

Joe Biden comes to town

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THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

**Liberals
should treat
China's
election
meddling
controversy
as a politically
'life-
threatening
event,' say
politicos,
pollsters**

BY ABBAS RANA

China's attempts to interfere in Canadian elections is politically more explosive than the SNC-Lavalin, blackface/brownface and the WE Charity scandals, and its fallout could carry serious consequences for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's personal political career and the Liberal Party in the next election, say politicians.

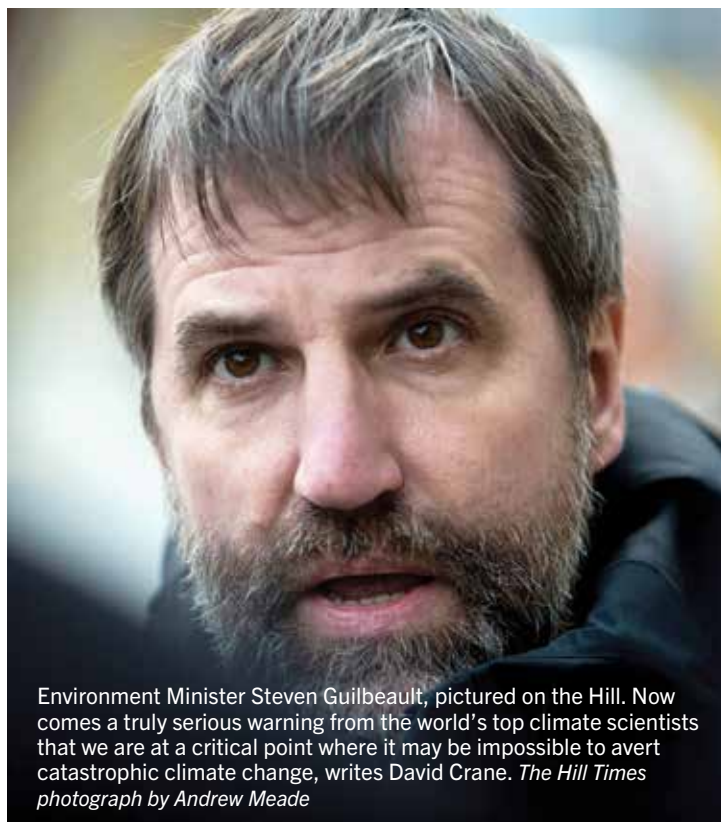
"You're dealing with a very tired government that has these other scandals in the past, but this goes to the heart of Canadian democracy," said Duane Bratt,

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OPINION

Humanity has reached a critical moment in history

The latest IPCC report warns: 'In this decade, accelerated action to adapt to climate change is essential to close the gap between existing adaptation and what is needed. Meanwhile, keeping warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires deep, rapid and sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors. Emissions should be decreasing by now and will need to be cut by almost half by 2030.' **Read David Crane p. 14**



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, pictured on the Hill. Now comes a truly serious warning from the world's top climate scientists that we are at a critical point where it may be impossible to avert catastrophic climate change, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

**Feds need
to better
communicate
what Critical
Election
Incident
Public
Protocol
does, says
Rosenberg**

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

Recent days have revealed regular reports—mainly by Global News and *The Globe and Mail*—on allegations of Chinese interference in the last two federal elections.

In early 2019, before the national vote in October of that year, Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.), then-minister of democratic institutions—a cabinet position that no longer exists) announced the establishment of the Critical Election Incident Public Protocol (CEIPP), which the federal government explained would be "a mechanism for communicating with Canadians during the writ period in a clear, transparent, and impartial manner in the event

Continued on page 17



Mike Lapointe

Heard On The Hill

‘I thought I was going to Jedi mind-trick him into just friggin’ off’: Critch learns basics of snowboarding from PM Trudeau on *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*’ sketch

This Hour Has 22 Minutes’ Mark Critch recently got a lesson from Canada’s “most famous snowboard instructor,” Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**.

Prior to his time as an MP and prime minister in the halls of Parliament, Trudeau once worked as a snowboard instructor in Whistler, B.C.

“I’ve always wanted to learn how to snowboard,” said Critch, asking if the prime minister was a “legit snowboard instructor.”

Trudeau said that indeed he was a level two instructor, but that a few years back, he was given an honorary level four, to which Critch replied, “that is the saddest thing I’ve ever heard.”

“I’m going to learn how to snowboard, and you know, maybe you can have something to fall

back on if things don’t work out, other than [NDP Leader] **Jagmeet Singh**,” said Critch.

Hand-in-hand with the prime minister, Trudeau at one point suggests Critch slide more to the left.

“Typical Liberal—further to the left,” said Critch. The prime minister’s response: “you’re about to dig in your toes and fall on your face while you’re making a joke.”

Critch asked who taught Trudeau how to ski, with Trudeau replying that it was his father.

“**Fidel Castro**, taught you to ski?” said Critch.

Critch eventually asks if the prime minister would “show us what you can do as a level two snowboard instructor?”

“You know what a level-two snowboard instructor does? He

does what you just saw me doing: teaching others how to snowboard,” said Trudeau.

“I thought I was going to Jedi mind-trick him into just friggin’ off—but you’ve been prime minister for like eight years now?” asked Critch. “We all know how hard it is to get him to frig off.”

Recipients of Persons Case Awards to be honoured March 30

Recipients of the Governor General’s Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case will be honoured on March 30 at



Let’s tango: *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*’ Mark Critch, left, gets a lesson from Canada’s “most famous snowboard instructor,” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph courtesy of Twitter

the Shaw Centre in downtown Ottawa.

The 2022 Recipients include Dr. **Lynn Gehl**, an Algonquin Anishinaabe-Ikwe and member of Pik-wākanagān First Nation of the Ottawa River Valley; Dr. **Shimi Kang**, an internationally recognized advocate for mental health, diversity and equity for girls and women; **Farrah Khan**, world-renowned for her groundbreaking work supporting survivors of gender-based violence and advocacy alongside marginalized communities; Dr. **Sylvia Maracle**, a Wolf Clan member, leader and knowledge keeper from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory; **Judy White**, who is Mi’kmaq and a member of the Flat Bay Band; and **Ishita Aggarwal**, a public health professional, fourth-year medical student, and women’s health and human rights advocate.

The awards were established in 1979 by the government with the support of then-governor

general **Edward Schreyer** to celebrate the 50th anniversary of five women from Alberta winning the judiciary battle to be recognized as persons in 1929, therefore making them eligible for appointment to the Senate.

“These awards highlight Canadian contributions to the advancement of women’s equality and celebrate Canada’s evolution as an inclusive society,” according to the website.

Report finds Canada ranks 13th in world’s happiest countries in 2023

In the most recent World Happiness Report, the 10th since the first report was published, Canada came in 13th place, just behind Australia and Austria.

Although the happiest country in the region, with Canada moving up two spots from last year’s global happiness ranking, the country’s score actually dropped slightly from 7.03 to 6.96.

“It’s difficult to pinpoint why citizens feel less satisfied, but inflation, economic uncertainty, and many other factors could play a role,” according to the report.

“Are wealth and prosperity legitimate measures of happiness? How about safety and health outcomes? In the West, we view democracy as a key component to happiness, yet there are countries under authoritarian rule that score high in the Happiness Index,” according to the website. “Questions like these make “ranking happiness” a particularly challenging puzzle, but also one worth pursuing.”

Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and New Zealand took the top 10 spots, ranging from happiness scores of 7.8 to 7.1.

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Monday’s photo

Waiting for Biden:

Members of the security detail wait for U.S. President Joe Biden to arrive at the Canada Reception Centre at the Macdonald-Cartier Airport in Ottawa for his first state visit to Canada on March 23, 2023.

The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



YOU MADE THE RULES NOW ENFORCE THEM

Driver Inc. has created an uneven playing field in the trucking industry and led to unfair disadvantages for compliant businesses. **This federal government can make immediate change** if we are to protect drivers' rights, and Canada's supply chains.

Let's put a stop to the scam. Act today.

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News

Senators unhappy with government rejection of ‘surgical compromise’ on C-11, but likely won’t block bill’s passage

Defeat of amendment on user-generated content leaves ambiguity in law, causing ‘uncertainty and fear,’ says Senator Paula Simons

BY IAN CAMPBELL

ASenator behind many of the Upper Chamber’s amendments to C-11 says she is “quite disappointed” that the government plans to oppose a key amendment related to user-generated content on social media platforms.

Independent Senator Paula Simons (Alberta) told *The Hill Times* that the government “moved in important ways” by accepting several changes to the bill, but she was still left wishing for more.

“We really thought we had come up with a surgical compromise that allowed the government to do what it wanted to do without accidentally entangling digital creators, whom the government has said it does not intend to include,” Simons said. “We thought that our own amendment would

clarify the language and give everybody peace of mind.”

Last month, the Senate returned Bill C-11 to the House with 26 amendments, after its longest-ever study of a piece of government legislation. On March 7, Canadian Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) announced the government would accept most of those amendments, but oppose several key changes, including the one related to user-generated content.

The government is seeking to require online streaming services to show a minimum amount of Canadian content to audiences, as has been the case for decades on television and radio under the Broadcasting Act. While some organizations representing artists, such as SOCAN, support extending this concept to digital platforms, many independent creators who post content to platforms such as YouTube and TikTok have expressed that they do not want to be captured by this provision. They are concerned if algorithms on these platforms are required to show their content to more users in Canada—even viewers who may not be interested in it—the algorithm would interpret the content as being unpopular, leading to less exposure for those creators globally.

Simons said her amendment tried to address this by providing clearer definitions of the kinds of creators these online platforms would be required to display as part of the Canadian content requirements. She said any music that has a unique signifier number in the Canadian and global music system—which allows it to get royalties and count for Canadian content on radioplay—would still be captured by C-11. The same would be the case for any video content originally broadcast on television and then posted to YouTube, such as a broadcast of a live sporting event or television documentary. However, the amendment would have removed a criteria from C-11 that independent creators generating revenue online would be captured in the scope the bill.

“We wanted to find a way to balance the rights and privileges of Canadian recording artists—many of whom, especially in Quebec told us that they wanted this in—while also respecting the rights and the privileges of digital creators who absolutely

didn’t want to be in,” said Simons. “So we thought we had come up with a balance. The government doesn’t see it that way.”

In response, Rodriguez wrote that the Senate amendment would limit the government’s “ability to publicly consult on, and issue, a policy direction to the CRTC,” and “prevent the broadcasting system from adapting to technological changes over time.”

Simons described that response as “a sentence that requires some interpretation.”

“There’s nothing in our amendment that precludes the government from engaging in public consultation,” she said. “I found that a very perplexing thing to say. Nor is there anything in our amendment that stops the government or the CRTC to adapting to technological change.”

Simons said the government must make a choice, so the legislation has clarity.

“Either the government is serious when it says that it’s not including digital creators, or it isn’t,” she said. “Minister Rodriguez has repeatedly said, ‘Platforms in, producers out.’ It would be good if your bill said that too.”

However, in an email statement, Laura Scaffidi, a spokesperson for Rodriguez, said the government was delivering “what Canadian artists and creators have asked.”

“We thank the Senators for their important work as they studied Bill C-11,” said Scaffidi. “The government accepted a large majority of the amendments they adopted. We accepted the amendments that made Bill C-11 stronger, to ensure that tech giants pay their fair share.”

C-11 ‘a question of survival’ for French language, but still requires improvements, says supporter

ISG Senator Julie Miville-Dechéne (Inkerman, Que.), who worked closely with Simons during the Senate’s study of the bill, also expressed disappointment. She told *The Hill Times* she is a strong supporter of the overall goals of Bill C-11, but found the area related to user-generated content needs improvement.

“I’m French-speaking, I represent Quebec, and it is partic-



On March 7, Canadian Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez announced the government would accept the majority of Senate amendments to Bill C-11, but reject several key changes, including one related to user-generated content. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ularly important for a language like French that there will be some ... priority or precedence” for Canadian, Francophone, and Indigenous content, said Miville-Dechéne.

“In Quebec, we are listening to less and less Francophone music, because music now is consumed through platforms,” she said. “The algorithms are proposing mostly Anglophone content.”

Miville-Dechéne called it “a question of survival of the culture of the French language” that the provisions of C-11 come in, but that she heard in the bill’s study “enough worries and enough pushback on this particular article” to conclude it “merits to be clarified.”

“As a senator, even though I’m for this bill, I think our role is to study it in depth and to see if there are some improvements that would make the bill better,” she said. “It’s not because you like a bill that you close your eyes and just say, ‘let it pass like this.’ You have to hear very seriously all the arguments, pro and cons ... We’re not just there to vote. We’re there to try to improve legislation, if it has to be improved.”

Simons said she developed a strong interest in the issue when she was assigned as the Independent Senate Group’s legislative lead on the bill, along with fellow ISG member Donna Dasko (Ontario).

She said her three decades of work as a journalist also gave her a greater appreciation of these issues.

“I was an early adopter of social media,” she said. “I have worked in this space, and so I’ve seen it evolve and develop. And so when digital creators first started coming to me and saying we’re really concerned about this, I was probably a little more fluent in some of these platforms.”

‘Ambiguity creates ‘uncertainty and fear,’ says Simons

Simons said that despite the government’s plans to pass C-11 without this Senate amendment, the impact that the law will have on user-generated content remains unclear. It depends on how the government issues its policy direction to the CRTC, which will enforce the regulation.

If, in the policy direction, the government uses that tool to

scope out user-generated content, then the impact of the legislation itself may be “minimal” said Simons.

However, the uncertainty it creates is a problem, she said.

“What there is right now is uncertainty and fear,” said Simons. “And it couldn’t have hurt to provide clarity to at least get people to know that they were safe in that space ... If people stop creating, if people leave the country to do their work, if people feel inhibited, that’s a bad thing.”

If the bill is returned to the Senate in the form the government has indicated, it will be greeted with a mix of “disappointment and frustration” because “we thought very carefully about these amendments,” said Simons.

However, she expects most Senators would view this as a case when the Upper Chamber must defer to the elected House of Commons and pass the bill.

“I’m still uncomfortable with the bill but ... the bar is very high for the Senate to kill a bill, and I’m not sure that most senators will agree if this meets that bar,” she said.

Miville-Dechéne said she would not reveal how she will vote, but remains “very much in favour” of C-11, and that this situation is likely one where the Senate should defer to the House.

Conservative Heritage critic Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, Alta.), whose party opposes the bill, said in an interview with *The Hill Times* that if her party forms government it would repeal C-11.

Thomas said she thinks it is “rather optimistic” to expect that user-generated content will be scoped out in the policy direction, based on Rodriguez’s “very telling” decision to reject the Senate amendment.

“The government has been showing its cards,” she said. “It does wish to scope in user generated content. It does wish to retain power and to retain flexibility to manoeuvre in terms of its regulation of content online.”

Simons said she will continue to follow the issue after the law is passed.

“I’m still going to be pushing to see the regulations,” she said. “And I’m hoping that the regulations live up to the government’s promises.”

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ISG Senator Paula Simons said she is ‘quite disappointed’ the government plans to oppose an amendment related to user-generated content on social media platforms. *Photograph courtesy of Paula Simons*

Canada must reject the culture wars' weapon of 'anti-woke' and understand its dangers

Errol P. Mendes

Comment



When populist and demagogic leaders use the cultural weapon of “woke” or “wokeness,” it is often meant to refer to those who are overly imbued with political correctness. However, its use has a more insidious rationale that aims at promoting divisions in society in public education, the media, corporate governance and more recently to argue wokeness as even the cause of the banking crisis in the U.S. The two leading populist leaders for the Republican presidential nomination—Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis—are wielding this culture weapon with increasing intensity. DeSantis uses it to instil fear in parents that sexual and racial minorities want to promote their ideologies, culture and racial guilt into the children that belong to families in the dominant and voting majority population.

His Stop WOKE Act is aimed at preventing the teaching or training on certain topics on race, sex, and gender in Florida public schools and workplac-

es. He has also presented an existential threat to academic freedom at colleges and universities by defunding certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and by abolishing certain majors such as those relating to critical race theory and giving the power to fire tenured faculty members by political appointees. He feels confident enough with this favourite culture wars weapon that he has stated that Florida is where woke goes to die. What he really aims for is to crush opponents who believe in substantive equality and equal dignity for the most vulnerable in society while seeking the votes of those who are most prone to fear that their dominant position and values in society is being threatened by the marginalized in society.

DeSantis went further in wielding the “woke” weapon blaming the managers of the Silicon Valley Bank for focusing too much on diversity programs diverting them for their core mission. This is the same culture warrior who voted as a congressman for the deregulation of these smaller banks under changes to the Dodd-Franks Act that was signed into law by then-president Donald Trump another anti-woke warrior in 2018. Yet, his son Donald Trump Jr. could not resist adding that the failure of the SVB could be attributed to a leftist/woke ideology. Some

of the other Republican congress members have also labelled the SVB one of the most woke banks.

While it is becoming clear that the use of the word “woke” is to create social divisions, its own proponents often fail to offer clear definitions of what this cultural weapon means. One conservative writer, Bethany Mandel, who often uses the woke weapon, when asked to define it in a viral video was stumped.

One person who has a clearer and more destructive rationale for the language and meaning of this cultural weapon is indicted war criminal Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has linked his invasion of Ukraine to the culture wars in the United States and other western countries. He is reported to have accused the West of moving towards Satanism and teaching sexual deviation to children and that he and Russia are fighting to save the souls of present and future generations. His message could also be aimed at those Republican culture warriors in Congress who could be persuaded to vote against financing Ukraine’s fight for survival. Some may even identify with Putin’s use of the culture weapon to promote a form of autocracy in their own country that allows for suppression of anyone or group that does not share their anti-democratic values.

In Canada, it is the present leader of the Conservative Party, Pierre Poilievre, who is asserting the “woke movement” is against freedom. This wannabe prime minister should be aware that this culture weapon is being used elsewhere to establish the base of an intolerant and close-minded society, and could be the building blocks of autocracy or worse. Meanwhile, proponents of this “woke” weapon assert they are trying to protect the values of the majority in society. This is why this anti-woke politics is a danger to Canadian society and politics. It can be used by the most unsavoury of politicians to undermine the real meaning of what is meant by the woke agenda. Perhaps it is time for those who understand the dangers of the attacks on “wokeness” to assert that if being “woke” is to seek the best that democracy in Canada can offer—namely substantive equality—inclusion and equal liberty and dignity for all, bring it on. Its antithesis is autocracy and the rule of fear.

Professor Errol P. Mendes is editor-in-chief of the National Journal of Constitutional Law, president of the International Commission of Jurists, Canadian Section, and teaches law at the University of Ottawa.

The Hill Times

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Farmers, growers and ranchers are on the front lines of climate change.

They grow our food and drive our economy.

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Bill C-234 will unleash farmers, growers and ranchers’ full potential. The Agriculture Carbon Alliance and our 15 national farm organizations are calling on all Members of Parliament to vote in favour of it.

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News

Job security during transition to low-carbon economy among top concerns in environment-heavy February for lobbying

Environment-related advocacy reclaimed its spot as the most popular subject matter discussed in federal lobbying in February, after two months lead by economic development discussions.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Environment-related advocacy took the top spot as the most discussed subject matter in federal lobbying in February, led by Canada’s largest labour organization arguing that workers must be protected as the country transitions to a low-carbon economy. Hundreds of workers and labour leaders from across Canada mobilized on Parliament Hill on Feb. 6-7 for lobby days organized by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). Decision-makers in Ottawa were urged to invest in unionized, sustainable jobs for energy workers that protect their communities and the environment, during the organization’s “biggest lobby delegation to date,” according to a CLC press release.

The CLC was the most-active lobbying organization overall in February, and contributed 133 of the 3,155 communication reports filed for the month, according to a search of the federal lobbyists’ registry on March 23. The environment was listed as a subject for discussion in all the CLC’s communication reports for the month.

The Hill Times reached out to the CLC to discuss its advocacy related to the environment, and was directed to a report entitled *Jobs in a Sustainable Economy*, which the organization shared with MPs, Senators, and federal ministers during the lobby days.

“Canada’s unions know that we need to work together to meet our climate ambitions and limit climate change to no more than 1.5 degrees. That means Canada’s economy will change,” reads the report. “We know from research conducted directly with potentially affected workers that they understand the risks of climate



Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan said that building a net-zero economy will mean hundreds of thousands of good union jobs, in a Natural Resources Canada press release on Feb. 17. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

change and the need for our economy to adapt, but they worry that without taking the right steps, they, their families, and their communities will be left behind.”

The CLC argues in the report that, during a transition to a low-carbon economy, workers should have a pathway to jobs with equal or greater income, safety protections, union protections, and benefits as they had in the carbon-intensive industry jobs they leave behind.

Other topics discussed by CLC representatives during the lobby days included requests for greater investments in health-care, and for the introduction of anti-scab legislation. CLC representatives also called for swift passage of Bill C-228, Conservative MP Marilyn Gladu’s (Sarnia-Lambton, Ont.) private member’s bill, which is intended to protect workers’ pensions during corporate bankruptcies. The bill completed second reading in the Senate on March 7.

CLC representatives communicated with seven ministers during its lobby days, including Labour Minister Seamus O’Regan (St. John’s South-Mount Pearl, N.L.), Employment Minister Carla Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.), and Infrastructure Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.).

The federal government released its interim sustainable jobs plan on Feb. 17, which establishes a framework for transitioning employment away from the fossil fuel industry and towards clean energy.

“There’s huge opportunity coming for workers. Building the net-zero economy means hundreds of thousands of good jobs—good, union jobs. We’re going to make sure that Canadian workers

have the tools they need to get them,” said O’Regan in a Natural Resources Canada press release.

February marked the return of environment-related advocacy as the most-discussed topic in federal lobbying, after two months with economic development as the top subject matter.

The environment was listed as a subject for discussion in 666 communication reports in February, according to a search of the federal lobbyists’ registry on March 23. Following behind that month were economic development, which appeared in 563 communication reports, and health, which appeared in 483.

Previously, economic development led as a topic of discussion in January 2023 and in December 2022. Economic development and the environment tied with 776 communication reports each in November of last year. Overall, the environment was the most popular subject discussed in 2022, and appeared in the most communication reports in nine straight months, between February and October of last year.

In terms of advocacy related to the environment, Pulse Canada distantly followed behind the CLC in February, and filed 22 communication reports on the subject.

Greg Cherewyk, president of Pulse Canada, told *The Hill Times* that his organization launched its “Impactful Campaign” in Ottawa on Feb. 6. The organization’s representatives met with designated public office holders to argue that expanding production of pulse crops could contribute to the economy, while helping to lower greenhouse gas emissions on farms, he said.

According to Cherewyk, the single largest source of

greenhouse gases related to producing most crops are the nitrous oxide emissions associated with nitrogen fertilizer. However, pulse crops naturally produce their own nitrogen, which replaces the need to add nitrogen fertilizers.

Pulse crops will also leave residual nitrogen in the soil, which can then benefit whatever crops are planted next in that field, according to Cherewyk. Pulses grown in Canada include mainly dry beans, dry peas, lentils and chickpeas, according to Statistics Canada.

“There’s really no other practice, piece of technology or innovation that could be implemented on a farm and produce that kind of emission reduction so simply,” said Cherewyk. “To expand production of this crop would not only result in a positive contribution to the Canadian economy [and] more jobs ... but it would also result in lower emissions from agriculture.”

About 8.8 million acres of pulse crops contributed about \$6.3-billion to Canada’s economy in 2021, according to data from Pulse Canada.

During the Impactful Campaign, Pulse Canada representatives communicated with public office holders including Conservative agriculture critic John Barlow (Foothills, Alta.), Conservative environment critic Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, Que.), and Liberal MP Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, P.E.I.), a member of the House Finance Committee.

Close behind Pulse Canada in February was the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which filed 21 communication reports related to the environment.

Phil Gass, lead for transitions within IISD’s energy program, told *The Hill Times* that the organization’s February discussions on the Hill also revolved around worker protections during the transition to renewable energy. IISD’s “Re-energizing Canada” campaign argues that reducing emissions from Canada’s oil and gas production is a priority, and includes recommendations for a secure transition.

“Because it’s getting close to budget time ... we were helping to make sure that our research, and particularly research related to the fiscal aspects of energy transition, was getting to folks that are helping to make some of those decisions,” said Gass. “I think we’re just watching really closely to see how fiscal investments and energy transition are structured. We want, as much as possible, funds directed to the renewable energy transition. And then on the social side, we want to make sure that workers in the energy sector are protected, despite fluctuations in energy prices and transitions.”

IISD’s lobbying activity in February included speaking with Liberal MP John Aldag (Cloverdale-Langley City, B.C.), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee; Deltell; and Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.), chair of the House Environment Committee.

In terms of overall lobbying on all subjects, the most active organizations in February were the CLC, followed by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers First District, who participated in the CLC’s lobby days on the Hill and contributed 42 communication reports. Aerospace Industries Association of Canada was third with 36 communication reports filed for the month, followed by the Breakfast Club of Canada, which filed 31 communication reports.

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Top Contributors of ‘Environment’ Communication Reports		
Organization	Communication reports listing 'environment'	Total communication reports
Canadian Labour Congress	133	133
Pulse Canada	22	26
International Institute for Sustainable Development	21	21
Agnico Eagle Mines Limited	20	26
Canadian Aquaculture Suppliers Association	18	18
Irving Oil Limited	16	17
Environmental Defence Canada	12	12
Canadian Nuclear Association	11	19
Canola Council of Canada	10	16
David Suzuki Foundation	10	13

The environment was the most popular subject listed in communication reports for federal lobbying in February. This table shows the organizations that contributed the most communication reports about the environment, as well as how many communication reports they filed overall related to other subjects. Information courtesy of the federal lobbyists’ registry.

CANADA'S GREEN BUILDINGS STRATEGY NEEDS A SOLID FOUNDATION

Canada's green building sector is one of the best solutions to reduce carbon emissions, increase jobs, and grow the economy. In fact, supporting green building through proactive policies and investments could triple the number of jobs to almost 1.5 million, contribute \$150 billion to Canada's GDP, and result in a reduction of 53 MtCO₂e of carbon compared with 2018 levels – all by 2030.

Whether retrofitting buildings or constructing new zero-carbon ones, green buildings also have many other co-benefits, including improving air quality and occupant health, protecting ecosystems, greening Canada's supply chain, and aiding in housing affordability while ensuring more resilient buildings and communities.

With all the proven value green buildings provide, we support Natural Resources Canada's efforts to develop Canada's Green Buildings Strategy (GBS). Ensuring the strategy has credibility requires a solid foundation that includes ambitious and measurable milestones, support from all levels of government, and targeted investment. The strategy also must consider the life cycle emissions of buildings and offer a long-term approach and solutions including on resilience to a changing climate. For best results, it must align with the building sector's innovation and investment cycles and the dramatic demand for an expanded and skilled workforce.

Decarbonization at speed and scale will depend on forward-thinking regulations and targeted government support for zero-carbon buildings and deep-carbon retrofits. Our main trading partners are already moving ahead, whether through regulations like the new Energy Performance of Buildings Directive of the European Union or the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States. With a strong GBS, Canada could keep pace and unlock significant economic and competitive benefits.

Closer to home, carbon emissions are also becoming a business risk for real estate owners. "Brown discounts" — where high carbon emissions reduce the investment a building can attract — are a growing consideration in real estate transactions. Keeping the real estate sector competitive will require the GBS to set national guidelines, coordinate actions at all levels of government, and work with industry to implement robust tools and solutions.

A successful strategy must also prioritize and incentivize zero carbon transition planning to give building owners the tools to sequence needed interventions while controlling costs. Establishing a building or portfolio-wide plan is urgent when you consider that envelope improvements may happen only once by 2050 but can significantly impact the size and costs of heating and cooling systems.

Support for quality, accessible, and reliable building data is another area where the GBS could ensure a strong foundation for decarbonizing Canada's buildings. Building owners need data to determine where to invest and how to demonstrate the effectiveness of their sustainability actions. Governments also need data to guide policies, establish program baselines, and measure program effectiveness. The GBS should encompass tools for measuring building performance and establish benchmarks for labelling both buildings and materials using Life Cycle Assessment best practices, procurement, and performance data. By helping manufacturers report on their products' environmental performance, the government can strengthen its commitment to creating a viable, domestic supply chain of low-carbon building and retrofit materials.

Lastly, the GBS will necessitate a coherent and coordinated whole-of-government approach that adapts to current public programs and policies while being flexible enough to account for future ones. The GBS must coordinate with the Greening Government Strategy, align with building codes that should include operational and embodied carbon emissions by 2025, and support procurement policies such as the upcoming "Buy Clean" strategy. Beyond federal actions, the GBS could establish a consistent approach that other levels of government can follow to support the adoption of green building practices. A lack of harmonization is not conducive to scaling and accelerating green building innovation across Canada.

The government's commitment to adopting a Green Buildings Strategy is a significant and promising step. Green building offers Canada numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits, but to realize them fully, the GBS must build a strong foundation. Focusing on government cooperation, investment in tools to support the building sector and its supply chain, and integrating with current and future policies and programs will help Canada advance climate action and build a more sustainable future.

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Editorial

PM Trudeau needs to fully clear the air on China's interference, or face the political fallout

China's alleged interference in Canadian elections has been dogging Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government for weeks. According to veteran political observers, Trudeau is in the fight of his political life as he's dealing with one of the most challenging controversies of his career. In a nutshell, as has been widely reported, he needs to answer three basic questions: what did he know about this controversy, when did he know it, and what did he do with the information he received.

So far, he has failed to do a good job of answering these questions. Trudeau has also not been able communicate coherently as to what he has done to get to the bottom of this issue, and why has he not call a public inquiry. The story, which is evolving lightning-fast, is carrying a new surprise for him almost daily, sometimes more than once a day. He must realize that this controversy is more politically explosive than the ones he dealt with in his first two mandates, including the SNC-Lavalin, brownface/blackface, scathing books by two former senior cabinet ministers about his style of running cabinet, and the WE Charity scandal, because it goes to the heart of Canadian democracy. Prof. Duane Bratt told *The Hill Times* this week.

It raises questions about the integrity of Canadian elections. If Trudeau fails to address this issue to the satisfaction of Canadians, it could spin out of

control and prove to be disastrous for the prime minister and for the Liberal Party. Already as a direct result of this controversy, Toronto MP Han Dong has stepped down from the Liberal caucus to defend himself against an allegation that he advised a senior Chinese diplomat in February 2021 to delay the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor from detention because it would help the Conservative Party. Both Canadians were detained in China in retaliation to the 2018 arrest of Huawei senior executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver following an extradition request from the United States.

Dong has denied this allegation, and has said that he would file a defamation suit against Global News. Regardless of whether or not the allegation is true, the logic behind the argument that the release would help the Conservative Party is unclear. The Liberals have been in power since 2015 and the release of the Two Michaels before the 2021 election would have created goodwill for the Liberal Party, not the Conservatives.

So far, only Dong has faced this accusation. Trudeau should be concerned about more accusations. The prime minister should put out all the information that he has about this controversy now. Even if he or his staff have made any mistake in handling this controversy, he should accept it, apologize, and move on.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Opinion columnist failed to mention riot was widely condemned in Israeli society, too: Fegelman

A March 13 column in *The Hill Times* by Mukarram Zaidi saw the author point the finger for recent violence between Israelis and Palestinians squarely at the Jewish state using popular anti-Israel tropes, but his claims are unsupported by facts. Zaidi commented on a recent assault on a Palestinian village by a group of Jewish extremists, which saw one Palestinian regrettably die. While horrific, Zaidi neglected to mention that this riot was widely condemned in Israeli society as being deplorable, from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to President Isaac Herzog, to the thousands of Israelis who contributed to a crowd-funding campaign for the Palestinian village raising close to a million dollars. Israel also arrested a number of Israelis in connection with the violence.

In contrast, when two Israeli civilians were gunned down while driving on a highway by a Palestinian terrorist—which Zaidi does not mention—senior Palestinian officials paid a condolence visit to the terrorist's family. An official Palestinian Authority statement referred to the killer as having died while committing an act of "martyrdom."

Tragically, there is no shortage of such instances and it's important to point out that the overwhelming majority of Palestinian casualties in 2023 are confirmed terrorists. For example, after a Palestinian terrorist recently shot and killed seven innocent Israelis outside a Jerusalem

synagogue in January, celebrations erupted throughout Palestinian towns, with candies and sweets being distributed, car horns honking, revellers yelling "God is great," and fireworks being set off.

While Israel has made multiple painful concessions for peace—including the 2005 disengagement from Gaza, where it removed all Israeli soldiers and civilians from the coastal enclave, to peace offers made to the Palestinian Authority—Israel has shown that it's ready and willing to forge a peace agreement with its Palestinian neighbours.

And yet, it's against this backdrop that Zaidi demands that the Canadian government attack Israel for its alleged "human rights abuses?" Such a demand is the height of absurdity. Israel may not be perfect, but it's a country governed by the rule of law and is the only free nation in the Middle East, according to a recent report by Freedom House.

As a liberal democracy, Israel should absolutely be held to a high standard, but to utterly dismiss the Palestinian Authority's role and responsibility in perpetuating violence and the suffering of its own people, and to demand no accountability from the Palestinian leadership, is to look for an easy, convenient answer, even when it is demonstrably wrong.

Mike Fegelman
Executive director
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Privatization threatens public health-care system in Canada, writes Ottawa reader

Privatization threatens the public health-care system in Canada. By taking funding and staff away from public hospitals, it will make wait times for urgent hospital-based care longer. The Ontario government is running a budget surplus of more than \$2-billion, but has frozen funding for public health. It tried to depress the pay of health-care workers through Bill 124, which was recently ruled unconstitutional. Doug Ford's government intends to defund public health care, let services deteriorate to a critical level, and introduce privatization as a solution.

Health-care workers have criticized the push for privatization, and say that it will worsen the current staffing shortages. Surgeries cost more in private clinics than in public hospitals. Cataract surgery costs \$455 in a public hospital but \$605 in

a private clinic. Taxpayers pay more for the same procedure so that private clinics' shareholders can profit.

Private clinics violate the Canada Health Act, which protects the right of patients to access medically necessary services free of charge. These clinics routinely charge patients hundreds or even thousands of dollars extra for OHIP-covered procedures and try to sell patients unnecessary, uninsured procedures.

The push for privatization is driven by powerful private-sector interests that lobby intensively for access to the \$600-million market that these surgeries represent. Some of the private clinics that stand to benefit most are major donors to Premier Ford's Progressive Conservative Party, as PressProgress has revealed.

Peter Schmolka
Vanier, Ont.



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One million new Canadians is something to celebrate

Sure, it comes with some demographic challenges. With increased demand, the cost of housing in Canada's major cities is under extreme stress. But that is something that smart government immigration policy can plan for.

Sheila
Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—One million new Canadians is something to celebrate.

Statistics Canada's announcement last week that the country's

population will shortly reach 40 million was something of a shocker.

I remember when we were only 15 million strong.

But what is so fantastic about this population jump is that the majority of Canadians are happy about it.

In most nation-wide surveys, by and large, Canadians believe the country's immigration has led to economic prosperity.

Sure, it comes with some demographic challenges. With increased demand, the cost of housing in Canada's major cities is under extreme stress.

But that is something that smart government immigration policy can plan for.

Immigration Minister Sean Fraser announced last week that his department would be making some changes to the immigration policy. They include targeting specific subsets of workers for the immigration fast track, and incentivizing the immigration point system for people who are willing to move to underpopulated areas of the country.

Both moves make sense. We need skilled workers to cover off the job gap in certain sectors, and if they can come from abroad, the holes will be filled more quickly than waiting for apprenticeship and college graduates.

That doesn't minimize the need for the government to aggressively promote apprenticeship and interprovincial migration of skilled labour. But it can supplement the shortages on a short-term basis.

As for the changes to where new immigrants live, that will be met with approval by big-city and small-town politicians.

Big-city mayors know that increasing populations put additional pressures on high-ticket items like local transit and infrastructure.

Municipalities are also grappling with the challenge that most downtown locations are becoming too expensive for the locals, pressuring developers into messy evictions and legal disputes with long-term tenants.

By moving immigrants into smaller communities, the changes plug the workforce gap that those communities are facing and simultaneously encourage local economic growth with the arrival of new families who need to purchase housing, appliances, furniture, and other big-ticket items.

With the exception of the People's Party of Canada, most federal parties seem to approve of the direction the government is taking in announcing an increase

in the number of annual immigrants welcomed into the country.

Parties usually follow the wishes of the population. In most regions, the population is favourable to the hike in numbers.

However, Quebec is always tricky as the voters there do not want to see the French language undermined by immigrants who have a tendency to prefer raising their children in English.

Quebec has not exactly rolled out the red carpet to newcomers, with rules that prohibit religious headgear in public service positions, including teaching.

It is probably the only province where the majority of citizens would likely oppose a plan for mass migration.

As for the rest of the country, most provincial governments have experienced a direct economic boom related to immigration.

If the current population growth rate continues, the country will end up with almost 50 per cent immigrants within the next quarter century.

At the moment, immigrants comprise one-fifth of the country's population.

But you only have to visit cities like Toronto and Vancouver

to see the impact of migration on the new face of Canada.

And thus far, communities seem to be adapting and thriving.

Of course, there are problems. Triads and some gang elements well-established in their home countries have taken root in Canada.

But most studies show that Canadian-born residents are far more likely to commit crime than those who have come from other countries.

That doesn't stop PPC leader Maxime Bernier from railing against all forms of immigration.

But the Conservatives are playing it a lot smarter. For those who oppose immigration, they have been very active in demanding that the government close off leaky borders. In that respect, they are able to satisfy those who oppose immigration while at the same time wooing the communities who very much depend on family reunification and the chance to move to Canada.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had to tackle that issue when the American president put migration front and centre on the bilateral agenda.

U.S. President Joe Biden's visit to Ottawa has partly focused on amending the safe country agreement so that land borders cannot be used by those who want to transit illegally from the United States to Canada.

With a better safe country agreement, the boom is welcome.

It makes the country stronger.

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

The Hill Times

Liberals have a theory for winning

So, what is this Liberal theory for winning? I can't say for sure, but it will likely be to emphasize Trudeau's persona, or more specifically to emphasize his inherent likeability.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKAVILLE, ONT.—Canada's federal Liberals face many serious problems—economic uncertainty, a litany of scandals, bad polling numbers, etc.—but despite all that negative stuff that's dragging them down, I'd argue they still have a trick up their sleeve that could bring them back up.

By "trick" I mean I'm willing to bet they have in place what I



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. If the Conservatives can't make Poilievre more likeable, their second choice is to make Trudeau seem unlikeable. That'll require them to come up with a well-crafted, well-researched communication strategy aimed at undermining Trudeau's brand. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

like to call a "theory for winning," which is to say the Liberals probably have a well-thought-out election plan ready to go right now.

And, yes, having such a plan is important in politics, because it's hard to win an election when you're plotting an ad hoc strategy on the fly, or you're simply hoping the other side will make mistakes.

So, what is this Liberal theory for winning?

Well, of course, I can't say for sure, but from what I know about past Liberal strategies, I'd say their plan will be to emphasize Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's persona, or more specifically



ly to emphasize his inherent likeability.

Yes, that sounds like an overly simplified concept, but at the end of the day, politics isn't really all that complicated; if people like your candidate, they're more apt to vote for them.

In other words, "likeability" matters.

True, the prime minister's likeability factor has taken a serious hit over the past few years, as evidenced by his steadily falling approval numbers in the polls, but that was inevitable, since, as the old saying goes, "in politics, friends come and go, but enemies only accumulate".

Indeed, every time the prime minister makes a policy decision, he risks alienating some segment of the political universe.

That's just how governing works.

Yet, all that said, even though Trudeau's persona has definitely suffered some damage, the flame of his likeability still flickers.

As a matter of fact, this was revealed in a recently released Angus Reid poll, which indicated that, while Trudeau's overall approval numbers are dropping, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre "lags in likeability."

As the Angus Reid analysis put it, "Trudeau is much more positively appraised in Quebec (36 per cent to 24 per cent), and slightly more so in Ontario (41 per cent to 34 per cent) and British Columbia (38 per cent to 33 per cent), than Poilievre."

Clearly, if this poll is accurate (always a big "if" when it comes to such public domain opinion polls), it gives Trudeau and the Liberals a path to victory.

All the Liberals have to do once an election is fully underway is remind voters that even though Trudeau may have disappointed them from time to time, he's still the same charming, charismatic, and affable leader he was when

he first bounded onto Canada's political stage.

And make no mistake, the Liberals are quite proficient when it comes to getting that particular message out through their political advertising.

In fact, in past elections, their TV spots featuring Trudeau looking likeable, have always been well-written, well-produced, and quite persuasive.

How could the Conservatives counter Trudeau's inevitable likeability offensive?

Well, they have two choices.

First off, they can try to increase Poilievre's likeability, which is easier said than done.

The fact is, with rare exceptions, (e.g., former U.S. president Ronald Reagan) conservative politicians have a hard time coming across as likeable, since they usually focus on other personal traits such as toughness or competence.

So, if they can't make Poilievre more likeable, their second choice is to make Trudeau seem unlikeable.

That'll require the Conservatives to come up with a well-crafted, well-researched communication strategy aimed at undermining Trudeau's brand.

Basically, what I'm saying is, to offset the Liberal theory for winning, the Conservatives need their own theory for winning.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Equality before the law has been compromised in two of the world's putative great democracies: the United States and Israel

The GOP needs to wake up to the likelihood that Trump's next photo-op might well be a mug-shot. And if they really do think that a twice-impeached, indicted presidential candidate is the ticket back to the White House, they should remember that the electorate will have the final say.

Michael
Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—In America, the law is king, the king isn't the law.

That sentiment was expressed by 18th century English-American political philosopher and pamphleteer Thomas Paine. He wanted to persuade his fellow colonists that it would be better to break way from England and form a republic, a view he successfully advocated in his famous 47-page tract, *Common Sense*. That pamphlet became one of America's first bestsellers.

Central to his thinking, Paine espoused the rule of law, rather than the rule of a monarch. He was passionately against any form of government based on aristocracy or heredity. From the very founding of America, equality before the law, the supremacy of law over mere politics, and the law's absolute independence, have been paramount—at least until now.

Paine would be in pain today if he could see how his classic prin-



Consider the stunning developments in U.S. politics in reaction to the multiple criminal investigations into former president, and now presidential candidate, Donald Trump, left. Meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu, right, became the first PM in Israeli history to be indicted while in office. Photographs courtesy of Flickr/Wikimedia Commons

ciple has been compromised in two of the world's putative great democracies: the United States and Israel.

In Israel, the government is run by a prime minister under indictment for bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, offences that could carry a sentence of more than a decade in prison if they are proven.

Benjamin Netanyahu became the first PM in Israeli history to be indicted while in office. But it is not his alleged crimes that have recently put him on the front pages of newspapers around the world. After all, he has pled not guilty to all the charges brought against him in 2019, and remains cloaked in the presumption of innocence unless a court finds otherwise.

So why have hundreds of thousands of Israelis taken to the streets for weeks to protest against their prime minister and his extreme, right-wing coalition government? Why have some women shown up at these rallies dressed in long, red gowns, like handmaidens from Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel? Why have Israeli opposition members

draped themselves in Israel flags during debates in the Knesset?

It is because their worst fear of what might happen if an indicted person became prime minister has been realized. Netanyahu, himself before the courts, has introduced legislation that would destroy the balance of power between the legislative and judicial branches of government. If Netanyahu gets his way, politicians may soon hold the whip hand over judges in Israel, as they do in autocracies.

That's because under Netanyahu's judicial reforms, a simple majority vote in the Knesset would be all that is needed to overturn rulings by Israel's Supreme Court; so much for the independence of the judiciary. It's not a bad card to hold if you happen to be under indictment. Perhaps that's why former Israeli prime minister and current opposition leader Yair Lapid has called Netanyahu's proposed legislation a "corrupt, personalized law," in which the current PM is "looking out for himself."

While Netanyahu has triggered mass civil disobedience in the streets of Jerusalem, with his

frontal assault on the independence of the judiciary, the GOP in the United States is veering toward the same outcome. The implications of what Kevin McCarthy and House Republicans are doing is every bit as drastic, extreme, and wildly undemocratic as what Likud party is doing in Israel.

Consider the stunning developments in U.S. politics in reaction to the multiple criminal investigations into former president—and now presidential candidate—Donald Trump. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy is as hopelessly captive to Team Crazy within his own caucus as Netanyahu is to the raging right-wing extremists who made him PM. They want to "investigate" the investigators looking into the Stormy Daniels Affair. Sorry, alleged affair.

Think about that. What McCarthy has ordered, and what has been supported by three GOP committee chairpeople, is dragging the district attorney of the southern district of Manhattan before Congress to answer questions about an ongoing criminal investigation! Think of

it as a kind of official obstruction of justice.

It would be hard to imagine a clearer case of partisan iconoclasm and overreach. Or one that strikes a potentially lethal blow to the very heart of American democracy. McCarthy and his Freedom Caucus are not just interfering in the administration of justice in a blatant and outrageous way, they are doing it in total ignorance of what the facts are in the case. As in Alice in Wonderland, it is verdict first, then the trial. These misguided zealots don't even know what Alvin Bragg has, let alone what the grand jury intends to do with it.

So what do they know?

They put that in a letter to DA Bragg: "You are reportedly about to engage in an unprecedented abuse of prosecutorial authority." The letter was signed by three GOP Committee chairmen—Jim Jacobs, Bryan Steil, and James Comer—the Curly, Larry, and Moe of the Freedom Caucus. And just how did they come to that conclusion? Exactly what moved them to so egregiously violate the independence of the judiciary and the justice system? Who inspired this partisan face-plant?

None other than Donald Trump, the very subject of the Stormy Daniels criminal investigation. Trump, the politician who called for the termination of the U.S. Constitution, and all the rules and regulations that govern civil and political life in America. Trump, who made 30,573 false or misleading statements during his four years as president. And Trump, who said he was about to be arrested, which turned out to be another lie.

The GOP's war on the justice system should not come as a surprise. One of the party's deep space, political "astronuts," Marjorie Taylor Greene, has openly said the Department of Justice needs to be "guttled," and invited others to help her in this work. All the better to "lock up" political opponents, right?

Greene—who continues to peddle the malicious fantasy that the 2020 election was stolen—thinks that the heroes of the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol Hill Building were the rioters themselves, not the Capitol Hill police who put their lives on the line defending the peaceful transition of power to a new president. She even mused about visiting those insurrectionists already in jail for their crimes. What's next, a Christmas card to Russian President Vladimir Putin?

The GOP needs to wake up to the likelihood that Trump's next photo-op might well be a mug-shot. And if they really do think that a twice-impeached, indicted presidential candidate is the ticket back to the White House, they should remember that the electorate will have the final say.

In that case, Americans would do well to consider another profound thing that old Thomas Paine had to say: "These are the times that try men's souls."

Michael Harris is an award-winning journalist and author.

The Hill Times

YORK UNIVERSITY DRIVES POSITIVE CHANGE, EMPOWERS INDIVIDUALS TO ACT

THE NEW FREE MICROLECTURE SERIES AIMS FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

With microplastics in our food, increasing risk of human-made disasters, and ongoing disruptions to ways of life in northern and Indigenous communities, the effects of climate change and environmental devastation are rapidly becoming more evident, widespread and intense. It's more important than ever for communities and individuals to take action.

York University has created a powerful resource in the quest for a better future—offering a chance to not just learn about sustainability, but to make a difference on an individual level and inspire others to take tangible actions towards a more sustainable world.

The new Microlecture Series in Sustainable Living is a free, open-access program that gives participants the opportunity to learn from six of York's world-renowned academic experts on a diverse range of topics related to sustainability.

Thanks to its innovative "microlecture" format, in less than an hour participants can learn how microplastics journey through and impact our ecosystems, unravel the relationship between energy and economic growth, explore why the most vulnerable amongst us often face the highest flooding risks, discover the difference between a hazard and a disaster in the context of emergency management, consider how colonialism has impacted the way disasters affect Indigenous communities, and dive into the reasons our lakes are rapidly warming.

"Each of us has a role to play in creating a better future for our planet, and transitioning to a cleaner, just and more prosperous planet needs to be both an immediate priority and a sustained effort," says York University's president and vice-chancellor Rhonda Lenton. "The Microlecture Series in Sustainable Living helps to foster a culture of collaboration and gives us the tools and knowledge to make a difference."

Participants are tasked with making positive, sustainability-focused changes in their daily lives based on tips from each professor. For those who complete the series,



correctly answer test questions and commit to putting their learnings into practice, a first-of-its-kind Digital Badge in Sustainable Living—which can be added to social media such as LinkedIn—will recognize their commitment to environmental responsibility and serve as a powerful tool for challenging others to do their part.

After earning their badge, participants become Sustainable Living Ambassadors, prepared to inspire others in their own communities to make small changes that can have a big impact.

Global challenges like climate change represent critical inflection points in society, and the collective response will determine the future well-being of people and the planet. York University recognizes the important role academic institutions play in convening people and ideas for meaningful action.

By making the Microlecture Series freely available not only to its own students and community but to all who want to join the movement for a more sustainable world, York University is showing its commitment to driving positive change and empowering individuals to take urgent action.

"By working together and taking small steps," Lenton adds, "we can achieve great things and build a world that is more sustainable for generations to come."

The desire to build a more sustainable future and mitigate the threats facing people and the Earth underscores York's core values and goals, and the Microlecture Series in Sustainable Living is just one of many ways York University is bringing its Sustainability Action Commitment to life.

York's top 35 ranking among universities worldwide on the Times Higher Education's Impact Ranking recognizes the university's steadfast commitment to right the future. Along with the recent announcement of ambitious new goals to achieve carbon neutrality by 2049 or sooner, York is expanding its sustainability office and leveraging education, research and partnerships at the local and global level to explore transformative solutions to the broad range of issues impacting the sustainability of our world. Most recently, announcing former Toronto City Councillor, York alum, and long-time champion of sustainability, Mike Layton, as York's inaugural Chief Sustainability Officer.

Through the university's efforts to educate and inspire the next generation of change-makers, York continues to establish itself as a sustainability leader in the Canadian post-secondary education sector.





Challenge yourself to build a sustainable future

Take the free Microlecture Series in Sustainable Living.
Earn the badge.
Become a Sustainable Living Ambassador.

RIGHT
THE
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SCAN ME



Join us in creating positive change.
yorku.ca/sustainableliving

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UNIVERSITY



Opinion

MPs' work on gun control misses target

Notwithstanding the proven link between guns and violence against women, Canadian women's groups have not been treated as serious stakeholders in the gun control debate. Now, 34 women's groups are calling out misinformation around Bill C-21.

Suzanne Zaccour, Erin Whitmore & Paulette Senior

Opinion



Amendments to the federal government's proposed new firearms law, Bill C-21, have gener-

ated a complex debate on a simple question: what criteria should be used to distinguish legitimate hunting guns from prohibited firearms?

Surely, most everyone agrees that not all firearms belong in our homes and communities, and the mere fact that a gun can be used for hunting does not make it safe or appropriate for civilian use. There is no right to own a gun or to bear arms in Canada. Guns should have to meet certain requirements to be allowed into our communities, be it to hunt animals, shoot targets, or feature in collections or historical re-enactments.

The recently withdrawn amendments to Bill C-21 proposed a list and definition to identify prohibited firearms. In a healthier political climate, the debate on this proposal would have focused on technical criteria. Should the cut-off be muzzle energy exceeding 10,000 or 12,000 Joules? Should we exclude guns designed for high-capacity magazines, or those capable of accepting them?

Instead, the debate in the House of Commons, online, and in the media has been dominated by disinformation. Among the multitude of false claims:

"The government is going after hunters." "Millions of models are being banned." "C-21 is a grab on your guns."

As Alberta's Chief Firearms Officer Teri Bryant acknowledged in her recent testimony on Bill C-21, there are thousands of gun models available and used for hunting. Amendments to Bill C-21 listed fewer than 500 models of weapons that would become prohibited, leaving 19,000 makes and models of non-restricted weapons, including semi-automatic rifles, unaffected by the proposed changes. The panic about hunting guns is obviously misplaced.

Compared to the many women's and survivor-led gun-control organizations that rely on volunteers or precarious funding to promote responsible firearms restrictions in Canada, "the pro-gun lobby is large, vocal, and well-financed," as one *Toronto Star* columnist put it. Its ability to dominate and influence public and political debate is difficult to match. But Members of Parliament have an obligation to act in the interests of all Canadians.

Disappointingly, during committee hearings, members of the Conservative Party and the NDP reinforced misinformation being

spread by the pro-gun lobby about C-21. The NDP pointed to the "absolute need" for semi-automatic rifles to fight polar bears in the North, even though banning all semi-automatic guns is not, and has never been, on the table. The Conservatives asked if the government was taking the right measures in "trying to prohibit" automatic firearms, even though these weapons have been banned since the 1970s. Conservative MPs even repeated the gun lobby's mantra that the government is banning scary-looking guns, asking a witness to confirm that the amendments were a failure because "a gun should be classified on what it does, what it's capable of, not by what it looks like". Yet there is no mention of colour, appearance, or material in the proposed definition of a prohibited firearm; all proposed criteria are technical and based on purpose or functionality.

Of course, most Canadians do not read the law, let alone amendments to a bill. So, it is up to our Members of Parliament, who have the privilege of knowledge and expertise, to provide the public with accurate information. False and misleading claims by our political leaders, in or out of

the House of Commons, have no place in our democracy.

Notwithstanding the proven link between guns and violence against women, Canadian women's groups have not been treated as serious stakeholders in the gun control debate. This must change. Representatives of 34 women's and feminist organizations have joined the #Women4GunControl Coalition, including national organizations with membership across the country.

Disinformation and partisan politics are recklessly distorting the current firearms control debate in Canada. We call on elected representatives of the Liberals, Bloc Québécois, and NDP to respect their campaign promises to strengthen gun laws. And we call on all Members of Parliament act with the integrity that their position requires and put the safety of women, girls, and communities first.

Suzanne Zaccour is the head of Feminist Law Reform at the National Association of Women and the Law. Erin Whitmore is the executive director of Ending Violence Association of Canada. Paulette Senior is CEO and president of the Canadian Women's Foundation.

The Hill Times

We need to shine some light on SNC-Lavalin and SMRs

Here's the other thing we would have discovered: SNC-Lavalin does not need to lobby government at all. It has tentacles that reach deeply into our civil service. What SNC-Lavalin wants, it gets.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May

Opinion



I am cursed with an excellent memory which makes me hang on to the unanswered questions. It also makes me want more sunlight, more inquiries, and more answers.

I wish we had had that public inquiry into the SNC-Lavalin Group Inc. scandal and I wish the RCMP had not dropped the matter.

My hunch is that we would have discovered two important things.

In December 2018, then-clerk of the Privy Council Michael Wernick did not inappropriately pressure then-justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould at the request of the prime minister. Wernick inappropriately pressured Wilson-Raybould as a favour to his old boss, former clerk of PCO, Kevin Lynch, then chair of the board of SNC-Lavalin. I may be quite wrong, but this scenario better fits the facts. Wernick denied he inappropriately pressured Wilson-Raybould and said he told Lynch he would have to talk directly to Wilson-Raybould or to the director of public prosecutions about the matter. SNC-Lavalin said Lynch requested a call with Wernick to convey that the company remained open to a deferred prosecution agreement.

But here's the other thing we would have discovered. SNC-Lavalin does not need to lobby government at all. It has tentacles that reach deeply into our civil service. What SNC-Lavalin wants, SNC-Lavalin gets.

This is a statement that remains true whether the occupant of the Prime Minister's Office is Liberal or Conservative.

SNC-Lavalin got the sweetheart deal of all time when then-prime minister Stephen Harper "sold" Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. to SNC-Lavalin. Over the years, AECL had received at least \$20-billion in public funds for the bargain basement price of \$15-million.

SNC-Lavalin is the driving force behind the new mania for so-called "small modular reactors"—SMRs.

The two SMRs slated for New Brunswick—ARC and Moltex—keep their promotional materials free of SNC-Lavalin references. You have to dig.

Here, for example, is the lead from this industry press release: "Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL), Canada's premier nuclear science and technology organization, is pleased to announce that it has entered into a collaboration agreement with ARC Clean Energy Canada (ARC Canada), a New Brunswick-based team working to develop and licence its sodium-cooled advanced small modular reactor (SMR) technology."

Looking for details in the release, you get this: "Canadian Nuclear Laboratories is a world leader in nuclear science and technology offering unique capabilities and solutions across a

wide range of industries. Actively involved with industry-driven research and development in nuclear, transportation, clean technology, energy, defence, security and life sciences, we provide solutions to keep these sectors competitive internationally."

It's the same thing with the Moltex announcement. You have to go to SNC-Lavalin's website to find its central role in CNL and Canadian National Energy Alliance: "Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is a world leader in nuclear science and technology. ... We (SNC-Lavalin) are a majority partner in a consortium which manages and operates CNL, which is currently managing its ageing infrastructure and renewing its laboratories. This investment will ensure the organization stays at the top of its field while strengthening Canada's status in the international scientific community."

Looking at other SMR announcements, such as the Bruce Power BWRX-300 SMR at Darlington, Ont., SNC-Lavalin is again a key player with partners Ontario Power Generation, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, and Aecon.

Thanks to *The Hill Times* for publishing Ole Hendrickson's

critical research in December 2020. That article established the links between SNC-Lavalin, its commercial partners, and the nuclear weapons industry:

"In 2015, the Harper government contracted a multinational consortium called Canadian National Energy Alliance—now comprised of two U.S. companies, Fluor and Jacobs, along with Canada's SNC-Lavalin—to operate AECL's nuclear sites, the main one being at Chalk River. Fluor operates the Savannah River Site, a South Carolina nuclear-weapons facility, under contract to the U.S. Department of Energy. Jacobs also has contracts at DOE (Department of Energy) weapons facilities and is part of a consortium that operates the U.K. Atomic Weapons Establishment."

It is never too late to peel back the layers and ask some hard questions. As federal and provincial governments shovel more millions into unproven technology and false claims of SMRs as a climate solution, shouldn't we demand transparency on where the new bodies are being buried? And should we not inquire into the deeply buried responsibility of a single corporation for its continual engagement in manipulating federal and provincial policies away from renewable energy resources towards that corporation's publicly developed, but now privately owned, nuclear technologies?

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May represents Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.

The Hill Times



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Transportation

Having a disability shouldn't mean getting from point A to point B is less convenient and more expensive. Accessible public transit often has to be booked days in advance. Taxi services – even those few that have accessible vehicles readily available in their fleets – are expensive. Air travel too often results in costly or irreparable damage to mobility equipment due to careless handling. As Canadians, we can – and should – do better.

Employment

The estimated 6.2 million Canadians living with a disability represent a largely untapped pool of skills and talents. We want to see more individuals with disabilities employed and participating in the economy as entrepreneurs. It isn't charity – it's just good business!

Housing

The state of the housing market in our country is tough. For people with disabilities, not only are costs higher than ever, but accessible housing in most markets is scarce or unavailable. We need to plan better, smarter, and stronger for the next 100 years to ensure eco-friendly, accessible, and innovative housing is available in all communities across Canada.

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- Easter Seals is active all across Canada, providing programs and services in all 10 provinces.
- More than 40 Easter Seals programs and services benefit thousands of Canadians with disabilities and their families each year – with its 16 specialized, fully-accessible summer camps alone attended by 6,000 children and youth, and over \$50,000 in post-secondary scholarships awarded annually.



www.easterseals.ca



Opinion

Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, pictured on the Hill on March 20, 2023, promised in April 2021 that 'the target we announced today is one that we intend to meet.' Of the top 10 emitting countries and regions, Canada in 2019 had the highest per capita emissions, at 19.60 tonnes. Our per capita emissions declined just 8.5 per cent between 2005 and 2019, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Humanity has reached a critical moment in history

The latest IPCC report warns: 'In this decade, accelerated action to adapt to climate change is essential to close the gap between existing adaptation and what is needed. Meanwhile, keeping warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires deep, rapid and sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors. Emissions should be decreasing by now and will need to be cut by almost half by 2030.'

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



The world has paid a huge price for the persistent global

campaign over several decades to challenge and discredit climate change science and to block or delay essential action to reduce and eventually eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. In Canada, these efforts were led by the various business and industry associations, the Alberta and Saskatchewan governments, compliant think tanks and the Conservative Party of Canada. They did much damage, as did their counterparts in other countries.

Now comes a truly serious warning from the world's top climate scientists that we are at a critical point where it may be impossible to avert catastrophic climate change. As the International Panel on Climate Change warns in its latest and most dire report released on March 20, the world is likely to fail to hold average global temperature increases to a targeted 1.5 Celsius, compared to the start of the industrial era in 1870, unless hugely more ambitious efforts are made to reduce consumption of fossil fuels—notably coal, oil and natural gas—and to pursue other means to reduce emissions in a significant way. As it says, humanity has "reached a critical moment in history."

In the near-term, the report warns, "every region in the world is projected to face further increases in climate hazards, increasing multiple risks to ecosystems and humans." These include an increase in heat-related deaths; an increase in food-borne, water-borne, and vector-borne diseases; growing mental health challenges; flooding in coastal

and other low-lying cities and regions, biodiversity loss in land, freshwater and ocean ecosystems, and decreases in food production in some parts of the world. Accessibility to water, lower crop yields, future threats to infrastructure, displacement of populations and increased migration, more droughts and floods, a rise in heat extremes, the risk of new infectious diseases, and a much greater share of the world's population exposed to extreme heat levels are all part of our future if we fail to act.

Canada's own commitments are in doubt, despite much boasting. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced in April 2021 that "Canada is now on track to blow past our old target of a 30 per cent reduction below 2005 levels" and that "our new climate target for 2030 is to reduce our emissions levels by 40 to 45 per cent." At a follow-up press conference, Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault promised that "the target we announced today is one that we intend to meet." Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson boasted Canada has "perhaps the most detailed plan that exists on this planet."

Under the 2015 Paris Climate Accord, Canada pledged to cut emissions between from 739 megatonnes to 517.3 tonnes between 2005-2030. With the new pledge to bring them down by 40-45 per cent by 2030, emissions would have to be reduced to 440 megatonnes by 2030. Yet in 2020, emissions were 672 megatonnes, just nine per cent below the 2005 level. So there's been some

progress, but far from enough. Of the top 10 emitting countries and regions, Canada in 2019 had the highest per capita emissions, at 19.60 tonnes. Our per capita emissions declined just 8.5 per cent between 2005-2019. In the same period, European Union per capita emissions fell 22.5 per cent to 7.56 tonnes per capita, while American emissions fell 20 per cent to 18.28 tonnes. Chinese emissions, however, rose by a huge 63.2 per cent, but per capita emissions rose to 9.09 tonnes, just under half the Canadian level.

Climate change is a global existential threat. It does not differentiate between democracies and autocracies, and any hope for the world's future well-being will depend on global cooperation, and especially in advancing science and technology for better solutions. "Without a major acceleration in low-carbon innovation, reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 will be unachievable," the OECD says in its just-published *Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook*. In the energy sector, for example, this will require "nothing short of the complete transformation of the global energy system" and reaching this target requires "rapid large-scale deployment of available technologies, such as wind and solar, as well as the development and widespread use of technologies that are far from mature today, such as green hydrogen. It also requires behavioural change." While currently available technologies would provide almost all of the emissions reductions required by

2030 in the net-zero scenario, by 2050 almost 50 per cent of emissions reductions in the next-zero scenario must come from technologies currently at the demonstration or prototype stage.

As the OECD underlines, "the climate emergency requires nothing short of a total transformation of socio-technical systems in areas such as energy, agri-food and mobility." This is no time, it argues, to create artificial barriers in science and innovation co-operation worldwide. Such efforts "could disrupt integrated global value chains and the deep and extensive international science linkages that have built up over the last 30 years. Coupled with a growing emphasis on 'shared values' in technology development and research, they could lead to a 'decoupling' of STI [science, technology, and innovation] activities at a time when global challenges require global solutions underpinned by international STI co-operation. A major test for multilateralism will be to reconcile growing strategic competition with the need to address global challenges like climate change."

Restrictions are now extending to even basic research, which traditionally has not fallen under security concerns. While "international science collaboration has blossomed in the last 20 years," today "there exists a real possibility that rising geopolitical tensions could limit these linkages and lead to a decline in international science co-operation in the future." The divisive way in which the world dealt with COVID-19 illustrates the price paid, in this case in lost human lives.

As we contemplate a growing climate threat, let's remember the 43,000 people who died as a result of the drought in Somalia last year—more than half were children.

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

The Hill Times

Trudeau, Huppé reinforce secrecy barriers

Meanwhile, the public remains deserted after 40 years of excessive secrecy under Canada's Access to Information Act and no one is really listening or willing to crack open the federal government's day-to-day operational records, writes Ken Rubin.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



OTTAWA—It's been trying times recently for the secrecy folks in Ottawa who quietly go about their business of saying and doing very little.

The fallout reached a frenzy over the long-standing issue of Beijing's influence in Canada, on which Ottawa has said very little. Now, opposition parties see this as an issue with which to score points, fuelling their calls for greater transparency and a public inquiry.

All this sudden interest came after last month's leaks to *The Globe and Mail* and Global News of normally-exempt CSIS documents on Chinese interference in Canadian elections.

Caught in the action, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau ordered closed-door probes by two security panels (the National Security and Intelligence Committee, and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency). Then he named a special rapporteur, former governor general David Johnston, to review their findings in secret.

It doesn't take much insight to see how controlling Trudeau's move is. It comes with an RCMP investigation into who leaked the CSIS documents. These leaks could be one way of getting around all the rules that state "no" to releasing such data that some officials want out.

The Canadian government's secrecy approach to handling national security goes further than its allies, and, at times, seems more aligned with those who run totalitarian regimes.

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, the public has recently been focussed on a series of revelations on excessive use of consulting firms and contract irregularities.

Again, this is a subject of parliamentary inquiries that authorities want to keep a lid on. Every insider knows contracting is a messy game that implicates many a bureaucrat.

Treasury Board's Comptroller-General Roch Huppé said to departmental finance officials to "be careful what you write down (about contracting information). It will find

calling it an exemption, including if it involves contracting details or irregularities.

National Defence was recently caught out again by *Ottawa Citizen* reporter David Pugliese in trying to hide a 2021 email advising the top brass how to downplay senior officers' sexual misconduct charges.

In early March, Canada's Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard appeared to be at her wit's end about getting on with her efforts at reviewing denied data. In her testimony before the House Access to Information Committee (ETHI), she noted how some of her release orders are being ignored by government agencies.


The list of denial of pertinent facts is a lengthy one: be it hiding the details of ArriveCan contracting largeness, or National Defence officials suppressing numerous multi-billion-dollar military procurement costs, or officials omitting specific expenses incurred by officials and politicians attending Queen Elizabeth's funeral in London last fall.

The struggles continue. Indigenous researchers are having even more difficulties gaining access to the historic archives they need. Access users are getting more lengthy extensions and little documentation.

Huppé's colleagues at Treasury Board conducted a pretend official ATIP review exercise, and seem intent on keeping most secrecy practices in place. Treasury Board President Mona Fortier has been requested to testify this month at ETHI. If Fortier appears, expectations are she will say nothing much about radically undoing rules that go against loosening up government secrecy.

Meanwhile, the public remains deserted, after 40 years of excessive secrecy under Canada's Access to Information Act. No one is listening much, or willing to crack wide open their day-to-day operational records.

Ken Rubin writes on transparency matters and is reachable via kenrubin.ca
The Hill Times



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News

‘What this person or persons did I think needs to be investigated’: national security experts weigh in on China interference leaks, next steps

National security experts say that whoever at CSIS is behind leaking secret and top-secret documents to media could face jail time if their identities are discovered.

BY MIKE LAPOINTE



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, now-Independent MP Han Dong, and the prime minister's chief of staff Katie Telford. In recent weeks, the government has been rocked by allegations of Chinese interference in Canadian elections. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, photograph courtesy of Twitter

As the alleged Chinese interference in Canadian politics at all three levels of government continues to dominate headlines, leading to one MP leaving the Liberal caucus, some national security experts say that whoever the CSIS source is behind leaking secret and top secret information to media could face jail time if their identities are discovered.

The story has moved quickly in past weeks. Former governor general David Johnston has been named as the government's "special rapporteur" to look into allegations of Chinese interference in Canadian elections, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians is investigating the issue alongside the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, and the prime minister's chief of staff, Katie Telford, will now testify at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee in the near future after many hours of Liberal filibustering the motion to have her appear.

A couple of weeks ago, the RCMP and CSIS began investigating the leaks as per "violations of the Security of Information Act (SOIA) associated with recent media reports," and that "this investigation is not focused on any one security agency," according to a March 6 CTV News article.

The CSIS source(s), whoever they are, have leaked intelligence reports to the media for weeks, and authored an op-ed in *The Globe and Mail*. According to a recent headline, "CSIS documents reveal Chinese strategy to influence Canada's 2021 election."

From Global News, questions have been asked surrounding an investigative report that "cited information from intelligence officials who allegedly provided Trudeau's party with an urgent, classified briefing in late Septem-

ber 2019 regarding Toronto-area Liberal candidate, Han Dong."

"The sources said that over the summer, CSIS had been tracking Dong—a former Ontario Liberal MPP—because they were concerned he had replaced Don Valley North Liberal incumbent Geng Tan under what they thought were suspicious circumstances," reported Global News journalist Sam Cooper.

In December 2022, Global News also reported that "new documents reveal key information of alleged Chinese election interference in Canada's 2019 election."

In the op-ed that ran on March 17, the individual wrote: "I asked myself: Can I do this while mitigating the risk to our country's sources and methods? Will this mean the end of my career? Who will take care of my family if I go to prison? For me, the answer to these questions was found in weighing them against the public interest."

In a note accompanying the op-ed, *The Globe and Mail's* editor-in-chief David Walmsley wrote that "revelations from the author of this opinion piece formed the backbone of our news stories that there is foreign interference in our political system at all levels of government and across Canada."

"The facts in those stories, which are just part of our in-depth and years-long reporting on the issue, are uncontested," wrote Walmsley. "However, the individual faces possible prosecution for revealing classified documents," noting that it was a "rare moment" in which an opinion writer has been granted confidentiality.

Now a senior strategy adviser with Samuel Associates, Artur Wilczynski previously worked at the Communications Security Establishment and was the Canadian ambassador to Norway from 2014 to 2018. He also worked at Global Affairs Canada as director general of international security.

"As soon as you become an individual who is able to receive classified information, you have to swear a document and you are briefed-in to make sure that you understand what the consequences are of disclosure," said Wilczynski.

Through years of working within national security, "you get an appreciation of why intelligence is classified and you're also aware of the potential consequences," he said.

"What this person or persons did I think needs to be investigated," said Wilczynski. "There should be a robust investigation to look into their actions and they should be held accountable, whether that's through a potential prosecution, and police need to look into it, look into the facts and make a determination as to whether or not they have the evidence required to bring a person before a Crown prosecutor to determine if there is enough evidence for charges."

Wilczynski also said there are internal processes around maintaining a security clearance and ongoing employment within the government.

The Globe and Mail reported that the "full extent of the Chinese interference operation is laid bare in both secret and top-secret Canadian Security Intelligence Service documents" viewed by the paper that cover the period before and after the September 2021 election that returned the Liberals to office.

Global News reported that government documents "confirm that the Privy Council Office, the nerve centre of the federal bureaucracy which supports Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, had signs of Beijing's alleged attempts to interfere with the 2019 general election."

Carleton University professor Ian Bron, who was a government whistleblower and who recently defended his PhD dissertation on whistleblowing regimes in the United Kingdom, Canada, and

Australia, said whoever the leakers are in this ongoing story could be prosecuted and see jail time, which is completely within the bounds of the Security of Information Act.

"The public interest defence will probably fail in an open court," said Bron, alluding to Sec. 15 of the act. But Bron also said "the person becomes unemployable in the public service," and that "typically what happens to the whistleblower after is that their career in the public service is over."

"It wears you down, it exhausts you, it takes upwards of a decade for a whistleblower to recover from the full-court press the government will take against them," said Bron.

Cameron Hutchison, law professor at the University of Alberta, said "it's a complicated issue for sure."

"We do recognize that these sources are valuable for bringing matters to the public interest, the law recognizes that, and we have to do a better job in cases like this in that information," said Hutchison.

"There's some prosecutorial discretion about whether the RCMP wants to lay charges or not, they don't have to," said Hutchison. "I think it's pretty clear they've committed an offence by doing this, and if police wanted to find out the identity from the journalists, I'm pretty sure they'd be successful there too."

"Hopefully, they don't go that route and decide not to pursue it too rigorously," said Hutchison.

Michel Juneau-Katsuya worked as a senior manager and senior intelligence officer with CSIS from 1984 to 2000.

"It's been going on for decades," said Juneau-Katsuya, when asked about Chinese interference.

"Back in the early '90s, they were clumsy," said Juneau-Katsuya. "As we progressed, they got more refined, more bold and more audacious in what they're doing."

Whoever the leakers are, "they noticed that, they saw that, they witnessed that," said Juneau-Katsuya.

If there is a public hearing, it will be "really bad" for the prime minister, he said.

"The problem that we'll be facing is that [Conservative Leader] Pierre Poilievre will turn that into an election issue, and not what it is really about: national security," said Juneau-Katsuya.

MP Han Dong leaves Liberal caucus in stunning development

In the most recent development, now-Independent MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.), who won the riding as a member of the Liberal Party in 2019 over Conservative candidate and now party spokesperson Sarah Fischer, has left the Liberal caucus. Dong won by a large margin again in 2021, defeating Conservative candidate Sabrina Zuniga.

In a statement made in the House of Commons on March 22, Dong said he was "taking this extraordinary step because to [sit] in the government caucus is a privilege and my presence there may be seen by some as a conflict of duty and the wrong place to be as an independent investigation pursues the facts in this matter," he said. "I will be sitting as the Independent so that business of government and indeed the bills of Parliament is not interrupted as I work to clear my name and the truth is presented to Parliament and to Canadian people."

According to reports, the RCMP began investigating the leaks a couple of weeks ago as per "violations of the Security of Information Act (SOIA) associated with recent media reports," and that "this investigation is not focused on any one security agency," according to the article.

CSIS itself is also investigating who leaked information of China's election interference, with CSIS director David Vigneault telling the House Affairs Committee recently that the leaks of secret and top-secret information shared with Canada's closest intelligence partners undermines their confidence in CSIS's ability to keep secrets, calling it "a very serious matter" in the *Globe*.

In response to questions from *The Hill Times* to Global News surrounding any concerns around potentially having to reveal sources and whether or not CSIS or the RCMP has been in contact with its Ottawa bureau, a Global News spokesperson said "Global News is governed by a rigorous set of journalistic principles and practices and we are very mindful of the public interest and legal responsibility of this important accountability reporting."

Requests for comment from *The Globe and Mail's* Ottawa bureau chief Bob Fife, as well as from editor-in-chief David Walmsley, were not returned. Requests for comment from both CSIS and the RCMP were also not returned before press deadline.

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The Hill Times

Feds need to better communicate what Critical Election Incident Public Protocol does, says Rosenberg

‘Communication on the protocol needs to change,’ says Morris Rosenberg, who says the federal government did not do a good job communicating the panel’s work in 2021. ‘Nobody knew about it. It’s called the public protocol.’

Continued from page 1

of an incident that threatens the integrity of elections.”

In July 2019, a nine-point cabinet directive was released outlining aspects of the CEIPP, including its purpose and process.

However, two years later, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) received Governor General Mary Simon’s approval to dissolve Parliament for a snap election on Sept. 20, 2021, there was little mention of the protocol.

“Communication on the protocol needs to change,” said Morris Rosenberg, the former senior federal public servant tasked by the Privy Council of Canada to write a report on the CEIPP’s implementation and effectiveness in addressing threats to the 44th general election in 2021.

Late last month, he released the public version of his report.

A classified version of the report was provided to the prime minister and to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, according to the Privy Council Office.

Rosenberg told *The Hill Times* in an interview that the federal government did a good job of highlighting the protocol in 2019 through regular press briefings, but did “not do it well in 2021. Nobody knew about it.”

“It’s called the public protocol,” said Rosenberg, a lawyer, who served as deputy minister of justice, deputy health minister and deputy minister of foreign affairs under both Liberal and Conservative governments.

“The idea of press briefings is really important because people are going to get their information,

not necessarily from government announcements and websites, but through the press,” he said, adding that journalists have a crucial role to play in being “vigilant” about foreign interference.

The CEIPP is comprised of a panel of five senior federal bureaucrats, two of whom hold positions Rosenberg once held. The panel members include the clerk of the Privy Council of Canada, the national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister, along with the deputy ministers of justice, public safety and foreign affairs.

Under section 6.0 of the cabinet directive, the panel’s mandate is to determine the “threshold for informing the public” when the occurrence of one or more incidents “threatens Canada’s ability to have a free and fair election.”

Among the 16 recommendations in his report, Rosenberg suggested that “there should be further study of the issue of whether the protocol should be amended to provide for the possibility of announcements below the threshold set out in section 6.0.”

In an interview, he explained that could include interference affecting an individual riding or “population sub-group.”

The Rosenberg report said that in both 2019—the review of which was conducted and led by former CSIS director James Judd—and 2021, the panel found that the federal government “did not detect foreign interference that threatened Canada’s ability to have free and fair elections.”

“However,” he added, “the national security agencies saw attempts at foreign interference, but not enough to have met the threshold of impacting electoral integrity.”

Rosenberg told *The Hill Times* that “the determination for whether the threshold is met is left to the panel.”

He said that when Gould released the cabinet directive for the CEIPP, the threshold was intended to be “very high” and that the hope was “that it will never have to be used.”

Rosenberg explained that there was also a concern “that if there was an announcement by the panel, that in of itself could have a consequence of undermining Canadians’ confidence in the election.”

While there has been an explosion of news regarding Chinese interference in Cana-



Morris Rosenberg, who led the Critical Election Incident Protocol’s report on the 2021 election, says the federal government needs to do a much better job of communicating what the panel does. ‘It’s called the public protocol.’ Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia/Dean Calma

dian elections, Rosenberg said that “it’s very hard to prove that somebody is acting as a proxy for any foreign government, which could have many ways of getting to people.”

In his report, Rosenberg wrote that “it is often difficult to determine whether incidents were co-ordinated and involved inauthentic amplification through the use of proxies, or whether they are honestly held views of Canadians who may have legitimate interests in supporting good relations with a foreign state.”

Late last month, Democracy Watch called on Canada Elections Commissioner Caroline Simard to investigate and report on when she plans to penalize or prosecute anyone involved in “China-sponsored interference” in the last two federal elections.

Such interference requires investigation at an arm’s length from government, which the CEIPP’s panel is not, argues Duff Conacher, co-founder of Democracy Watch.

The five members, he said, are “not independent—they serve at the pleasure of the prime minister.”

Conacher said it would be better if the federal government followed the model former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper proposed, but later withdrew, to establish a public appointments commission, whose members would conduct “mer-

it-based searches for qualified candidates” to serve on the CEIPP panel, and submit two or three names to an all-party parliamentary committee that would choose the final appointments.

Rosenberg addressed the panel’s composition in his report, which was largely based on interviews with all members of the 2021 panel and some 2019 panel members, along with Stéphane Perrault, Canada’s chief electoral officer, and Yves Côté, the former elections commissioner, as well as representatives of the national security agencies and other government officials.

Some comments suggested “that a group of eminent Canadians would have more public credibility than a group of senior deputy ministers, should it become necessary to have an announcement that there are threats to Canada’s ability to have a free and fair election.”

However, Rosenberg argued that a panel “composed of senior deputy ministers has several advantages,” including “their knowledge, experience and judgment and the working relationship among them,” and that “they are skilled at drawing out the expertise of the SITE agencies”—a coordinating body comprised of representatives from CSIS, the RCMP, the Communications Security Establishment, and the Rapid Response Mechanism based at Global Affairs Canada.

Senior public servants “are also adept at assessing the information they receive and in challenging it, where necessary,” whereas “a group of eminent Canadians may be associated with interests or causes that may become election issues, raising questions as to their neutrality,” wrote Rosenberg, adding that “representatives of the three [Liberal, Conservative and New Democratic] parties that chose to receive briefings during the last election all continue to support a panel composed of senior public servants.”

He told *The Hill Times* that panel members should not only be briefed by the national security agencies, but also by representatives of civil-society organizations—“with expertise on interference and disinformation,” as he stated in his report—and “who may take a different view on the nature of the problem.”

As he stated in his report, Rosenberg said he believes that “election interference is only one

element of a broader series of threats to Canada’s democratic institutions” that includes “reducing the public’s trust in democratic institutions, increasing polarization, lowering trust in the media, and promoting the strategic interests of a foreign state.”

There are also several unknowns, as he explained in an interview.

“Technology is changing, the threat actors are changing, the geopolitical reasons for interfering in elections are changing,” said Rosenberg, who also served as deputy secretary to the cabinet, responsible for operations under former prime minister Jean Chrétien’s Liberal government.

The CEIPP, he underscored, “has to be one instrument in an array of instruments that the government is using to protect our democratic institutions.”

Between the last two federal elections, the protocol also clarified the scope of interference to include domestic sources.

“When you look at ideologically motivated violent extremism—what happened with the [2022 trucker] convoy, what happened in the United States on Jan. 6, 2021—there is a concern about Canadians, not influenced by foreign interference, who may be interested in undermining our democratic institutions,” said Rosenberg, who in his report cited “a large amount of misinformation circulating about vaccine requirements and other public health measures, much of it being spread by domestic actors” which became an election issue during the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

“Everyone thinks about the use of the internet, but let’s talk about old-fashioned violence,” he added. “You had people throwing rocks at Trudeau, you had an incident where Singh had to be moved out quickly because there was some intimidation of violence.”

Earlier this month, Shane Marshall, a former People’s Party of Canada riding association president, pleaded guilty to assault following a September 2021 incident at the federal Liberal leader’s election campaign event in London, Ont. when gravel was thrown in the direction of the prime minister.

Last year, during the Ontario election campaign, federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) was verbally harassed in Peterborough, Ont. before and after a rally at the campaign office of the provincial NDP candidate, Jen Deck, where protesters yelled profanities at him and, as he later recalled, “some really horrible things like, ‘I hope you die.’”

Rosenberg said that in future federal elections, police and intelligence agencies need to coordinate with the major political parties to ensure that their leaders and candidates are provided with adequate security throughout their campaigns.

“There is a lot of attention being placed on China now,” he added. “But we also need to be vigilant on how the threat of interference is evolving.”

The Hill Times

News

Liberals should treat China's election meddling controversy as a politically 'life-threatening event,' say politicians, pollsters

The China interference controversy is more explosive than the SNC-Lavalin, blackface/brownface or WE Charity scandals, and could carry serious fallout for Trudeau, says Prof. Duane Bratt of the Mount Royal University.

Continued from page 1

a professor of political science at the Mount Royal University, in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "It is very serious and very damaging."

The quickly developing and evolving story of alleged Chinese meddling in the 2019 and 2021 elections has been dominating the news cycle for several weeks. Citing secret and top-secret CSIS intelligence leaks, *The Globe and Mail* and Global News have reported in recent weeks that China deployed a "sophisticated strategy" using finances, volunteer recruitment including international students, and voters to help defeat candidates who China's Communist government allegedly believed were unfriendly to Beijing's interests, and to provide support to those whom it deemed friendly. The Conservatives claim the alleged interference may have cost them up to nine seats in the last election. According to *The Globe and Mail* and Global News reports, the Communist government wanted a Liberal minority government in the 2021 election.

Earlier this month, Global News reported on a memo claiming, "Chinese officials in Toronto had disbursed money into a covert network tasked to interfere in Canada's 2019 election." Before this, Global News also reported on a "high-level warning about clandestine funding of China's 'preferred candidates'."

Last week, citing unnamed national security sources, Global News said that then-Liberal MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.) advised Han Tao, a top Chinese diplomat in Canada, on

how to handle the case of the "Two Michaels" who were held captive by China for 1,019 days. They were released on Sept. 24, 2021. According to the story, Dong suggested to a senior Chinese consulate official in February 2021 to delay the release of Canadians Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, as their release would help the Conservative Party. Even if that were true, the logic behind the motive seems unclear, said Bratt, as the Liberals have been in power since 2015 and the release of the Two Michaels would have helped the government. Both Spavor and Kovrig were released four days after the 2021 election.

Most political observers said they believe that Kovrig and Spavor were detained in China in retaliation for the 2018 arrest of Chinese Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver following an extradition request from the United States.

After the Global News story came out, Dong acknowledged his conversation with a Chinese diplomat, but denied advising the official to delay the release of the Two Michaels. The PMO said that they never asked the Toronto MP to act as a back channel to negotiate with the Chinese government for the release of the two Canadians.

Dong has vehemently denied all these allegations and has vowed to defend himself vigorously. On March 22, he resigned from the Liberal caucus and will now sit as an Independent. Dong has also announced that he would launch a lawsuit against Global TV, and voted last week in the House of Commons for a public inquiry.

"I'm taking this extraordinary step because to [sit] in the government caucus is a privilege and my presence there may be seen by some as a conflict of duty and the wrong place to be as an independent investigation pursues the facts in this matter," Dong said, reading a statement in the House of Commons on March 22.

In his speech, he also assured Kovrig, Spavor and their families that he did not do anything to cause them any harm.

Prior to Dong's caucus departure, Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP Vincent Ke resigned from that caucus after a Global News story alleged that he was the "financial intermediary" in the Chinese government's interference scheme. Ke, who now sits as an Independent MPP, has also denied the allegation.

Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.), mean-

while, has described China as an "existential threat" to Canada.

"It's more than the election," McKay said. "It's at the universities. It's at the police stations. It's the Confucius institutes. It's at the exploitation of resources, et cetera, et cetera. I think it's far bigger than that [election interference]."

Before the parliamentary break earlier this month, Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced multiple inquiries to address this issue. Among those is the appointment of former governor general David Johnston as special rapporteur on election interference, with a "wide mandate and [to] make expert recommendations on combating interference and strengthening our democracy." Johnston will decide by May 23 if an independent inquiry is needed. The prime minister has said if a national inquiry were recommended, he would accept it. The House Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC) is conducting its own study of foreign interference in Canadian elections.

After weeks of back and forth, stonewalling and resistance, the Liberals announced on March 21 that Katie Telford, chief of staff to the prime minister, would testify at PROC about what she knew about China's interference.

On March 23, the House passed a non-binding NDP motion by a vote of 172-149 to call an independent inquiry of foreign interference in Canadian elections.

The PMO has said that it did not know about Dong's conversation with the Chinese diplomat until it received media inquiries. *The Globe and Mail* was the first to send this question to the PMO. Following that, the PMO requested a transcript of the conversation from CSIS. Upon reviewing the transcript, the senior officials decided not to take any action as it provided "no actionable intelligence."

Greg Lyle, president of Innovative Research, said that new allegations about Dong have raised a number of questions.

Lyle said that the best strategy for Trudeau to deal with this controversy is to publicly answer questions like what did he know, when did he know it, what did he do to address the issue, and put out all the information that he has, including any mistakes that he or his officials may have made in handling this issue. If there are any errors, he should apologize now, Lyle said.

If Trudeau does not know everything or cannot publish

everything for whatever reason, he said, then it's obvious an independent public inquiry should happen.

"What he's got to wonder is how many more of these [allegations] are coming? We know that the general allegation is that the [Chinese diplomats were] working directly with both party organizers and candidates, not necessarily just Liberal organizers and candidates," Lyle said. "And now we have a name and the question is: how many more names could come out while this is going forward? I would worry if I was him that this is gonna spin out of control."

Lyle said that since becoming prime minister, Trudeau has dealt with a number of major scandals, including the SNC-Lavalin affair, WE Charity, blackface/brownface controversy, among a number of others, in addition to two former senior cabinet ministers—Jody Wilson-Raybould and Bill Morneau—writing scathing books about the prime minister. Some of these are controversies are that on their own could have brought down a prime minister, but Trudeau has been able to survive them. Now, the prime minister is in the eighth year of his mandate and a controversy like Chinese interference in Canadian elections could prove politically fateful.

"It's got more potential to be damaging because it adds," Lyle said. "There's a cumulative impact of these things, and you never know what's going to be the straw that [breaks] the camel's back."

As things stand now, Lyle said, the recent developments on this issue could demotivate the marginal Liberals or swing voters, who may not show up to vote on election day. And at the same time, this could mobilize the Conservative or swing Conservative voters, which could help Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) win the election. If Trudeau fails to handle this controversy properly, it could prove to be political fatal for Trudeau's personal political career and the Liberal Party in the next election, said both Lyle and Bratt.

"He doesn't even get to decide to leave. The cabinet and caucus could say you've had your time, buddy, you're gone," said Lyle.

"We all know that of the prime minister's strengths, one is not his caucus relations, let alone the cabinet relations. Just read the books [by Morneau and Wilson-Raybould]. When's the

last time someone left cabinet and wrote a book while the prime minister was still in office and said the sort of things that have been said in those two books? Never happened to [Brian] Mulroney, never happened to [Jean] Chrétien, it just doesn't happen, but it's happened to him."

Bratt said that given the way events are unfolding and how the story is evolving, it appears Johnston would most likely ask for an independent public inquiry, adding that Trudeau should have called it himself in the first place.

"Why did he have to appoint someone else to do that when he could have done it himself," said Bratt. "He does not need to appoint someone to investigate whether that inquiry [is needed], he could have done it himself, but, it's part of that pattern of stonewalling."

Scott McGregor, co-author of a soon-to-be-released new book, *The Mosaic Effect: How the Chinese Communist Party Started a War in America's Backyard*, said that in his view, the only way forward to get to the bottom of this complex controversy is through an independent public inquiry. He said it appears the Liberals have been so far reluctant to call one for fears they would lose control of the narrative and this could negatively affect their political interests.

"An inquiry is absolutely mandatory, at a bare minimum," said McGregor in an interview with *The Hill Times*. McGregor has co-authored the book with journalist Ina Mitchell.

A Leger poll released recently suggested that 72 per cent of Canadians want an independent public inquiry, and 12 per cent oppose it. The poll suggested that 67 per cent have heard about the alleged Chinese meddling in Canadian elections and 33 per cent have not. The poll results indicated that 49 per cent think that the potential Chinese intervention is somewhat limited and did not affect the overall results of the election. But 33 per cent said the alleged interference is so important that it greatly compromised the legitimacy of the election results.

The online poll of 1,544 Canadians was conducted from March 10-12.

Scott Reid, former director of communications to prime minister Paul Martin, told CTV on March 14 that Trudeau has failed to do a good job in reassuring Canadians that he's addressing this issue effectively. He suggested Trudeau should provide detailed answers to Canadians about what he has done so far and provide a convincing reason why he did not want to call an inquiry. Reid said this issue is a major distraction for the government's agenda, and the sooner Trudeau provides more details to Canadians the better it will be for himself and his government.

"It is providing people with questions and doubts with respect to their democratic institutions and processes and we can't permit that," Reid said.

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New Democrats ‘break the logjam’ on Telford’s testimony, as the Liberals choose ‘lesser of two evils,’ say strategists

As long as the Liberals can manage Katie Telford’s coming testimony effectively, the government has a path to the end of the spring session, and has a rationale to not call an election until October, says political scientist Lori Turnbull.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

The Conservative opposition day motion seeking to bring the prime minister’s chief of staff before the House Ethics Committee “had some success in putting pressure” on the deal between the Liberals and New Democrats, but ultimately showed the agreement is “solid,” says political scientist Lori Turnbull.

Turnbull, who is director of the School of Public Administration at Dalhousie University, told *The Hill Times* the Conservative motion pushed the Liberals to a point where they “felt that they had to clarify” to the NDP—their partners in a supply-and-confidence agreement—that they weren’t going to keep letting the situation “escalate” after several weeks of rising tension on the issue of foreign interference.



After more than two weeks of filibustering, the Liberals have agreed that Katie Telford, chief of staff to the prime minister, will testify at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee on the issue of foreign interference in elections. *The Hill Times* file photograph

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and his party ‘held their cards close to their chest’ while the Liberals waited to see if they would ‘blink,’ said strategist Brad Lavigne. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Turnbull noted that the rhetoric on that issue had heated-up in unexpected ways, particularly with the Conservatives accusing Trudeau of “covering up” for Beijing.

In the lead-up to the Conservatives’ March 21 Opposition day, the Liberals left the door open for several days to the possibility that a motion calling on Katie Telford, chief of staff to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), to testify at the House Ethics committee could be a confidence vote, thereby pressuring the NDP to vote with them to defeat the motion. However, the government finally eased those tensions last Tuesday morning when Trudeau ruled out the possibility of the vote being one of confidence.

Instead, the government acquiesced to having Telford testify at the Procedure and House Affairs Committee (PROC), where Liberal MPs had been filibustering a motion calling for her appearance for more than two weeks.

That’s why the eventual outcome does not represent a win for the Conservatives, suggested Turnbull.

“Because at the end of the day,” she said,

“it seems like there’s a significant de-escalation, like the temperature has come down on this.”

The outcome of events left strategists from all parties who spoke to *The Hill Times* finding ways to claim a victory for their party. But across political lines, there was broad agreement that the Liberals’ acquiescence to letting Telford testify at PROC amounted to them choosing “the lesser of two evils.”

Questions of confidence a ‘trial balloon’

Former NDP staffer Brad Lavigne said the Liberals “trial balloon”—leaving the door open to a confidence vote—was “mere political speculation, and a bit of theatre,” but Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) and his party did “a masterful job” of navigating it.

“They got the Liberals to move on this issue and break the logjam,” while “stealing the issue from the Conservatives, which I thought was quite effective and quite clever,” said Lavigne.

Lavigne suggested it showed “tremendous political sophistication” that the NDP—through their lone member on PROC, Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, B.C.)—had worked to have the motion at PROC amended to call not only for Liberals Party operatives to testify, but also Conservatives. This likely made the committee motion more palatable to the Liberals, compared to the Conservative motion they faced in the House of Commons.

“Once the Conservatives tabled their opposition motion on Monday morning, [the NDP] held their cards close to their chest,” said Lavigne.

He said the government attempted to see “if the NDP would blink,” but the Liberals had “backed themselves in a corner” on the issue of Telford’s testimony, and the New Democrats were able to stand their ground.

However, former Liberal staffer Elliot Hughes said he believes the Liberals “played this kind of perfectly,” while acknowledging that Singh is the “other winner” because he comes out looking like “a little bit of a kingmaker.”

Hughes said that because the issue of Telford testifying at committee was not one that had likely cracked the Ottawa bubble, the government was able to “push this to the limit.”

“They were able to sort of push it until it was going to crack,” said Hughes. “And once it was about to crack, they executed their plan, and I think now have taken control of the situation.”

Hughes suggested the outcome is one the Liberals would have mapped out in advance, and they would be satisfied because it will see Telford testify before a Liberal chair at PROC, as opposed to the House Ethics committee, where the chair is Conservative. The testimony itself will likely come in the days leading up to the Easter long weekend when the House is not sitting, he noted, helping to further contain the story.

The Conservatives may also be perceived as “overtly partisan” on the issue, said Hughes, “and

sort of rabid on this topic, rather than being a party that wants to work together to actually try to dig into the truth into these matters.”

Instead, it is now Singh who looks like he wants to work productively on these issues, said Hughes. He suggested this means the Conservatives have “lost across the board on this political episode.”

“I think [the Conservatives’] anger and their hatred for the prime minister is getting in the way and is blinding them to smart political strategy,” said Hughes.

However, former Conservative staffer Shakir Chambers said the Liberals at best had “found the lesser of two evils,” but still face a situation that leaves them on the defensive.

“I think every step of the way, on this particular issue, they’ve had to be dragged” by the opposition and the media, said Chambers, who suggested the Liberals could have better managed the issue by being more forthright. “The more you kind of play these political games, the more you filibuster, I think it erodes a lot of trust from Canadians.”

Liberals take control of the calendar, says Turnbull

On March 21, in addition to agreeing that Telford would testify at PROC, Trudeau laid out a timeline for David Johnston’s work as the special rapporteur on election interference. Johnston will give his initial report in May regarding whether a public inquiry is needed, and issue a final report in October.

Turnbull said the combination of these events has now created a potentially favourable calendar for the Liberals, which could let them control the foreign interference issue and election timing moving forward.

She noted that the immediate impact of finding a way forward on the Telford issue with the NDP is that “there’s some oxygen left” for the visit of United States President Joe Biden and the coming federal budget, which can drive the message MPs take back to their constituencies in the coming break weeks in April.

She said as long as the Liberals can effectively manage Telford’s forthcoming testimony, the government has a path to the end of the spring session, and a rationale for no election before Johnston delivers his final report in the fall.

Following the Johnston report, if the economy is improving around the same time, the Liberals may find themselves in a favourable place to consider going to the polls, said Turnbull.

“This gives them a pretty solid rationale for no election before October, and they probably don’t want to go [before then] anyway, and then to manage the timing beyond that,” she said. “It also really helps them with a rationale [to have an election] if the stars align after the fiscal update in November.”

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Feature

Joe Biden comes to town

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade & Sam Garcia



Air Force One landed on March 23, 2023, at about 6:30 p.m. at Ottawa’s Macdonald-Cartier Airport. U.S. President Joe Biden arrived for his first official visit as president.



President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.



Treasury Board President Mona Fortier, left, and Gov.-Gen. Mary Simon, right, welcome the president.



Mary Simon, Whit Fraser, Chrystia Freeland, Mélanie Joly, Mona Fortier, David Cohen, line up to officially welcome the POTUS



U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen, left, Maninder Sidhu, centre, PS to Mélanie Joly, shakes hands with Biden, while Cohen breaks the ice.



The photogs.



GG Simon walks with President Biden.



Mona Fortier, left, Mélanie Joly and Chrystia Freeland chat with Biden and Simon.



David Cohen and his wife Rhonda Resnick Cohen.



Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greet POTUS and FLOTUS.



The Trudeaus hosted the Bidens at Rideau Cottage.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Trio of new press secretaries among recent ministerial staff changes



Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu, left; Families, Children, and Social Development Minister Karina Gould; and Tourism and Associate Finance Minister Randy Boissonnault all recently hired a new press secretary. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



Piper McWilliams is executive assistant to Boissonnault and his chief of staff. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

For one, Families, Children, and Social Development Minister Karina Gould has found her new press secretary from within Revenue Minister Diane LeBouthillier's team.

There's been lots of movement among the ministerial press secretary ranks of late, with a trio of new media wranglers recently named, including Zeus Eden in Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu's office.

Hajdu has been without a press secretary since January, after Alison Murphy exited to do the same for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.



Zeus Eden is now press secretary to Minister Hajdu. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Eden comes straight from Navigator's Toronto office, having spent roughly the last year and a half working for the public relations firm, ending as a consultant. His resumé includes past internships with Kinross Gold Corporation, focused on global government relations, and with CPP Investments. During the 2019 federal election, he was an aide to now-Liberal MP Kody Blois in Kings-Hants, N.S. Eden holds a bachelor's degree in international relations, economics, and political science from the University of Toronto.

Andrew MacKendrick is director of communications and issues management to Hajdu, whose office is run by chief of staff Katharine Heus.



Philippe-Alexandre Langlois is Gould's new press secretary. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Families, Children, and Social Development Minister Karina Gould has scooped up Philippe-Alexandre Langlois from National Revenue Minister Diane LeBouthillier's team to serve as her new press secretary.

Langlois marked his first day in Gould's office on March 10.

Most recently an issues and parliamentary affairs adviser to the revenue minister, Langlois first joined LeBouthillier's team as a regional adviser for Quebec and the Atlantic shortly after the 2021 federal election—which he'd spent as the Liberal Party's candidate in Beauce, Que. Langlois came fourth in the race against incumbent Conservative MP Richard Lehoux and the riding's former MP, People's Party Leader Maxime Bernier (the Bloc Québécois candidate placed third), garnering 12.3 per cent of the vote.

He's also a former 2021 summer intern in Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau's office.

Langlois is currently in the midst of working towards a master of political management degree at Carleton University, according to his LinkedIn profile, and holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Bishop's University.

Previously, Mohammad Hussain was press secretary to Gould. He, too, left the minister's team (in February, in his case) to do the same in the Prime Minister's Office.

LeBouthillier is herself in need of a new ministerial press secretary following Chris MacMillan's departure from the post in last February, as previously reported. Stay tuned to *Hill Climbers* for an update on that soon.

In Gould's office, Langlois is working closely with senior communications adviser Margaret Jaques and director of communications James Cudmore.

There are two other recent staff additions in the families minister's office to report: Yuval Daniel as a special assistant for issues and parliamentary affairs, and Piper McWilliams as an executive assistant to the minister and her chief of staff, Frédérique Tsai-Klassen.

Daniel started on the job on Feb. 13, arriving fresh from B.C. Liberal MP Taleeb Noormohamed's office where she'd been working as legislative assistant since the

end of 2021. She's also a former assistant to B.C. Liberal MP Ron McKinnon.

Russell Milon is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Gould.

McWilliams joined Gould's team as of March 10 and was previously an assistant to Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray as the Liberal MP for Vancouver Quadra, B.C. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism and legal studies from Carleton University last year.

Finally, Tourism and Associate Finance Minister Randy Boissonnault has found a new press secretary from within his office, recently promoting Farrah-Lilia Kerkadi to the role.

Kerkadi has been working for Boissonnault since February 2022, previously as a special assistant for issues management and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, Liberal MP Rachel Bendayan. She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Montreal's Concordia University.



Farrah-Lilia Kerkadi is Boissonnault's new press secretary. The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster

Kerkadi officially stepped into the press secretary role during the week of March 20. Previously, Gabriel Felcarek held the title in Boissonnault's office. As previously reported, he left the Hill in February to become vice-president of GFN Productions.

Marie-Pier Baril is acting director of communications to the minister.

In other office news, Ramy Ismail recently joined Boissonnault's team as executive assistant to both the minister and his chief of staff, Elliott Lockington.

Ismail is from St. Catharines, Ont., and is a former constituency assistant to his local MP, Liberal Chris Bittle.

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Stuart Benson

Party Central

Where's the beef: politicians and ranchers saddle up for Canadian Cattle Association's annual Hill shindig

Returning to Ottawa for the CCA's annual general meeting, the yearly reception drew politicians, lobbyists, and ranchers from across Canada on March 22.

Howdy Party-Pilgrims! Grab your best Stetson and boots because the Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) was back in town to answer the question philosophers have grappled with for decades: where's the beef?

In Ottawa once again for its annual general meeting, the CCA also returned to hosting its yearly reception in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building on March 22, bringing together board members from its provincial associations, MPs, and Senators, politicians, and actual cowboys.

If you'll excuse a moment of political correctness, **Party Central** will take this opportunity to note the anachronism of the uni-gendered term 'cowboy'. As British Columbia ranchers **Renée Ardill** and **Karen McKean** and their more than 350-head of cattle will tell you, putting food on Canadians' plates is equal opportunity employment, so long as you can handle the long hours. Ardill and McKean also provided a greater appreciation for where Canada's beef is produced and the sometimes thankless work that needs to happen every day to raise, harvest, transport, and process the animals before they make their way into the numerous roast beef sliders on **Party Central**'s plate that evening.

Having grown up in southern Ontario, **Party Central** is no stranger to attending "Western"-themed festivities, but this may have been the first event where there was no doubt that the hats worn by revellers had been hard-earned rather than purchased at a costume store.

Ironically, the CCA's party also had large cutouts of cattle for attendees to pose alongside for photos, which **Party Central** learned was quite the politically fraught decision, as the CCA had to choose which breeds of cattle to include. The foresight of the CCA's judiciousness was validated that evening as **Party Central** noticed a number of attendees reorga-

nize themselves in order to stand nearest to the correct bovine.

"You've gotta love them all," said **Bruce Holmquist**, general manager of the Simmental Association, in a show of beef bipartisanship as he posed for photos with Conservative MPs **John Barlow** and **Andrew Scheer**, and **Kevin Boon**, general manager of British Columbia Cattlemen's Association.

Speaking of bipartisanship, **Party Central** also spotted plenty of both government and opposition MPs, including Conservatives like **Michael Barrett**, **Pat Kelly**, and **Chris Warkentin**, as well as Liberals **Kody Blois**, **James Maloney**, Minister of Veterans Affairs **Lawrence MacAulay**, and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food **Marie-Claude Bibeau**, who addressed the crowd wearing the white Stetson she keeps especially for the reception and for her annual trips to the Calgary Stampede, she said.

While the open bar that evening was provided by Beer Canada, **CJ Hélie** may owe the Conservatives another round—lobbying and ethical rules permitting, of course—considering their unanimous vote alongside the NDP later that night calling on the Liberals to cancel the planned April 1 tax increase on beer, wine, and spirits.

After introductory remarks from Bibeau, **Paul Thoroughgood**, national manager for sustainability with Ducks Unlimited Canada, presented the organization's inaugural Conservation Award of Distinction to **Ryan Beierbach**, a rancher and chair of the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, who accepted the award on behalf of the Canadian Beef Producers.

In the spirit of conservation, the CCA also took a moment to honour the memory of **Reg Schellenberg**, who died in December 2022, only months after being elected CCA president.

Throughout the night, Schellenberg's words were projected overhead: "The generations before taught us if you take care of your rangeland, it will take care of your next generation."

While **Party Central** is confident that the range is in good hands, for the rest of us, next time you enjoy that burger or steak, thank a rancher because—to modify the **Alan Moore** quote—who takes care of the caretakers?

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Fawn Jackson, left, Ducks Unlimited Canada board of directors; Liberal MP Kody Blois, Canadian Cattle Association's Lynn Grant, and Shannon Schellenberg at the Canadian Cattle Association Beef Reception at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building in Ottawa on March 22.



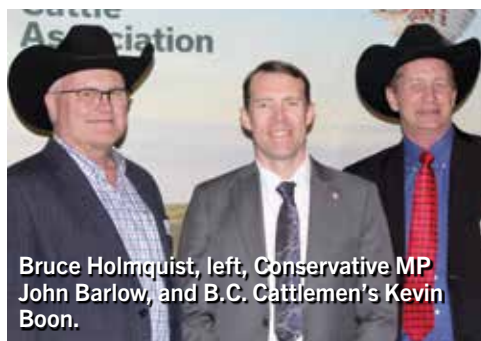
Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau wearing her special Calgary Stampede Stetson.



Beef Farmers of Ontario's Evan Chaffe, left, and ISG Senator Colin Deacon.



Beer Canada's CJ Hélie, left, Conservative MPs Pat Kelly and Chris Warkentin.



Bruce Holmquist, left, Conservative MP John Barlow, and B.C. Cattlemen's Kevin Boon.



Bank of Canada Museum's Steve Mattiussi, left, Natural Resources Canada's Stacey Noronha, and CCA's Jarred Cohen.



Liberal MP James Maloney, left, and Conservative MP Michael Barrett.



Blake Oliver, left, a senior policy adviser to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland; CCA's Jennifer Babcock; Bryan Detchou; Bill Anderson; Jasmine Kaur, and Sam O'Grady, consultants with Crestview Strategy.



Kayako Iida, left, and Takeshi Nukui, first secretaries with the Embassy of Japan; Cameron Yung, policy adviser for International Trade Minister Mary Ng; and Tokuro Furuya, deputy head of mission, Japanese Embassy.



Conservative MP Andrew Scheer, left, and Bruce Holmquist, Canadian Simmental Association.



Colin McKone, left, LA to Grit MP Terry Duguid; Sonja Tilroe, member of the Parliamentary Intern Program working with Duguid.



CCA's Ryder Lee, left, Animal Health Canada's Colleen McElwain, CCA's Leigh Rosengren, Beef Cattle Research Council's Andrea Brocklebank, and Conservative MP John Barlow.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Fawn Jackson, left, member of DUC's board of directors, Kristine Tapley, Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef's Ryan Beierbach, Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, DUC's Paul Thoroughgood, CCA's Nathan Phinney, and CRSB's Monica Hadartis.

AG Hogan to deliver four audits on March 27, including one on Centre Block's massive renovation project



Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver four performance audit reports to the House: Accessible Transportation for Persons With Disabilities; Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas; Rehabilitation of Parliament's Centre Block; Public Services and Procurement Canada; and International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality: Global Affairs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, MARCH 27

House Sitting—The House is sitting until March 31. It will break again 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 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).

Auditor General to Table Four Reports—Auditor General Karen Hogan will deliver four performance audit reports to the House of Commons: *Accessible Transportation for Persons With Disabilities*, *Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas*, *Rehabilitation of Parliament's Centre Block: Public Services and Procurement Canada*, and *International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality: Global Affairs Canada*. A press conference will follow at 12:45 p.m., Monday, March 27, in Room 200, 144 Wellington St.

National Public Safety Awards—The Union of Safety and Justice Employees will host Canada's inaugural National Public Safety Awards on Parliament Hill. The event will include a catered reception featuring mini burgers, braised short ribs, AAA striploin, craft beer, and more, followed by an awards ceremony celebrating the outstanding work undertaken by Canada's federal public safety and justice employees. A total of six awards will be presented to federal public safety and justice employees from across the country. Monday, March 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Valour Building, Room 228, 151 Sparks St. RSVP directly to kristina@kitpr.ca

Inaugural Bill Graham Lecture Series—The Canadian International

Council will recognize the late Bill Graham's contributions to Canada, its international policies, and the CIC itself with the creation of an annual Bill Graham Lecture on International Affairs. Two of his friends, Canada's ambassador to the UN Bob Rae and history professor Margaret MacMillan, will deliver the inaugural lecture. Thursday, March 27, 6 p.m. ET., at Arcadian Court, Simpson Tower, 401 Bay Street 8th Floor, Toronto. Tickets via eventbrite.com.

Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders Event—As part of its Action Day on Parliament Hill, the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders (CORD) is calling on the federal government to implement a national rare disease strategy to address care gaps and delays for the three million Canadians living with a rare disorder. CORD delegates will be in Ottawa on March 27, 2023, to meet with political leaders and policy-makers to discuss how the federal government can improve access to better care and treatments. #Canada4Rare.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Freeland Tables Budget—Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland will table the 2023 federal budget in the House of Commons at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 28.

2023 Kesterton Lecture—Carleton University presents the 2023 Kesterton Lecture featuring Jordan Bitove, publisher of the *Toronto Star* and owner of Torstar Corporation, who will speak on "Truth We Need for the World We Want." He will discuss the critical role of journalism in supporting our democracy, the importance of supporting Canadian-owned and -operated media, and what we can expect for media in Canada in the years to come. Tuesday, March 28, at Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper St. 6 p.m. Details: events.carleton.ca.

Virtual panel on healthcare—The Canadian Club Toronto hosts a virtual panel discussion, "A Behind the Scenes Strategic and Tactical View of Canadian Healthcare," exploring what's worked well and what hasn't, and how Canada can learn from other countries to seek

to improve care for its citizens. This event will take place online. 12 p.m. ET. canadianclub.org.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29

Conference on Trade and Protectionism—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a conference: "Navigating Canada's Interests Through Resurging Protectionism" featuring international trade experts discussing issues including "Resurging Industrial Policy and Friendshoring" and "Critical Minerals and Battery Supply Chains." Wednesday, March 29, at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., #1800. 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. ET. Details: cgai.ca.

Conference: Deconstructing the Rouleau Report—The University of Ottawa hosts a one-day conference on "Deconstructing the Public Response to the Convo." Experts in the fields of law, politics, public administration, economics, criminology, sociology, communications, tech, and health will deconstruct the Rouleau Commission's findings and recommendations. Wednesday, March 29, 9 a.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Social Sciences, Room 4007, 120 University Priv. Tickets via eventbrite.ca.

Isotopes for Hope—The Empire Club of Canada hosts James Scougack, chair of the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council, who will deliver remarks on "Isotopes for Hope: Canadian Leadership Needed Now More Than Ever." With geopolitical tensions and Russia historically being a large supplier, along with growing demand for and uses of isotopes, the world needs Canada's leadership now more than ever. This event will take place at One King West Hotel, 1 King St. W., Toronto. Wednesday, March 29, 11:30 a.m. Visit empireclubofcanada.com to register.

Is Canada Ready for What's Coming in AI?—The Internet Society-Canada Chapter hosts a discussion on "Stepping up to the plate: Is Canada ready for what's coming in AI?" where leading Canadian and international experts will dive into the issue of governments competing to get the most out of artificial

intelligence technologies to improve the delivery of services and improve private sector productivity. Wednesday, March 29, 1:30 p.m. A reception will follow. Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Europe One Year After the Invasion of Ukraine—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a discussion on "Continent at a Crossroads: Europe One Year After the Invasion of Ukraine." Ukraine's Ambassador to Canada, Yuliya Kovaliv, will kick off the event by reflecting on the war's impact on her people and the future of her country's place within Europe. Other participants include European Union Ambassador to Canada Melita Gabrič; Finland's Ambassador Roy Eriksson; and British High Commissioner Susannah Goshko. Thursday, March 30, at the Château Laurier Hotel, 1 Rideau St. 12-1 p.m. Tickets: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Torstar Publisher to Deliver Remarks—The Canadian Club of Toronto hosts Jordan Bitove, publisher of the *Toronto Star* and owner of Torstar Corporation, who will speak on "Truth We Need for the World We Want." He will discuss the critical role of journalism in supporting our democracy, the importance of supporting Canadian-owned and -operated media, and what we can expect for media in Canada in the years to come. Thursday, March 30, 11:45 a.m. at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Panel: 'Womxn in Canadian Public Policy'—McGill University hosts a panel discussion, "Working as Womxn in Canadian Public Policy." Participants including former Liberal MP Eleni Bakopanos, policy specialist Nirushaa Senthilnathan, and policy consultant and researcher Dr. Olivia Smith will shed light on the experiences of womxn working in politics, policy and civil society and the challenge of reaching gender parity in decision-making spheres. Thursday, March 30, 5:30 p.m. ET at the Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

Elizabeth May to Deliver Bell Lecture—Green Party Leader Elizabeth May will deliver the 2023 Bell Lecture, titled "The time for action is now: a time capsule from 1999." What if Canada's governments had mobilized to stop the growth in emissions when Kyoto was ratified in 2003? Could we have avoided the level of climate change emergency we are now experiencing? This event will take place in the Nichol Building, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. 7p.m. Register at carleton.ca/fpa.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

Canadian Academy of Health Sciences to Release Report—In 2022, Health Canada asked the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences to conduct an assessment on health human resources. The final report will be published today. It will provide key findings and pathways to address the health human resources crisis.

French Envoy to Speak in Montreal—France's ambassador to Canada, Michel Miraillet, will deliver remarks in French at a luncheon event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, April 4, 11:45 a.m. ET at Le Westin Montréal, 270 Saint-Antoine St. W., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Modernizing Procurement for the Digital Age—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, National Capital Region, welcomes Carleton University associate professor Dr. Amanda Clarke for a discussion about federal IT procurement practices. This event will be of interest to a wide variety of public servants and observers, including those who work in public policy, procurement, information technology, and corporate services. Tuesday, April 4, 5:15-7:30 p.m. ET, at the Delta Ottawa, 101 Lyon St. N. Register: TI-fed-IT.eventbrite.ca.

TUESDAY, APRIL 4—THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Special Chiefs Assembly—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a Special Chiefs' Assembly from Tuesday, April 4-Thursday, April 6 at the Shaw Centre, 55 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: afn.ca.

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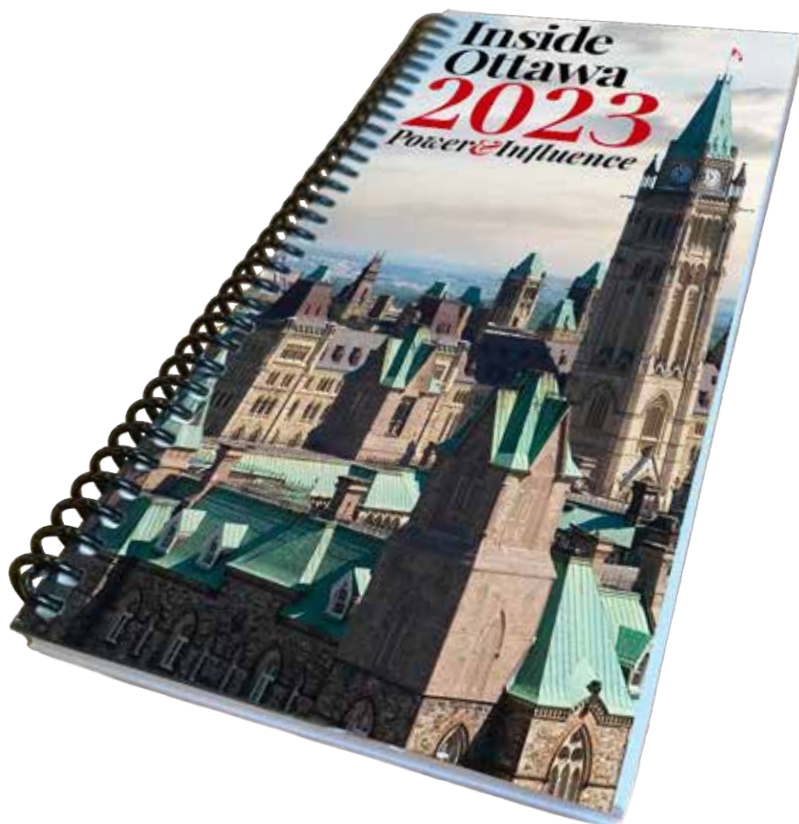
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The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

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Publication date: February 2023



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