hire the CEO of Election Canada.

“It is time to create an appointment process that reflects the status of the clerk as a servant of the Commons,” he said.

Given the inconsistencies in how the process has been carried out for the hiring of each new clerk—despite the 2001 attempt to provide guidance through the change to the Standing Orders—Warkentin said that he would be open to efforts to better codify the procedure. Julian said it was too early to say. He suggested that if the process the parties arrive at for appointing the next clerk turns out to be satisfactory to all, then it may make sense to codify it.

Robert will serve his last day as clerk on Jan. 13. An interim clerk will need to be in place for the return of the House on Jan. 30. No timeline has been set for the hiring of the permanent replacement.

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Former deputy and interim House clerk Marc Bosc was not hired for the permanent role in 2017, despite a tradition of those roles serving as a pipeline for hiring the clerk. *Photograph courtesy of House of Commons*

'A mixed bag': committee report on proposed oil and gas emissions cap reflects deep divisions on path forward

The House Natural Resources Committee tabled 10 recommendations for an emissions cap for Canada's oil and gas sector on Dec. 14, eight months after hearing from the final witnesses.

BY KEVIN PHILIPUPILLAI

Conservative, Bloc Québécois, and New Democrat MPs on the House Natural Resources Committee each disagreed with parts of the long-awaited report about a proposed emissions cap for the oil and gas sector, reflecting deep divisions over the future of fossil fuel production in Canada.

The report, which was tabled in Parliament eight months after the committee finished hearing witness testimony, recommends the government align its emissions cap policy with the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, strengthen the carbon pricing system for industry, and take steps to minimize the harm of the energy transition on the groups most likely to be affected.

The Conservatives opposed the report's recommendations, saying an emissions cap on the oil and gas sector would be a de facto production cap. The Bloc Québécois and the NDP said the recommendations do not go far enough, both in terms of reducing emissions and creating a just transition for workers and communities.

Aly Hyder Ali, oil and gas program manager for the advocacy group Environmental Defence, told *The Hill Times* the report's 10 recommendations were "a mixed bag" that the government should treat as "an absolute minimum" when developing its promised emissions cap for Canada's fossil fuels sector. He called on the Liberals to build on the recommendations because, on their own, they are "not strong enough" to meet Canada's international climate commitments.

Hyder Ali praised the focus on the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era, as opposed to the less stringent goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. He said in order to meet Canada's responsibilities within this goal, the government must require a 60 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, seen here in West Block on Nov. 22, 2022, and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, left, have until April 13 to respond to the House Natural Resources Committee's recommendations on an emissions cap for fossil fuels. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"Anything below 60 per cent would mean that Canada, as a resourceful, wealthy country that has the expertise, is shrugging off our responsibility to put unjust burden on countries that historically have not been responsible for climate change to the same extent," he said.

Hyder Ali also praised the emphasis on setting up federal support for a just transition for workers, but criticized other recommendations that he said would encourage "false solutions," such as



The Conservatives, led by committee vice-chair Shannon Stubbs, opposed the very idea of an emissions cap. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

carbon capture and storage, and "provide industry with loopholes that allow them to skirt responsibility to reduce emissions."

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) said the report's recommendations are "encouraging when read in isolation."

"But the problem comes when you dive deeper," said May,

explaining she was disappointed the committee was not willing to make the difficult decision "to bite the bullet and reduce production, and emissions, and make room for a major transition to renewable energy."

May said the International Panel on Climate Change's April 2022 report contained the "absolutely devastating" warning that in order to maintain both 1.5 degrees and 2 degrees as viable targets for global warming, "global emissions had to peak or begin to drop sharply at the latest by 2025. That's less than two years from now."

May also warned that, to be effective, a cap on emissions or on production must be set low enough to prevent further expansion of the sector, and "start reductions fast."

"Everyone rightly gave credit to Rachel Notley's government for agreeing to the idea of a cap on production. But that cap was based on a 30 per cent increase over the level of production from when they set the cap," said May of the former Alberta premier. "If the caps are set far higher than where we are now, then it's not part of a climate solution."

In November, the federal government announced it would introduce an emissions cap for the oil and gas sector by the end of 2023, in keeping with its obligations under the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act, which became law on June 29, 2021.

The House Natural Resources Committee launched a study of this proposed cap on Feb. 7, 2022, heard from witnesses from February to April, and tabled its report in the House of Commons on Dec.

14, 2022. The government must table a response in the House within 120 calendar days—by April 13.

Environment Canada spokesperson Cecelia Parsons said in an email the government will be guided by the committee's report when designing the emissions cap, as well as by the Net Zero Advisory Board and by public consultations that began in July 2022.

"The government expects to communicate the next steps early this year," said Parsons.

Conservatives warn cap would bring 'the demise of the Canadian energy sector'

The Conservative MPs on the committee, led by committee vice-chair Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, Alta.), opposed any emissions cap for the oil and gas sector. In their dissenting report, which was included as an appendix to the committee's main report, they said a cap on emissions would be a de facto cap on production, which would interfere with provincial jurisdiction.

The Conservatives also said Canada's oil and gas sector has a responsibility to help address global energy insecurity brought about by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and any reduction in Canadian oil and gas production would see production shift to countries with worse environmental and emissions reduction standards.

Stubbs was not available for an interview. Her office re-posted the Conservatives' dissenting report on her personal website, under a warning that the government's proposed emissions cap would be "the demise of the Canadian energy sector."

The Conservative position aligns with the brief that the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers submitted to the committee in March 2022, which argued that "the biggest and most immediate role Canada

can play in addressing global climate change is by displacing coal in the global energy mix with responsible Canadian natural gas exported as liquefied natural gas (LNG)."

The NDP's dissenting report highlighted the government's failure to meet previous climate targets. The party, represented on the committee by Charlie Angus (Timmins-James Bay, Ont.), argued any cap on emissions for the oil and gas sector must go beyond limiting emissions during produc-



Environmental Defence's Aly Hyder Ali says the committee's recommendations are 'an absolute minimum' standard that the government should build on when designing an emissions cap for Canada's oil and gas sector. *Photograph courtesy of Environmental Defence*

tion and include the 80 to 85 per cent of emissions that come when the final product goes to market and is burned.

Bloc press secretary Julien Coulombe-Bonafous said in an email that the party opposes the report's conclusions. He said Bloc MP Mario Simard (Jonquière, Que.) proposed amendments to seven of the report's 10 recommendations, with all but one being rejected.

"If the committee wanted our support, they would have voted in favor of our recommendations, which they didn't," said Coulombe-Bonafous.

According to a list of proposed amendments provided by Coulombe-Bonafous, Simard tried, unsuccessfully, to propose that the report recommend an end to all new oil and gas projects, a 30 per cent reduction in oil and gas emissions by 2026 and a 60 per cent reduction by 2030, strict enforcement measures for the emissions cap, and an end to public subsidies for research into carbon capture and storage.

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Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, right, seen here in October 2020, says the House Natural Resources Committee's recommendations don't go far enough. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

MAID task group 'still on track' to meet February timeline despite feds seeking delay on expansion

Opponents are renewing their efforts to see the government reverse track two of Canada's medical assistance in dying laws, while advocates are calling for the delay to be as brief as possible.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

On the heels of the government's abrupt decision last month to seek an extension on the March 2023 deadline for the expansion of medical assistance in dying laws, a member of the MAID task group working on regulatory standards says it remains on target to meet its timelines.

Dr. Mona Gupta, who chaired the government's Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness (which issued its final report in May 2022), is now working as a member of the task group that is operationalizing some of the panel's key recommendations. She said the task group is "still on track" to have its work complete by its original target of February 2023.

Track one MAID, for patients whose death is reasonably foreseeable, became legal in 2016 when the federal government passed Bill C-14 in response to the Supreme Court's *Carter* decision. Track two MAID, for patients whose death is not reasonably foreseeable, became legal in 2021, when the federal govern-



Mona Gupta, a member of the task group working on regulatory standards, said the group remains 'on track' to meet its February 2023 target to deliver its work. Photograph courtesy University of Montreal



On Dec. 15, Justice Minister David Lametti announced the federal government will seek an extension on the pending expansion of MAID laws set to happen in March 2023. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

ment updated its laws again in response to the *Truchon* decision from the Quebec Superior Court. That law, Bill C-7, delayed legalizing track two MAID for persons with mental illness as a sole underlying cause by two years, with a sunset clause that was set to expire in March 2023. On Dec. 15, 2022, Justice Minister David Lametti (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que.) and Mental Health, Addictions, and Associate Health Minister Carolyn Bennett (Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont.) announced the government wants to push that time period back due to concerns raised by experts and Canadians.

The work of the task group is tightly focused around producing materials that can be used by provincial regulators related to the assessment of MAID when mental illness is the sole underlying cause, as well as for other challenging track two requests, Gupta said. Gupta is a psychiatrist at the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal and associate clinical professor in the Département de Psychiatrie et d'Addictologie at the Université de Montréal.

A Special Joint Committee of Parliament that has been examining the issue more broadly is also set to issue a report in February.

In an email statement to *The Hill Times*, a Health Canada spokesperson said the proposed delay "would allow more time for dissemination and uptake" of the work being done by the task group, as well other resources such as a Canadian MAID curriculum being developed for practitioners.

Gupta noted that, while she cannot speak for the government, this may have motivated them to seek the extension.

"There were certainly groups of people, for example, chairs of psychiatry, who started making some statements towards the holidays about wanting to have time to just to absorb the information," she said. "To absorb the documents and the reports that were coming and the work that's being done."

The statement from Health Canada added that "next steps will be considered after the review of the Special Joint Committee's final report is complete."

Conservative Senator Yonah Martin (British Columbia), who serves as the joint chair of the parliamentary committee, said in an email that the government did not consult with her about its plans to seek the extension. Martin said she was "relieved" by the decision, because "there have been clear witness testimonies from psychiatrists themselves warning the committee and the government about the lack of readiness and dangers of expanding MAID to those suffering from mental disorders as the sole underlying condition."

The government has neither committed to a specific timeline for the extension period, nor introduced the legislation to seek that extension.

Gupta said that, because the pending expansion is specific to individuals with mental illness as a sole underlying cause, any delays should be tightly connected to addressing how MAID will affect those individuals.

"It's really important to note that any delay, any sort of benchmarks for readiness, have to be rationally connected to the goal of providing assessments to people with mental disorders as their sole condition, because

they're the ones whose rights are being violated through this delay," she said.

Opponents renew calls for reversal as others urge against much delay

Advocacy groups on both sides of the issue have reacted strongly to the government's plan to seek an extension, with proponents of MAID calling for the extension period to be as brief as possible, and those opposed ramping up their campaigns to see the Government of Canada reverse its direction.

"The issue is not whether individuals with a mental disorder are entitled to apply for MAID, it's just a question of when," said Helen Long, CEO of Dying With Dignity Canada. "So this delay should be as short as possible, and we shouldn't be reopening the debate on whether this is something that should move ahead or not."

Long said her organization will focus on communicating the stories of those who are set to become eligible for MAID when the sunset clause expires.

"It's a really small group of people, but at the end of the day, there are people who have been suffering, often for years or decades, who have tried multiple treatments and have been unable to get any relief of their suffering," she said.

However, Neil Belanger, CEO of Indigenous Disability Canada, said his organization will be working in tandem with many other disability and human rights organizations on continuing to make the case for the government to reverse course.

When the extension was announced, Belanger's organization, in partnership with Inclusion Canada, spearheaded the release of a letter from over 50 organizations calling for the reversal of track two MAID. Long says he has been asking for meetings with the government on the issue, but has not been granted an audience for years, since before the pandemic.

"The pro-MAID expansion groups, they're saying this is about autonomy," said Belanger. "You can't have autonomy when you're pressured into taking MAID because of your socio-economic conditions."

Long said her response to disability groups calling for a reversal of track two MAID is that they should instead identify more specific safeguards they would like to see in place.

Task group focused on safety of practice, says Gupta

Gupta said that while the scope of the expert panel, and now the task group, has been tightly focused on difficult track two MAID cases—particularly those related to mental illness as the sole underlying cause—the fact that both have been focused on regulation means a central goal of their work is to increase the safety of practice.

"The purpose of regulation is to guide the profession towards safe practice," she said. "So certainly, the concerns that all sorts of individuals and organizations have raised about safe practice, those were taken into consideration during the expert panel's deliberations, and they were embedded to the best of our ability in the recommendations that we made."

For example, Gupta said the task group is developing resources and language that lay out "a way of thinking for physicians and nurse practitioners" when it comes to establishing criteria such as incurability or irreversibility of decline.

"The task group is essentially doing a kind of piece of translation," she said. "Taking what's in a government report, and shaping it to fit, hopefully, the needs of regulators. ... So those concerns about safety are already embedded in those recommendations."

"The panel's recommendation to turn to the regulators for guidance and leadership was quite intentional, because of their unique positioning in the health-care system of being the guardians of safe practice."

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If snap election happened, Conservatives would win 141 seats and Liberals 139, say Fournier and Nanos

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals should be worried that the progressive vote is not united behind them at this time, and this will be the key deciding factor in the next election.



Justin Trudeau, top, and Pierre Poilievre. Based on Philippe Fournier's analysis, the Conservatives would win a minimum of 112 seats and a maximum of 171, but he also said the extremes are much less likely than the middle. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1
election were to be called now, the Conservative Party would likely win 141 seats, the Liberals 139, the NDP and Bloc 28 seats each, and the Greens two. In the 338-member House, the majority threshold is 170 seats. This means that whoever forms government would need the support of two other parties to get their legislations passed in the House. Under this scenario, the Greens would have only two seats, but still could have an enormous amount of influence.

Based on Fournier's analysis, the Conservatives would win a minimum of 112 seats and a maximum of 171. The Liberals' worst-case scenario would be to end up with 105 seats and their best case would be 165 seats. The NDP seat count would range between 16 and 50; the Bloc between 21 and 32; and the Greens between two and three. Fournier put out these seat projections on Jan. 1 which are based on all the polls that came out in December.

"The extremes are much less likely than the middle," said Fournier in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "As of today, the Conservatives are projected leading in 141 riding. The worst-case scenario for the Conservatives will be 112, and the absolute best-case scenario will be 171."

In terms the popular vote, the Conservatives would win 35 per cent of the votes, the Liberals 31 per cent, the NDP 21 per cent, the Bloc six per cent, and the Greens four per cent. In the popular vote, the margin of error for both the Conservatives and the Liberals is plus or minus four percentage points; the NDP three per cent; and one per cent each for the Bloc and the Greens.

In the last federal election in 2021, the Liberals won 160 seats with 32.6 per cent of the votes; the Conservatives won 119 seats with 33.7 per cent of the votes, the Bloc won 32 seats with 7.6 per cent of the votes; the NDP won 25 seats with 17.8 per cent of the votes, and the Greens won two seats with 2.3 of the votes.

According to seat projections by Nanos Research, if an election were to happen now, the Conservatives would win 112 seats, the Liberals 105, the NDP 21, the Greens two and the Bloc 19. This projection also suggests that there are 79 ridings that are too close to call. Of these, 22 seats are within a two per cent margin and 57 seats within two and seven per cent.

"Our internal modelling numbers are consistent with where he [Fournier] thinks the projections are," said Nanos. "We're a little more cautious in identifying what's too close to call."

According to a Nanos Research poll released last week, the Conservatives were leading the pack with 34 per cent support, followed by the Liberals with 29 per cent, the NDP 22 per cent, and the

Greens and the Bloc Québécois 5.7 per cent each.

One of the key findings of the Nanos poll suggests that among women voters—a key voting bloc of the Liberal coalition—the Liberals and the Conservatives were both tied in a statistical dead heat at 29 per cent each. The NDP support among women voters was at 26 per cent, the Greens seven per cent and the Bloc five per cent.

A second poll by Nanos Research also released last week suggested that 51 per cent of Canadians would prefer that the Liberals go into the next election with a new leader other than Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), and 45 per cent would want the Conservatives to choose a different leader than Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) to lead the party in the next election.

Trudeau has been the Liberal leader since 2013 and Poilievre was elected to his party's top job only four months ago.

Nanos said that both Trudeau and Poilievre are polarizing figures and that while it took a few years for Trudeau, after becoming prime minister, to become a polarizing figure, Poilievre got there right out of the gate. Nanos explained that the reason why Poilievre became polarizing so quickly was because during the leadership election, he openly associated himself with the Freedom Convoy, now a defining element of his brand. Nanos said, at this time and based on the numbers, it appears highly unlikely that either the Liberals or the Conservatives can win a majority government with their incumbent leaders.

"It's difficult in the current configuration for either one of these leaders to win a majority government, it's just more difficult because of how Canadians

feel about both of those leaders," said Nanos. "Could Justin Trudeau win an election? Absolutely. Could Pierre Poilievre win election? Absolutely. Can either one of them win a majority, today? Probably not."

Nanos said that the defining element for the next election would be whether or not the progressive vote is united behind the Liberals. Right now, based on his polling numbers, it's not and the Liberals should be worried about that because the NDP's rise in popularity is bad news for Trudeau. He said this factor was the key reason why the Conservatives were able to stay in power between 2006 and 2015. One caveat, Nanos put on this observation, was that when people express their opinions in between elections, there are no repercussions for any of the parties. When disaffected Liberal supporters express their support for the NDP, they know there are no consequences for the Liberals as there's no election on the horizon. So, this scenario could change during the election campaign.

Going forward, Nanos said, Canadians could see interesting dynamics in Parliament as the Liberals and the New Democrats are competing for the same voting bloc. If the Liberals have a misstep, the NDP might pull the plug in the hopes of winning more seats. Before the Liberals came to power in 2015, the New Democrats were the official opposition and at the start of that election campaign, they were the front-runners.

Since March, the Liberals and the NDP have been operating under their historic supply-and-confidence agreement that could allow the Liberals to govern until the next scheduled election in 2025, in return for progress on

key NDP priorities, like dental care and pharmacare, among others.

"Jagmeet Singh has to walk a very fine line between accomplishing things through the parliamentary arrangement with the Liberals, but still distancing himself from the Liberals," said Nanos. "So that if a controversy or turbulence does hit the Liberals in 2023, that the New Democrats don't become unwitting political casualties to a backlash against the Liberals because the New Democrats are propping up the Liberals in the House of Commons."

Nanos said the drop in support for the Liberals below 30 per cent has not only psychological, but practical implications for the governing party.

"If you're the government, you're the prime minister, and the support for your party drops below 30 per cent," said Nanos. "It's harder to motivate people, it's harder to raise funds, and it suggests that you're on the defensive. So, for a governing party, like the Liberals or the Conservatives who want a chance to win, anything below 30 takes wind out of their sails."

The reason for the Liberal Party's drop in the polls, Nanos said, appears to be the result of bickering between the federal and the provincial governments over the health-care funding. Health care has traditionally been a strong point for the Liberals, Nanos said, but right now they're not proposing a solution to address the concerns of Canadians. The other reasons for the Liberals losing their popularity is the cost-of-living issues, Nanos said. Nanos argued that Poilievre staying out of the news is also helping his party in getting ahead of the Liberals.

The Conservatives are tied in a statistical dead heat with the Liberals amongst women voters, Nanos said, because Poilievre has been focusing on pocketbook issues, like cost of living, housing, inflation, and gas prices which are top-of-mind for female voters. Traditionally, women are seen as a key part of the Liberal Party vote base and men part of the Conservative support base.

"The winning scenario for the Conservatives is to do well among men and to be competitive among women," Nanos said. "And for the Liberals, is to do well among women and be competitive among men. So right now we're in a scenario that gives the advantage to the Conservatives because they're more competitive."

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The Hill Times

338Canada.com's House Seat Projections if an Election Were Called Now

Party	Safe	Likely	Leaning	Toss up	Seat-by-seat projection	Last election
Conservative	93	12	19	17	141 [112-171]	119
Liberal	59	37	24	19	139 [105-165]	160
NDP	13	4	4	7	28 [16-50]	25
Bloc	15	3	4	6	28 [21-32]	32
Greens	1	1	0	0	2 [2-3]	2

Source: 338Canada.com

Global

Winter is coming in Ukraine: are there prospects for peace?

How wars end is important. World War I ended with the Versailles Treaty that many argue led to unresolved grievances and another war. World War II was followed by the more benign Marshall Plan that included reconstruction and long-term support commitments. We need to acknowledge that something other than total victory may be required now for peace.

Robin Collins &
Sylvie
Lemieux

Opinion



Recently, NATO's Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that the alliance will continue to support Ukraine for "as long as it takes." Prominent columnists have challenged the very idea that a ceasefire in the Ukraine crisis is possible or have even suggested that it might lengthen the war on Russian President Vladimir Putin's terms. Some are pressing for a "fight to victory" by Kyiv, given recent gains on the battlefield. Too often the nuclear weapons threat is seen as blackmail, a bluff, or a risk worth ignoring.

Is there hope for peace?

Panelists at a Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons discussion in late November were asked to consider opportunities for reducing the nuclear weapon threat. All acknowledged the dire situation in Ukraine following the illegal Russian invasion. But a crisis is also an opportunity to reassess. This moment could ideally lead us closer towards a common security understanding of conflict and conflict resolution.



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. There is debate about the usefulness of Canada in resolving the Ukraine crisis because this country is not seen as neutral, is loudly backing one side, and is showing little interest in a peace negotiations track. Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

There was some hope coming out of the G20 Declaration in Bali: "The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital."

Before the invasion, NATO and G7 states initially supported the Minsk Accords, but subsequently were reluctant to fully implement them. Similarly, Putin's reference to "one people" as a justification for aggression is unhelpful, and for the benefit of his domestic nationalistic audience. Can Putin be trusted to negotiate in good faith?

Many have argued against NATO enlargement for decades, and most agree this was part of the deal at the end of the Cold War. Real or imagined, Russia sees this now as a form of encirclement and therefore its own retaliatory capacity being compromised.

However, despite all this, there have been civilian corridors established, and temporary ceasefires to allow grain shipments (enabled by Turkey, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN) for mutual benefit. The security services of the United

States and Russia have also been in contact with one another.

Canadian Role

There is debate about the usefulness of Canada in resolving the Ukraine crisis because this country is not seen as neutral, is loudly backing one side, and is showing little interest in a peace negotiations track. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland has referred to a necessary "vanquished Russia."

Nevertheless, there is still an opportunity for Canada to call for reduced salience of nuclear weapons in NATO policy, and to advocate for de-alerting and No First Use. As a middle power country with some credibility, a call to push within the alliance for negotiations between Russia and Ukraine would be noticed.

These would all be positive signals. The risk of nuclear weapon use is intolerably high, but not only due to the rhetorical statements of Putin or Dmitry Medvedev. As Project Ploughshares' director Cesar Jaramillo notes, nuclear deterrence is a continuing unacceptable risk. Each day is a high-risk day.

Bringing conflict experts together might also provide an opportunity to make some headway, even if difficult. Peace researchers have suggested that an international forum should be convened. Turkey, which has good relations with both Ukraine and Russia, could be a helpful interlocutor. Or a neutral civil society organization like the International Pugwash Movement might offer to coordinate an exchange of views.

With the destruction of infrastructure, including knocked out heating and electricity, Ukrainians are heading into a brutal winter. Already an estimated 100,000 have been killed or injured on each side, according to some estimates. This tragedy and horrific loss of life may yet be a factor that leads towards meaningful pressure to end this war.

What Might Victory for Ukraine Look Like?

For many reasons, Putin's complete defeat is difficult to imagine. Any strategy that might lead to Russian humiliation is very dangerous. Putin is facing a kind of defeat with Sweden and Finland joining NATO, in addition to broad

isolation of Russia caused by his invasion and annexations. But ending the war is also the only way to end the current heightened nuclear weapon threat. This requires negotiations, even if many are currently uninterested.

How wars end is important. World War I ended with the Versailles Treaty that many argue led to unresolved grievances and another war. World War II was followed by the more benign Marshall Plan that included reconstruction and long-term support commitments.

We need to acknowledge that something other than total victory may be required now for peace. Canada can pursue the downgrading of the role of nuclear weapons within NATO's strategic concept and thereby reduce the possibility that they might be used intentionally or accidentally. Both the Canadian government and civil society can devote resources—now—to a Ukraine peace platform that will be essential for ending the current crisis and building a basis for future stability.

Robin Collins and Sylvie Lemieux are co-chairs of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

The Hill Times

Hybrid work in the federal public service is here to stay, there's no going back to 2019

A new way of thinking is seriously required, one that demands a much bigger conversation about the future of downtown Ottawa. You may recall the ridicule heaped on a public service manager who suggested that employees should come back to the office in order to support a local Subway franchise. Bringing public servants back downtown is not going to make the Byward Market area any safer or resolve the LRT mess.

Michael Kaczorowski

Opinion



OTTAWA—As first reported earlier last month, the federal Treasury Board has mandated all federal public servants to return to the office. Unfortunately, the announcement bears all the hallmarks of a shambolic exercise in policy-making, with predictable results.

Details of how this new directive will roll out are few, apart from directing deputy ministers to implement a minimum requirement of two to three days per week in the office, or 40 to 60 per cent of an employee's regular schedule. What matters is that this move marks a complete u-turn from the federal government's approach to date, which left it up to individual departments to figure out how and when their employees were to come back.

That decision, to no one's surprise, bred inconsistency, confusion and unanticipated consequences. Some employees at comparable jobs and levels could work at home while others could not do so. Many public servants



Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, pictured last month on the Hill, has mandated federal public servants to return to the office two to three days a week by the end of March. Former public servant Michael Kaczorowski writes that hybrid work is here to stay. 'There is no going back to 2019.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

began "department shopping," based on which employer offered the most flexible work-from-home arrangements. In its eagerness to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" solution, the federal government came up with a patchwork approach that could not possibly last.

Under pressure from the City of Ottawa, local businesses, and the opposition, the federal government has thrown up its hands and admitted defeat. In the absence of a genuine strategy, however, the Treasury Board has adopted a heavy-handed policy which sets the stage for needless confrontation with public-sector unions which have already signalled their opposition. The decision also leaves rank-and-file public servants completely in the dark about how a return to the office will work after nearly three years into the pandemic.

The challenges are considerable, starting with the public service work-world. Working from home ushered in the technologies, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, that allowed employees to continue to communicate and respond to work demands. Yet the supposed convenience of working from home cut both ways. While it has provided for greater flexibility, the onus on employees to be available at all hours has increased. Time spent during the morning/evening commute has been replaced with more on-screen time earlier and later. The office "lunch hour" or "coffee break" has become as much a relic of the past as fax machines and floppy discs.

Then there is the question of what returning to the office is going to look like in practice. For many recent hires, working in an office environment will be an

entirely new experience requiring the kind of social skills that previous generations developed as a matter of course. The transition will not necessarily be easy for some. Working in an office environment requires a very different kind of discipline than working from home.

The physical nature of the office will, of necessity, be very different. Cramming people together in tightly spaced cubicles is obviously a non-starter, post-pandemic. The notion of "collaboration" has been trotted out repeatedly by some as a reason for returning to the office. One could argue that collaboration is hardly enhanced when some employees are in the office while others continue to operate remotely. But collaboration is about getting the job done effectively, whether in person or virtually. The "kumbaya" element may be nice, but it is a secondary consideration. As it stands, departmental staff have no idea where and how they will be located.

Collaboration and productivity will definitely suffer if people are afraid to go back into the office. How will the Treasury Board address genuine health concerns in office environments which were already notorious for the lack of safeguards? Take the case of my former building at 10 Wellington Street in Gatineau, Que. Apart from being an outstanding example of brutalist early 1970s architecture, certain floors have been shut down due to a variety of issues, including bad air quality, bad water, bed bugs and bats. While remediation work goes on, employees from those floors have been moved elsewhere on a "temporary" basis. If this is Treasury Board President Mona Fortier's

idea of "reimagining" the workplace, the government has a long way to go.

It had been assumed up to now that the specifics of hybrid work were to be negotiated with public-sector unions. That now appears to have been thrown out the window, setting the stage for job actions. Employees who had already signed "telework" agreements with their managers must wonder if these are now worthless in light of the government's edict.

Another issue is particular to Ottawa as a government town. Our entire mass transit system has been built to deliver people in and out of the downtown core. Yet anyone who has stood at a bus stop during an Ottawa winter waiting for the bus that never comes, or when it does arrive is crammed to the ceiling with passengers, can appreciate the fact that people are reluctant to return to that scenario. Our much vaunted LRT was supposed to change all that and we know how that turned out.

There is no question that the federal government's volte-face is in large part a result of pressure from politicians and private sector organizations like the Canadian Chamber of Commerce wanting to see public servants back in their cubicles based on the perception that people are not working. Perception, like ignorance, is a terrible basis for public policy, never mind the insinuation behind what was previously referred to as a "return to work." The reality is that public servants have been working harder and longer since the pandemic while juggling the demands of family life.

A new way of thinking is seriously required, one that

demands a much bigger conversation about the future of downtown Ottawa. You may recall the ridicule heaped on a public service manager who suggested that employees should come back to the office in order to support a local Subway franchise. Bringing public servants back downtown is not going to make the Byward Market area any safer or resolve the LRT mess.

Treasury Board's dictum appears as reactive and inconsistent as its previous "chacun a son gout" approach. That is simply not good enough. It opens the door to needless fights with public sector unions, accusations of bad faith, mass grievances and likely legal action.

What we need is to lay a foundation for hybrid work which demonstrates consistency and fairness, balancing the needs of employees and employers. Hybrid work obviously raises important practical questions when it comes to such issues as measuring employee performance and other HR questions. Flexibility does not mean a free-for-all. The rights of public-sector employees must be matched by the obligations they have to their managers and to the public service as a whole.

The first point all sides in this debate need to understand and accept is that hybrid work is here to stay. There is no going back to 2019.

Michael Kaczorowski is a retired senior policy adviser for the Government of Canada whose public service career was spent primarily in federal-provincial relations in a variety of departments, including the Privy Council Office, Fisheries and Oceans, and Indigenous Affairs.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Trudeau's Indo-Pacific Strategy already raising serious doubts

To adopt an Indo-Pacific strategy that largely excludes China and attempts with the U.S. to isolate it is a dead end. It solves nothing while it risks a future war, that could escalate into something too awful to contemplate. Is this really in Canada's national interest? Where are wiser people when we need them?

David
Crane

Canada &
the 21st Century



TORONTO—It's only a few weeks old. But the Trudeau government's Indo-Pacific Strategy is already raising serious doubts. It does enough to please the Biden administration, so it will now support Canada joining the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Strategy, an initiative for an Asian coalition that deliberately excludes China while writing new rules for trade and supply chains. Canada was miffed when, last February, the U.S. announced its Indo-Pacific Strategy, which included 13 Asian nations, but excluded Canada.

Now, with Canada's increasingly adversarial approach to China, the United States has announced it will support Canadian membership. There is even to be a Canada-U.S. Strategic Dialogue on the Indo-Pacific, pulling Canada even more closely into the American orbit. Canadian foreign policy now seems driven by a determination to show the United States we are its most reliable ally in its efforts to contain China, as well as by our vulnerability to American protectionism.

One of Canada's leading China experts, Paul Evans of Simon Fraser University, contends that with its tight alignment with U.S. foreign policy, the strategy marks a significant shift in our own foreign policy. "Canada is lean-



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured on the Hill. Canadian foreign policy now seems driven by a determination to show the United States we are its most reliable ally in its efforts to contain China, as well as by our vulnerability to American protectionism, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ing closer to its American allies and away from a regional middle power role." What does it mean to the world, then, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau boasts that "Canada is back"?

Fear of the U.S. has often been an important factor in our relations with our neighbour. While Canada several times after 1949 considered establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing, the United States' opposition and fear of U.S. retaliation were always factors holding Canada back. As Bernie Frolic recalls in his history of Canada-China relations, prime minister Lester Pearson resisted establishing diplomatic relations with China, saying "it was better to have peace with Washington than relations with Peking."

But in 1968 his successor, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, argued "many of the major world issues will not be resolved completely or in any lasting way, unless, and until an accommodation has been reached with the Chinese nation." He pressed ahead, establishing diplomatic relations with China and supporting Beijing's return to the United Nations, despite strong U.S. opposition to both.

Pierre Trudeau's 1968 words are just as true today. There is an urgent need for new global rules and governance systems to avoid a descent into

a cataclysmic war, ensure global financial and economic stability, and enhance the ability to deal with major challenges facing all of mankind, from climate change and the real risk of future pandemics, nuclear proliferation, conflict in space, and other challenges of a more crowded planet.

But future progress is not possible if China is excluded from the writing of needed new rules. Canada's foreign policy should seek ways to improve global governance and prospects for a peaceful and sustainable future, rather than align itself with a dangerous United States policy to divide the world into competing blocs. The future world has to be a multipolar world.

Jeff Reeves, vice-president of research and strategy at the Asia

Pacific Foundation, is among those who sees some positive measures in Ottawa's Indo-Pacific Strategy. But its basic flaw is that it is more about aligning Canada with the adversarial approach of the United States, he argues. "Canada's decision to expand its naval footprint in Asia and its plan to establish a diplomatic position in Hawaii," Reeves argues, "are less about supporting Asian states' security than they are about Western state alignment. One finds no demand in the region for a more robust Canadian security role in Asia. Rather, one finds repeated concern over American provocation on matters ranging from North Korea and Taiwan to the South China Sea."

Stephanie Martel, a political scientist at Queen's University,

also has much praise for elements of the strategy. But she also raises concerns because "Canada seems to have effectively shut the door in the near to medium term on the possibility that China can act as a constructive player on the global stage, while at the same time stating that cooperation with Beijing on key-issue areas, like climate change, is not only possible but a necessity." While branding China as "a security threat" certainly "aligns with Washington's view, but it is not as clear as Ottawa suggests that all of our closest partners share this assessment, at least to this extent." Many in the European Union do not.

Moreover, she warns, "this stance is going to complicate Canada's attempts to overturn a perception in the region's policy circles that it is nothing more than a 'mini U.S.' and to convince ASEAN in particular that 'more Canada' is actually needed in key for a—given ASEAN's penchant for a non-confrontational—inclusive approach to regional affairs. I'm not sure how Ottawa is going to be able to walk that tightrope."

Sharon Zhengyang Sun, a Canada West Foundation economist, agrees it makes sense for Canada to pay more attention to the Indo-Pacific world. But she is also critical of the approach to China and its lack of planned active engagement with Beijing.

"Remaining in dialogue versus active engagement is very different," she says. "Remaining in dialogue with China is barely enough to manage relations with our second-largest trading partner." Investing more to increase Canadian understanding and expertise of China, as the strategy promises, is important. But it "allocates no investments or resources towards China. There is no explicit mention of China under the new Team Canada trade missions like there is for India, ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea. Nor is there an increase in visa-processing capacity for student permits or renewing student permits for China, as there is for India, Pakistan and the Philippines."

To adopt an Indo-Pacific strategy that largely excludes China and attempts with the U.S. to isolate it is a dead end. It solves nothing while it risks a future war, that could escalate into something too awful to contemplate. Is this really in Canada's national interest? Where are wiser people when we need them?

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

The Hill Times



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, pictured Dec. 13, 2022, in Ottawa. Canada's foreign policy should seek ways to improve global governance and prospects for a peaceful and sustainable future, rather than align itself with a dangerous United States policy to divide the world into competing blocs. The future world has to be a multipolar world, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu is on trial for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, and the evidence against him is strong. The bribery charge alone could get him 10 years in jail. But now he is saved from all that because his new government was sworn in. Serving prime ministers don't go to jail. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Israel: fifth time lucky for Benjamin Netanyahu

Prime Minister Benjamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu has put Israel through five elections in four years in order to come up with a coalition government that will not abandon him to the tender mercies of the courts.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—“When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully,” wrote Sam Johnson 250 years ago, and the Israeli prime minister has just confirmed it.

Prime Minister Benjamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu has put Israel through five elections in four years in order to come up with a coalition government that will not abandon him to the tender mercies of the courts. He is on trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust, and the evidence against him is strong. The bribery charge alone could get him 10 years in jail.

But now he is saved from all that because his new government was sworn in on Dec. 29, 2022. Serving prime ministers don't go to jail, and his new coalition will probably last long enough to change the laws and give him permanent immunity.

In effect, each of the five elections has been a referendum on Bibi's fitness to rule—and each one showed Israeli voters to be equally divided with almost mathematical precision on that question.

The roller-coaster ride started in 2019, when Netanyahu had already been in power for 10 years. His existing coalition fell apart when the corruption charges were made public, but there was an election due anyway. That would mean a wholesale reshuffle of the parties and many new coalition possibilities, so he went with it.

His Likud party emerged from that election as the biggest party, but the new coalition he created also fell apart. Try again.

Same result for 2019's second election: Bibi managed to form a coalition ranging right across the political spectrum, but it fell apart within the year.

It was becoming clear that Bibi himself was the problem. A growing majority of Israeli voters are right-wing, but a lot of them don't trust him personally. Try again.

Third election, December 2020 (and Netanyahu's trial was actually underway by now, though at a snail's pace). Likud was the biggest single party again, but a wildly disparate group of parties united only by their dislike of Bibi formed a coalition without him, and was confirmed by a fourth election in March, 2021.

Do try to keep up. There will be a test.

Out of office, Netanyahu busied himself with brokering an electoral merger between three small extreme right-wing parties that separately stood little chance of winning seats in the Knesset by themselves. (An Israeli party has to win 3.25 per cent of the national vote to be seated in parliament

at all.) Together on a single ticket, however, they could win a few seats.

Sixteen months rolled by and the anti-Bibi coalition predictably splintered, because they had almost nothing else in common. A fifth election was called, and when it was held two months ago Netanyahu's new creation, the Religious Zionist Party, won 14 seats.

That made it possible for the first time for Netanyahu to build a coalition government that is stable, because it contains only right-wing parties. It took five elections and a lot of everybody else's time, but he is a master politician.

The new Religious Zionist Party (RZP) is so extreme that most foreigners and many Israelis are shocked. Outgoing prime minister Yair Lapid describes it as “full-on crazy,” and former Bill Clinton adviser Daniel Seidemann, an Israeli, talks of “Israel's inexorable descent into totalitarianism and racism.”

That may be a bit overwrought, but the leaders of the RZP are definitely beyond the pale.

Deputy leader Itamar Ben-Gvir is a gun-brandishing street

agitator who has been indicted 50 times for racist incitement. He was a fan of far-right Jewish terrorist Rabbi Meir Kahane, and became famous as a teenager for stealing the hood ornament of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's car. He told the reporters: “We'll get to him too.” (Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist three weeks later.)

Ben-Gvir's colleague, RZP chairman Bezalel Smotrich, believes that Israel should annex the occupied Palestinian territories, and calls for Palestinians who throw stones to be shot by police. Last year, he told an Arab Member of the Knesset: “It's a mistake that Ben-Gurion didn't finish the job and throw you out in 1948.”

Both men are settlers living in the West Bank, and they want cabinet posts that give them power over what happens there—like legalizing Jewish settlements that are illegal even under Israeli law.

Bibi will swallow all of that and more because they will enable him to pass laws that give the Knesset power to override court decisions. (Judges: “Guilty as charged.” Knesset: “No, he's not.”)

The West Bank Palestinians are already in a slow-motion revolt: 150 killed by the Israeli army and Jewish settlers in 2022 (and 31 Israeli dead). The new government's response will be much too big and brutal, and the West Bank is already awash with arms. It's heading for war, or at least massacre.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is *The Shortest History of War*.
The Hill Times



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

Senior staff moves in Fisheries Minister Murray's office

Among the director-level changes in the office, Jason Rondeau is currently transitioning out of his role as director of policy, with Kurtis Layden lined up to replace him.

A number of senior staff moves have taken place in Fisheries and Oceans Minister **Joyce Murray's** office, with a new acting chief of staff named, four director-level changes to report, and another impending.

Chief of staff **Cyndi Jenkins** went on leave last summer and is set to return in June of this year. As reported, **George Young**, who recently retired after a decades-long career on the Hill, had initially filled in as acting chief of staff to Murray (stepping away from his now-former post as deputy chief of staff to Infrastructure and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** to do so). With Young's exit, **Neil MacIsaac** is now acting chief of staff to Murray.

MacIsaac first joined the fisheries team as director of operations under then-minister **Bernadette Jordan** in late 2019 and was made director of fisheries management and stakeholders management after Murray took over the portfolio in November 2021 following that year's federal election. MacIsaac previously worked for the Nova Scotia Liberal Party and caucus, including six years as director of regional caucus operations at the provincial legislature, and is a former special assistant for the Atlantic to then-interim federal Liberal leader **Bob Rae**, among other past roles.

Hill Climbers understands that when Jenkins returns in June, MacIsaac will become deputy chief of staff and director of fisheries management to Murray.

Kevin Lemkay, who'd been director of communications to Murray since the end of 2021, left the fisheries office in December to instead run Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion Minister **Carla Qualtrough's** communications shop.

Lemkay first began working in the federal political sphere after the 2015 federal election, when he was hired as a constituency assistant to Toronto Liberal MP **Rob Oliphant**. He moved to Ottawa two years later to become a special assistant for Ontario in the Liberal research bureau (LRB). In the fall of 2018, he joined then-border security and organized crime reduction minister



Kevin Lemkay is now communications director to Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray saw a number of end-of-year staffing moves in her office, including among her roster of directors. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Bill Blair's team as a communications and Ontario regional affairs adviser. He went on to work as press secretary to then-immigration minister **Marco Mendicino** and as an issues adviser in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** office.

In Qualtrough's office, Lemkay fills a gap left by **Jane Deeks**, who exited in the fall to become director of communications to Labour Minister **Seamus O'Regan**, as previously reported.

With Lemkay's exit, director of parliamentary affairs **Matthew Dillon** has switched roles to become Murray's new director of communications. **Hill Climbers** understands a new parliamentary affairs head is set to be hired in the office, so stay tuned for an update.

Prior to joining the fisheries team under Murray, Dillon worked as a senior issues manager to then-environment minister **Jonathan Wilkinson**. Working backwards chronologically, he's also a former: issues manager to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Carolyn Bennett** (during which time he briefly stepped in as both acting press secretary and communications director), special assistant to then-environment minister **Catherine McKenna**, and assistant to McKenna as the then-Liberal MP for Ottawa Centre, Ont.

Erik Nosaluk, who was previously a communications co-ordinator and digital media adviser, has been promoted to the title of senior communications adviser. Nosaluk has been working for Murray since her days as minister of digital government, having started in that office as a special assistant for communications in January 2020. He was promoted to press secretary there one year later and took on his last title after following Murray to the fisheries portfolio after the 2021 election.



Erik Nosaluk is now a senior communications adviser to Minister Murray. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Caleigh Garland has changed roles in Murray's office. Previously director of operations since, she's now director of stakeholder engagement for the fisheries minister. Garland has been working for Murray for more than a decade, starting as an aide in Murray's office as the Liberal MP for Vancouver Quadra, B.C. She joined Murray's office as then-digital government minister as director of operations in early 2020.

With Garland's new title, **Elizabeth Arsenault** has been promoted to director of operations in the fisheries office.

A former assistant to Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Mike Kelloway**, Arsenault joined Murray's office as a regional adviser for Nova Scotia and P.E.I. and assistant to the parliamentary secretary (Kelloway) at the beginning of 2022. She's also a former assistant to then-Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Mark Eyking** and ex-Atlantic regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary to then-health minister **Patty Hajdu**.

Jason Rondeau is currently in the process of transitioning out of his post as director of policy to Murray, with **Kurtis Layden** already lined up as his replacement.

Rondeau was made policy head after Murray took over the fisheries portfolio in November 2021, having first followed then-minister Jordan to the office as a policy and Atlantic regional affairs adviser in late 2019. He'd previously been an issues manager to Jordan as then-rural economic development minister. Rondeau is also a former policy and Atlantic regional adviser to then-infrastructure minister **François-Philippe Champagne** and executive assistant to Jordan as the then-MP for South Shore-St. Margarets, N.S. Keep reading **Hill Climbers** for any updates on where he's landed.



Elizabeth Arsenault is now director of operations. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Layden comes from Environment and Climate Change Minister **Steven Guilbeault's** office, where he'd been a senior policy adviser since November 2021. Layden originally joined the environment office under McKenna as an Atlantic regional affairs adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary in early 2019, and became a policy and parliamentary affairs adviser after Wilkinson took over the portfolio following that year's federal election.

In other policy staff news, policy adviser **Jonathan Robinson** recently added "senior" to his title. A former West and North regional affairs adviser with the LRB, he joined the fisheries team after Murray took on the post. Robinson is a former assistant in Murray's MP office, and ran her successful 2019 re-election campaign, and an ex-assistant to B.C. Liberal MP **Hedy Fry**, among other past experience.

Morgan McCullough has also been bumped up to senior policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser. McCullough joined the fisheries office under Jordan as a policy and Pacific regional affairs adviser in July 2021 and is also a former aide to B.C. Liberal MP **Patrick Weiler**.

Andrew Cooper is a new addition, having recently been hired as a special assistant for policy. From Stratford, P.E.I., Cooper has a bachelor's degree from the University of Prince Edward Island and a juris doctorate from the University of New Brunswick. He articulated with Duplain Law and was called to the bar of Ontario last fall.

Back in October, **Finn Long** joined the office as Murray's new executive assistant, replacing **Inessa De Angelis**, who left to pursue a master's degree at the University of Toronto. He's a former assistant to Toronto Liberal MP **Han Dong** and, according to his LinkedIn profile, he also works as a freelance photographer and filmmaker.

The rest of Murray's current team includes: **Jeffrey Woodland**, issues manager; **Don McDonald**, policy and Pacific regional affairs adviser; **Sofia Vartsakis**, policy and Prairies and North regional adviser; **Liam MacKinnon**, special assistant for Quebec and New Brunswick regional affairs; **Charles Lemay**, ministerial driver.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Kurtis Layden is taking over as policy director to the fisheries minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Finn Long, pictured with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Liberals to hold national caucus retreat



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks at the Liberal party's winter caucus meeting in Ottawa on Jan. 23, 2020, two months before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, JAN. 9

House Not Sitting—The House has adjourned for the Christmas break and is scheduled to sit 26 weeks in 2023. It will resume sitting Monday, Jan. 30, 2023, and will sit for three straight weeks (Jan. 30-Feb. 17). It will break on Friday, Feb. 17, and will return on Monday, March 6. It will sit for one week and will adjourn on Friday, March 10. It will return on Monday, March 20, and will sit for two weeks (March 20-March 31). It will break again on Friday, March 31, for two weeks and will return on Monday, April 17, and will sit for five consecutive weeks (April 17-May 19). It will adjourn on Friday, May 19, for one week and will return again on Monday, May 29, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (May 29-June 23). It's scheduled to adjourn for the summer on June 23, 2023. It will break for 12 weeks (June 23-Sept. 18) and will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-Nov. 17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15).

TUESDAY, JAN. 10

North America Leaders' Summit—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will travel on Jan. 10 to Mexico City, Mexico, to participate in the North American Leaders' Summit. Contact media@pmocpm.gc.ca.

Macklem to talk central bank independence—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will take part in a panel discussion on Tuesday, Jan. 10, on "Central bank independence and new risks: climate" part of the International Symposium on Central Bank Independence hosted by Sveriges Riksbank in Stockholm, Sweden. 1 p.m. EST. Details: bankofcanada.ca.

Webinar: 'Is the Competition Act the Solution?'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts a webinar, "Competitiveness and Prosperity: Is the Competition Act the Solution?" As the feds' consultation on the future of competition policy in Canada wraps up at the end of February, Robin Shaban, co founder of the Canadian-Anti-Monopoly Project, will discuss why we need to update Canada's competition law and the merits of applying an inclusiveness lens to this policy area. This event will take place 1 p.m. EST on Tuesday, Jan. 10. Details: cabe.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 11

Canada's Best Political Economic Forecast Lunch—The Canadian Club of Toronto and the *National Post* host "Canada's Best Political Economic Forecast Lunch," a forecast luncheon on the economy, the markets and political issues that will affect Canadians in the year ahead on Wednesday, Jan. 11, in Toronto at 11:45 a.m. EST. Participants include Kevin Carmichael, editor-in-chief, *Financial Post*; Amanda Lang, host, Taking Stock, Bell Media; Dennis Mitchell, chief executive officer and chief investment officer, Starlight Capital; and Jean-François Perrault, senior vice-president and chief economist, Scotiabank. Register at canadianclub.org.

Lecture: 'Language, Inclusion, Immigration and Unity'—McGill University hosts a lecture on "Language, Inclusion, Immigration and Unity: A personal perspective on the future of the Parti libéral du Québec," featuring David Birnbaum, recently retired Liberal MNA, on Wednesday, Jan. 11 at 4 p.m. EST in Montreal. Following the Parti libéral du Québec's worst electoral results in its history last October, Birnbaum will discuss how this political movement should redefine its future, re-establish its roots and rebuild its connection with Quebecers. Details: mcgill.ca.

THURSDAY, JAN. 12, 2023

Forum: 'Reflections on the Use of COP-style negotiations'—The University of Saskatchewan hosts a forum: "Reflections on the use of COP-style negotiations for environmental sustainability." Two participants from December's COP15 in Montreal, Dr. David Castle and Dr. Stuart Smyth, will discuss their experience and reflect on the COP model of advancing public policy. Castle was part of the official Canadian Delegation while Smyth was there as an expert as part of an industrial group sponsored by Crop Life International. This event will take place online on Thursday, Jan. 12 at 12 p.m. EST. Details: schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca.

FRIDAY, JAN. 13, 2023

Lecture: 'Growing Disinformation in Climate Spaces'—Carleton University hosts a lecture, "Growing disinformation in climate spaces" with Melissa Aronczyk, author and associate professor at Rutgers University. Climate disinformation is sprouting up all over the world: on the ground, on platforms, and throughout public and private airways,

landscapes, and flow zones. How bad is it? How does it work? And what can we do about it? This event will take place on Friday, Jan. 13, at 12 p.m. EST in Room 1811, Dunton Tower, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

Lecture: 'China's Renminbi and Global Monetary Disorder'—Carleton University hosts a lecture on "China's Renminbi and Global Monetary Disorder," part of NPSIA's seminar series. Gregory T. Chin, associate professor of politics at York University, will discuss why it's imperative for China to increase the global use of its currency, the Renminbi, amid the fracturing of the global liberal monetary order that has held since the end of the Second World War. This event will take place on Friday, Jan. 13, at Carleton University, Richcraft Hall, 9376 University Dr. 2:30 pm EST. Details: events.carleton.ca.

MONDAY, JAN. 16, 2023

Ex-GG to Discuss New Book—Former governor general David Johnston will discuss his new book, *Empathy: Turning Compassion into Action*, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Written for a post-pandemic world and based on Johnson's personal experiences, this book explores how awakening to the transformative power of listening and caring permanently changes individuals, families, communities, and nations. This event will take place on Monday, Jan. 16, 2023, at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. 7 p.m., EST Details: writersfestival.org.

TUESDAY, JAN. 17, 2023

Panel: 'ArriveCANNED'—The University of Ottawa hosts a conversation entitled "ArriveCANNED" exploring the circumstances and concerns around the introduction and prolonged use of the federal government's ArriveCAN app, highlighting key issues at play in this form of surveillance. This event will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the University of Ottawa, Fauteux 302, 57 Louis Pasteur, 4 p.m. EST. Tickets: eventbrite.ca.

The Walrus Talks: Inequality—The *Walrus* Magazine presents "The Walrus Talks at Home: Inequality," Oxfam's annual report on the state of global wealth disparity looks at the why and how of who is winning and who is losing in today's economy. Panelists include Lynne Groulx, CEO, Native Women's Association of Canada; Alexandra Haas, executive director, Oxfam Mexico; Sohaib Shahid, director, Conference

Board of Canada; and Joel Solomon, author and co-founding partner, Renewal Funds. This event will happen on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m. EST. Details: thewalrus.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 18— THURSDAY, JAN. 19, 2023

Crown Corporate Governance Conference—The Canadian Institute hosts the "Crown Corporate Governance" conference from Jan. 17-18, featuring programming addressing the most critical challenges, create solutions, and provide guidance for decision-makers of crown corporations and public sector entities. This year's co-chairs are Teresa Woo-Paw, chair at Canadian Race Relations Foundation; Colleen Ouellette, deputy secretary and director corporate secretariat at Export Development Canada; and Thomas Yeo, partner at Torsys LLP. Speakers include Anne-Cécile Lequain, general manager, employee services and diversity, Canada Post; Chantal Guay, CEO at Standards Council of Canada; Frederic Duguay, general counsel and corporate secretary, Canada Infrastructure Bank; and other key stakeholders. Join the chairs and board members of leading federal and provincial crown corporations, as well as government and public sector executives, as they share insights and practical solutions on obstacles and challenges impeding board directors today. Jan. 17-18, 2023. Save 10 per cent with the Hill Times Publishing promo code: D10-999-HILLTIMES. For more, visit: bit.ly/3S9nsc4, email: customer-service@canadianinstitute.com, or call 1-877-927-7936.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 18, 2023

Luncheon: 'The Future of Canada's Life Science Industry'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion on "The Future of Canada's Life Science Industry" featuring Gordon C. McCauley, president and CEO of adMare Bio-Innovations; Cate Murray, president and CEO of Stem Cell Network; and Rob Annan, president and CEO of Genome Canada. This event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. 11:30 a.m. EST. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

The Restitution Dialogues—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts a conference, "The Restitution Dialogues: Exploring the Vatican Archives." Panel participants will discuss the broader impact of the contemporary 'restitution revolution', the nature and provenance of Canadian Indigenous material in the Vatican collection, institutional best practices in restitution and repatriation, and the cultural impact of return and renewal. 12:00 pm EST. This event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, online. billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

Lecture: 'Deploying Feminism'—The Balsillie School for International Affairs hosts a hybrid lecture on "Deploying Feminism: The Role of Gender in NATO Military Operations," featuring Stéfanie von Hlatky, Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Gender, Security, and the Armed Force and the Associate Dean (research) of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Queen's University. This hybrid event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, 67 Erb St. W. Waterloo, Ont., at 12:30 p.m. EST. Details: balsillieschool.ca.

Panel: 'Power, Policy and Queerness'—McGill University hosts a panel discussion on "Power, Policy and Queerness," highlighting diverse views of people and groups working on policy issues affecting 2SLGBTQI+ communities across Canada, reflecting on how changes in the policy landscape

have impacted their work, and sharing recommendations for the way forward in Canada. Participants include Curt Wackett, programs and policy research officer, Rainbow Railroad; Jaime Sadgrove, manager of communications and advocacy, Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity; and Chris Karas, present litigant in the federal case of Christopher Karas v. Canadian Blood Services and Health Canada. This event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Thomson House, 3650 rue McTavish, Montreal. 2 p.m. EST. Details: mcgill.ca/maxbellschool.

Panel: 'The Future of Canada's Natural Resources'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts a panel discussion on "Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Future of Canada's Natural Resources." Participants include former MP Dan McTeague, president, Canadians for Affordable Energy; Alex Pourbaix, president and CEO, Cenovus Energy; Catherine Cobden, president and CEO, Canadian Steel Producers Association; and James Scougack, executive vice-president, operational services and chief development officer, Bruce Power. This event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Hilton Hotel, 145 Richmond St. W., Toronto. 11:45 a.m. EST. Details: economicclub.ca.

Book launch: 'Canada and China: A Fifty-Year Journey'—York University hosts the launch of Prof. B. Michael Frolic's new book, *Canada and China: A Fifty-Year Journey*. A panel discussion on past, present, and future Canada-China relations will follow. This event will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 18, at York University, 519 Kanef Tower, 4700 Keele St. North York, Ont., 3 p.m. EST. Details: events.yorku.ca.

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