

Trudeau
fires first salvo
of next
election
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THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR, NO. 2046

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Off script: exploring the 'electorally hazardous' role of 'authenticity' in politics

In the age of soundbites, rigid party discipline, and intense media scrutiny, some academics are considering the role of images of authenticity in Canadian politics, and the balance between MPs presenting less polished versions of themselves and the rise of populism.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

In today's tightly scripted, talking-point world of politics, there's a real shortage of straight shooters. One expert leading the first-ever major Canadian study on political authenticity says she was motivated by the eroding

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**A look at
authenticity
in politics**



You can't handle the truth: Pictured from lower left and clockwise, Jagmeet Singh, Anita Anand, Justin Trudeau, Yves-François Blanchet, Pierre Poilievre, Chrystia Freeland, François-Philippe Champagne, and Doug Ford. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

NEWS

'Ya gotta dance with the one that brung ya!' Next election expected to be a 'game of margins,' Trudeau 'doubles down' on Liberal 'red wall' in cabinet shuffle, say politicians

BY ABBAS RANA & IAN CAMPBELL

In the most substantial cabinet shuffle since 2015 that affected 30 of the 38 ministers in some way last week, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has "doubled down" on choosing an overwhelming majority of his front bench from the Liberal "red wall" consisting of Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces that brought him to power in 2015 and provided his two subsequent mandates, according to MPs, political insiders, and pollsters.

"He's [Trudeau] elevated and changed high-profile people from those regions and also new people. He's hoping to attract some attention, give the government an opportunity to reset the conversation with voters in those different regions," said David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

Of the 39-member cabinet, including Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), 33 or 84 per cent of members are from the so-called "red wall" provinces. Those who are not include Energy and Natu-

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Mike Lapointe

Heard On The Hill

NCC officially re-opens River House on the banks of the mighty Ottawa and there's public swimming; and Ottawa Lawn Summer Nights raises \$47,000 in one month



The National Capital Commission has opened the newly-renovated River House, complete with a new enclosed swimming space for the public. Photograph courtesy of Mark Bernards/Ottawa Riverkeeper

The National Capital Commission has officially opened the recently restored River House, a 100-year-old boathouse now including a brand new way to access the Ottawa River.

Following a more than \$15-million renovation, River House features a new set of docks that were needed to build an enclosed swimming space, a new learning space, dedicated science lab, as well as offices and meeting rooms in the building.

"Having a space right on the water has long been an aspiration of Ottawa Riverkeeper," according to a release. "Never before have we had our own program space. We can't wait to show you this dream as it begins to take shape!"

"To call this a new public asset would be an understatement," said CTV's **Graham Richardson** in a video posted to Facebook following a bike ride to the site. "This is gorgeous at River House, fully lifeguarded for 12 hours a day, it's free, there's a restaurant and a bar for later."

"Just spectacular," said Richardson.

The NCC launched swimming at the site, and held a grand open-

ing on July 25. You can visit the location, at 501 Sir-George-Étienne-Cartier Parkway, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week throughout the summer.

Ottawa Lawn Summer Nights raised \$47,000 in one month, and still fundraising until Sept. 15

The Ottawa Lawn Summer Nights, a lawn bowling event held every Wednesday evening in July to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis Canada, raised \$47,000 in one month, said **Krista Bracco**, manager of Lawn Summer Nights at Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Also, the Lawn Summer Nights Canada has raised \$4.4-million in lawn bowling fundraising events across Canada since it began in 2009.

The lawn bowling evenings, held at the iconic Elmdale Lawn Bowling Club in Ottawa's Civic Hospital neighbourhood next to

Reid Park, attract teams of Hill staffers, lobbyists, bureaucrats, politicians, journalists, and other professionals for an evening of food, drinks, music, and lawn bowling. Cystic Fibrosis Canada runs teams in Vancouver; Calgary;



Max McGuire, pictured on July 3, 2019, was this year's top fundraiser in Ottawa for Cystic Fibrosis Canada, and he and his team, McGuires on Fire, were one of the top fundraising teams across Canada. McGuire personally raised \$4,335 and his team raised \$8,275. McGuire is a local Ottawa filmmaker who has cystic fibrosis. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Regina; Chatham, Ont.; London, Ont.; Ottawa, Toronto; and Halifax.

Max McGuire, a local film director, writer, and producer who has cystic fibrosis, is one of the top fundraisers every year. This year his team, McGuires on Fire, raised \$8,275. Bowlers Gonna Bowl, led by **Hardave Birk**, raised \$2,725. Heart of Grass, led by **Greg MacEachern**, raised \$1,750. *The Hill Times'* team, the Lawn Tall Bowlers, led by **Paul Goubko**, raised \$1,500 this year. A Proof is a Proof, led by former NDP MP **Matthew Dubé**, raised \$885. The Limit, led by **Janice Nicholson**, raised \$525. Bowler Bears, led by **Katie Vaughan**, raised \$470. Earncliffe Strategies, led by Alicia Adams, raised \$275. Ottawa Bandits, led by **Blake Oliver**, raised \$350. The Ottawa Bandits also won the tournament. Holy Guaca-Bowly, led by **Shafiqah Muhammad Nor**, raised \$250. The Incredibowls, led by **Brit O'Neil**, raised \$110. They See Me Pollin' They Hatin', led by **Daniel Perry**, raised \$50 and RBC, led by **Jenelle Hiney**, raised \$50. *The Hill Times* is a sponsor of the Ottawa Lawn Summer Nights, along with Beau's Brewery, Innovative Medicines Canada, RBC, Proof Strategies, and Cottage Springs Beverage Co.

Government House Leader Karina Gould expecting her second child



Government House Leader Karina Gould announced she is expecting her second child. Photograph courtesy of Twitter

Karina Gould, who will serve as the government House leader following the July 24 cabinet shuffle, announced last week that she's expecting a baby in early 2024.

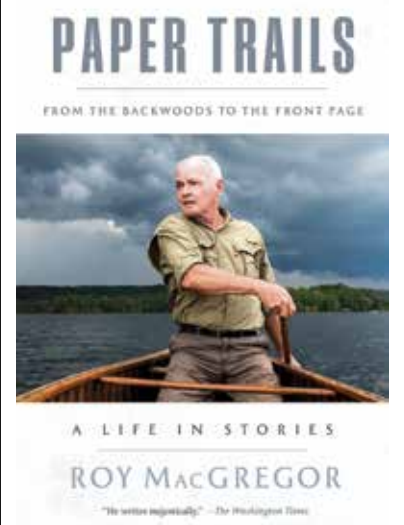
"Brushing up on some old briefing material," tweeted Gould on July 25, pictured holding *Canada's Pregnancy Care book*. "Excited to welcome our newest addition in January 2024."

In September 2017, *The Hill Times* reported that Gould, who at the time served as the democratic institutions minister, was going to be the first-ever active federal cabinet minister to give birth, and that she was going to take a six-week leave afterwards. Gould's son **Oliver** was born in March 2018.

Gould was first elected to Parliament in the 2015 federal election, and has served in three

ministerial roles. She was the youngest woman to serve as a Cabinet minister following her first appointment in February 2017.

Author Roy MacGregor's new book *Paper Trails* hits bookshelves Aug. 1



Paper Trails: From the Backwoods to the Front Page, a Life in Stories will be in bookstores on August 1. Book cover image courtesy of Penguin Random House

Adding another work to an already prolific list of fiction and non-fiction books, prolific Canadian author **Roy MacGregor's** new book, *Paper Trails: A Life in Stories*, is set to arrive in bookstores on Aug. 1.

"As his ardent fans will discover, the observant small-town boy turned pre-eminent journalist put his rare vantage point to exceptional use," according to the book's description. "Filled with reminiscences of an age when Canadian newsrooms were populated by outsized characters, outright rogues and passionate practitioners, the unputdownable *Paper Trails* is a must-read account of a life lived in stories."

In addition to writing for a number of publications, including *Maclean's*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, the *National Post*, as well as *The Globe and Mail* throughout his career, MacGregor has also written about his travels up and down Canada's great rivers, about painter and Group of Seven member **Tom Thomson**, and extensively about hockey, including the NHL's leading point scorer **Wayne Gretzky**.

"Canoe tripping involves a lot of trails, some portages so long and difficult you wonder how the hell you ever came up with such a 'vacation' plan," reads an excerpt from the book. "But I have always loved the bush and the Far North. The more off the beaten path the better."

mlapointe@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



EMERGING LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS EXPORT INDUSTRY IS A CLEAR WIN FOR CANADIANS

Canada is the fifth largest producer of natural gas in the world. The only countries that produce more than us are the United States, Russia, Iran and China.

We are one of the few democratic nations with large enough natural gas reserves to export our energy while easily meeting our own needs. Today, nearly 100 percent of our exported natural gas goes to the United States.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is one of the most sought-after commodities around the planet for two reasons. First, natural gas is a much lower emission alternative for coal and can compete with coal on price and availability. Second, after decades of relying on Russia for natural gas, countries are searching for safer, more secure supplies from trusted producers.

Canada's emerging LNG export industry offers an incredible opportunity for economic prosperity. The development of LNG creates jobs, attracts investment, and generates substantial revenues. The construction and operation of LNG facilities drive employment across a wide range of sectors, including engineering, manufacturing, environmental management, transportation, and technology. As an example, a recent study entitled "Our Communities Care" completed by iTotem Analytics for CAPP showed that between 2018 to 2021, British Columbia's upstream natural gas industry spent over \$4.7 billion in 140 municipalities and Indigenous Nations through the procurement of goods and services from more than 2,400 businesses.

Canada's reputation for political stability and as a secure trading partner makes us a top choice for countries who are looking to reduce their reliance on less secure regimes. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sent democratic nations around the world in search of alternate sources of natural gas to keep their economies running and to provide energy to their citizens. Contracts for LNG are often 15-to-20-year commitments, offering long-term economic stability for Canada while our international partners gain security in their critical energy supply.

Canada's stringent regulations and industry practices ensure that natural gas production and LNG projects operate

with high environmental standards. We prioritize rigorous methane management, energy efficiency, and emissions reduction throughout the LNG value chain, from extraction to liquefaction and transportation.

On the supply side, from 2012 to 2021, natural gas producers in Canada grew production by 35 per cent while driving down direct greenhouse gas emissions from production (also known as scope 1 emissions) by 22 per cent and methane emissions by 38 per cent, according to the Government of Canada's National Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Statistics Canada.

Critics have doubted the case for LNG in Canada but there is a vast and growing global market for natural gas and we only need to grab a small part of that to unlock substantial benefits. Germany has fast-tracked its LNG import capacity, going from almost no ability to import LNG just over one year ago to 14.5 billion cubic metres (Bcm) annually today – and the country expects to more than double that to 37 Bcm per year by 2028. Japan imports more than 100 Bcm of natural gas per year, Korea around 60 Bcm annually. These are all natural trading partners for Canada with the latter two already investors in Canada's burgeoning LNG industry.

This is an economic opportunity for Canada. Trading high-value LNG to other countries means their dollars flow back into our economy, raising our GDP and contributing to our national economy. It will create new jobs and opportunities to open businesses. It's important to note that two proposed LNG facilities are being driven in part by Indigenous ownership with the industry offering opportunities for Indigenous communities to prosper for generations to come through employment and participation.

And this economic opportunity brings with it the benefit of lowering global emissions by replacing coal with reliable, affordable, and secure energy sourced from Canada.

For more information about CAPP, visit www.capp.ca.
Lisa Baiton is CAPP president and CEO.



CANADA'S OIL & NATURAL GAS PRODUCERS

News

Environment a hot topic for advocates during first half of 2023, according to lobbyists' registry

‘This is probably the most attention I’ve seen on the environment’ since carbon pricing started in Canada, said Philip Gass from the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Emissions-reduction plans, changes to fossil fuel subsidies, and the federal government’s plan to transition to a net-zero carbon economy led the environment to become the most popular topic for advocates seeking to engage with officials in the first six months of the year, according to federal lobbying data.

‘We’re doing ... more government relations work than we’ve done in past years, we’ve definitely noticed an uptick,’ said Philip Gass, lead for energy transitions at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). ‘We’ve got more resources to invest in government relations, and so I think it’s a trend that’s going to continue.’

The environment was the topic lobbyists most wanted to discuss with officials in the first half of 2023, according to communication reports posted to the federal lobbyists’ registry. The subject was included in 3,499 communications between Jan. 1 and June 30, ahead of economic development (2,819), industry (2,410), energy (2,392), and health (2,197).

The IISD contributed 58 of those communication reports. The think tank, with offices in Canada and Switzerland, works in international policy on sustainable development. It is represented on the registry by Martha Casey,

interim co-president and co-CEO; and Temple Scott Associates consultants Brian Klunder, Joshua Matthewman, Don Moors, and Scott Munnoch.

Gass said the institute focused its advocacy efforts on four main areas: the Canada Energy Regulator’s modelling of a global temperature rise of 1.5C alongside Canada’s net-zero emissions goal; Bill C-50, Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act, intended to lay the groundwork for the economy’s shift to net zero; changes to fossil fuel subsidies; and the IISD’s own report on managing the decline of oil and gas production in Canada.

Those four topics all happened relatively close together—Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.) unveiled plans to phase out “inefficient fossil fuel subsidies” on July 24, while CER’s modelling, IISD’s report, and Bill C-50 were all released in June.

‘Since the introduction of carbon pricing in Canada, this is probably the most attention I’ve seen on the environment,’ Gass said. ‘In that case, it was one really prominent issue. Here, it was three or four medium to large ones all at the same time, but I think it just is a sign of the way things are going and the momentum on reform.’

IISD held in-person meetings with federal officials in Ottawa this past February, Gass said. ‘IISD is also part of the Green Budget Coalition, so we participate in group meetings with as many as 10 or more other organizations at the same time,’ he said.

Gass said the group is also preparing for the COP-28 climate summit in the United Arab Emirates later this year.

‘The timing of the release of these things in June allows us to set up for the fall for international meetings as well,’ he said. ‘I think it’s just a sign of the prominence [of these issues] and, frankly, climate change has been in the news for other reasons as well, for the impacts of wildfires and droughts. So I think it’s a sign that it’s going to be increasingly top of mind going forward.’

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and Environmental Defence Canada posted the most communication reports related to the environment in the first half of 2023, with 133 each. The CLC is represented on the registry by president Bea Bruske, while Environment Defence is represented by executive director Tim Gray, Temple Scott Associates consultant Brian Klunder, and Pivot Strategic Consulting consultant Aaron Freeman.

According to a CLC lobby document prepared earlier this year, the organization called for the “Just Transition” to a net-zero economy to be achieved “through social dialogue (involving government, labour and employers), decent work, labour rights, social protection and additional consultation with affected stakeholders consistent with human rights and equity.”

Environmental Defence previously told *The Hill Times* that its discussions with federal officials focused on carbon emissions from the oil and gas sector, changes to fossil fuel subsidies, and zero-emission vehicle sales regulations.

The bulk of reports related to the environment included communications with the House of Commons, which can include both MPs and their staffers. Of the 3,499 communication reports that included the environment, 1,107 included contact with the House.

Conservative MP Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, Que.), his party’s environment critic, was targeted in 70 communications, followed by Environment Minister Guilbeault, with 50 reports; Liberal MP Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.), who is Guilbeault’s parliamentary secretary, with 49 reports; Liberal MP Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan-Woodbridge, Ont.), who sits on the House Natural Resources Committee, with 47 reports; and Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.), with 46 reports.

The Canadian Cattle Association (CCA) posted the third-highest number of communication



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault appeared in 50 communication reports filed to the federal lobbyists’ registry that included the environment as a topic in the first half of 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

reports related to the environment between January and June. Represented on the registry by executive vice-president Dennis Laycraft, the association posted 64 environment-related communication reports in the first half of 2023.

Jennifer Babcock, senior director of government and public affairs at the CCA, said the environment and trade were the organization’s two main advocacy priorities.

‘We talk with a lot of MPs, whether or not their key priority role is the environment, and part of the reason that we’ve really shifted to focus more on environmental sustainability is to discuss what sustainability and the environmental means in Canada’s beef sector,’ she said. ‘The emissions discussion is a really large one, and last year the government came out with methane targets as well.’

Babcock said the association held a series of “spring fly-ins” to Ottawa, where provincial members and producers met with the federal officials. The CCA has also returned a practice of inviting MPs to farms and ranches during the summer.

‘That’s where you can actually get in the soil, get in the dirt, breathe the fresh air, and hear all the birds and see the biodiversity around you,’ she said. ‘That’s when you’re going to actually get that ‘aha’ moment to see this is what this is what the beef producers are doing. Particularly in the summer, when MPs are in their constituencies and during the summer barbecue circuit going around the country is when we try and do more of those on-the-ground tours.’

As with IISD, the CCA is looking ahead to COP 28, during which it plans to engage both politicians and other industry associations.

‘We are looking to host some pre-COP dialogue, talking about the important role that agriculture plays and food systems play,’ Babcock said. ‘When we look on the international side of things, I think Canada—both government and industry—can be really proud

of what we have to offer, so we’re looking forward to having more discussions with other sectors and the government leading into those COP discussions.’

sjeffery@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

The most frequently discussed lobbying topics in the first half of 2023

Subject	Communication reports
Environment	3,499
Economic Development	2,819
Industry	2,410
Energy	2,392
Health	2,197
Agriculture	1,703
Budget	1,636
Climate	1,633
Transportation	1,497
Taxation and Finance	1,412

Organizations that posted the most communication reports on the environment in the first half of 2023

Name	Communication reports
Canadian Labour Congress	133
Environmental Defence Canada	133
Canadian Cattle Association	64
International Institute for Sustainable Development	58
Canadian Canola Growers Association	57
Irving Oil Limited	56
Grain Farmers of Ontario	55
David Suzuki Foundation	51
Canola Council of Canada	51
Heidelberg Materials Canada Limited	45

Source: *The federal lobbyists’ registry on July 27, 2023.*



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau hugs Jenna Sudds after she is sworn in as minister of Families, Children and Social Development during a shuffle at Rideau Hall on July 26, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Will better mood music be enough for the Liberals?

While Trudeau may have decided the potential benefits of moving senior ministers outweigh the risks, it likely won't be enough to dig the government out of its political hole.

Ken Polk

Opinion



Political communication is the art of setting the right mood music for voters. Broadly speaking, all political parties want to show how their policies and ideas capture the mood of voters: governments to get re-elected, opposition parties to replace governments. Until recently, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has caught the public mood well.

Looking at Trudeau's sweeping cabinet shuffle, it seems he has decided that, while Liberals continue to have the right policies, they just have not been getting the mood music right.

It is easy to see why this may have been a tempting conclusion for him to draw. Inflation, rising interest rates, and the housing crisis have all driven a nega-

tive national mood. As with all governments, the Liberals have been buffeted by one controversy after another, from weak service delivery to alleged Chinese political interference. The Liberals' position in the polls has gradually worsened.

In this context, moving ministers whom Trudeau feels are good communicators into priority positions makes sense. Bringing in some new blood to replace retiring ministers may also give a shot of energy to a long-serving government that needs more of it. We will know in the fall whether he has made the right choices.

However, it is unclear how leaving some senior ministers in place will help improve communications on big files. Many have been in place throughout

the troubles of 2023. The government, as a whole, has struggled to communicate well on the overriding issue of the economy. And it has also been unable to communicate its climate change intentions or objectives clearly or consistently even though it remains an overriding government priority.

In the end, Trudeau may have decided that the potential benefits of moving more senior ministers out outweigh the potential risks.

In fairness to Trudeau, this decision may reflect his own instinct that the public's mood and the economy will both start moving back toward the government in the coming months. Inflation is clearly moderating and employment remains strong. It may well be that the

government will avoid the recession that seemed a certainty at the beginning of the year. Moreover, the ongoing increase in extreme weather, flooding and wildfires across Canada may keep climate change on the political front-burner to the advantage of the Liberals regardless of who is the responsible minister.

But the government is not in control of its fate. It cannot survive without the support of its NDP supply-and-confidence partners who remain sharply critical of the government on a range of economic issues. The prime minister does not have the luxury of waiting while the public mood improves.

Some rejigging of the economic narrative must happen to protect this flank. It may, in turn, require policy initiatives that resonate with a public that, at the moment, wants the government to up its game.

So better mood music is called for, but it likely won't be enough to dig the government out of its political hole. Nor will that be possible unless the government deals with its chronic inability to manage issues well. It has a long record of shooting itself in the foot regardless of who is in cabinet. Whatever the cause, it is a tendency that must be curtailed leading up to what is shaping up to be a challenging re-election campaign for the Liberals, whenever it occurs.

Ken Polk is a public affairs counsellor with Compass Rose, a former Jean Chrétien-era PMO staffer and a former bureaucrat.
The Hill Times

News

Annual public service report to PM should prompt ‘serious conversation’ about bureaucracy’s future, says former PCO clerk Wernick

Civil service renewal is ‘fairly low down on the political radar screen,’ says bureaucracy expert Andrew Griffith.

BY MIKE LAPOINTE

Michael Wernick, the former clerk of the Privy Council Office, says the annual report on the public service of Canada, released on July 19, should serve as a “jumping-off point” for a “serious, more grown-up conversation about the state of the public service going forward,” but said it’s usually ignored by Parliament, especially since the government has lost traction and focus on public-sector capability.

“You want to tell a positive story. It’s a rare opportunity to push back against the usual negative feedback loops where people only pay attention to things that go wrong, and highlight some of the hidden stories and what’s going on and tell us the bigger picture,” Wernick explained to *The Hill Times* after last week’s massive cabinet shuffle. “The risk is always getting it right—you want it to also be candid about where there were issues, and you want it to sort of set up a conversation about the state of the public service ideally.”

Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), who most recently served as defence minister, was appointed as Treasury Board president in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) cabinet shuffle on July 26. Her arrival into the role comes not long after John Hannaford’s appointment as Clerk of the Privy Council following Janice Charette’s retirement.

Charette officially ended her time in the role and in the public service on June 24, telling *The*

Hill Times that “anything that’s on the prime minister’s desk is on my desk; anything that he’s dealing with, I’m dealing with.”

Wernick told *The Hill Times* that, during his time in the top job, he signed off on annual reports four times between 2016 and 2019.

Wernick said his point was not to be critical of the report, given that “it’s a difficult balancing point.”

The former top bureaucrat called it “frustrating” that Parliament passed a law requiring an annual report on the state of the public service “and then has never shown any interest in it.”

The government first introduced the annual report in 1992, a requirement under section 127 of the Public Service Employment Act, according to the Prime Minister’s Office.

“I tabled four of them, and was never, ever asked to go to a parliamentary committee and discuss the report or the state of the public service,” said Wernick.

Wernick also said that there was nothing in the report about the service review which was alluded to a few years ago, and that digital government projects are “waiting in a queue.”

“And that’s where finance comes in—if you were going to be serious about public-sector capability, you’d have to spend money,” said Wernick. “You’d have to invest in training and leadership development, you’d have to put some money into it and buildings and equipment ... it won’t come for free. And so far, this government has lost any sort of focus and traction on public-sector capability.”

Data shows growth in public service, progress in diversity and inclusion

In terms of the diversity goals, Andrew Griffith, a former director general for Citizenship and Multiculturalism who keeps a

close eye on public service survey results and reports, said that “virtually, for all visible minority groups, their relative share in promotions has increased.”

There has been significant growth in the size of the federal public service recently, with the report noting that the number of employees grew from 319,601 in March 2021 to 335,957 in March 2022.

The number of executives grew from 7,972 to 8,506 during that time period, with the number of deputy ministers increasing from 37 to 41. The number of associate deputy ministers fell slightly, from 39 in March 2021 to 36 a year later.

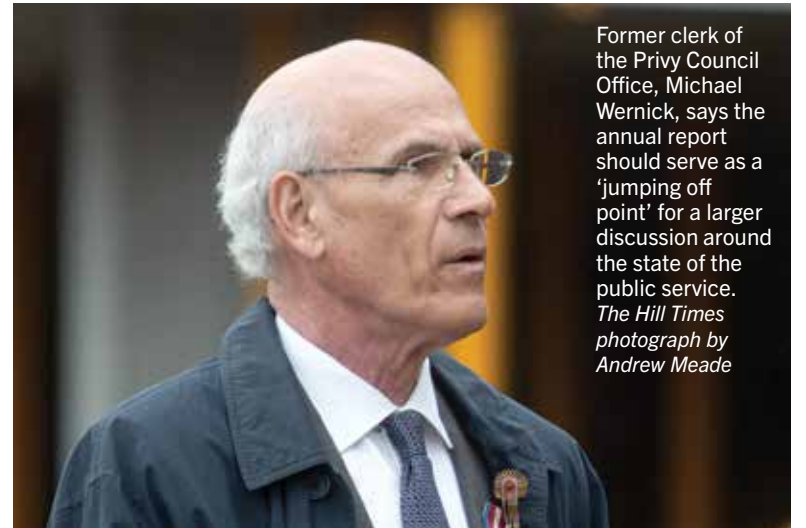
In the report’s “year ahead” section, Charette notes that the government’s agenda on diversity and inclusion “must be inclusive” and must advance commitments around reconciliation, accessibility, combating transphobia and better support for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.

Charette also writes that the government must continue to prioritize the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities, and “ensure employees in religious minority communities feel safe and supported in their workplaces.”

Griffith told *The Hill Times* that “the overall pattern of the public service becoming more diverse with better representation is there, at both the executive level and non-executive level.”

Griffith also said that based on the data he sees and analyzes surrounding the bureaucracy, the visible minority category as a whole is doing better in the last six years than the non-visible minority community—which applies to both men and women.

According to the report, which outlines disaggregated employment equity representation and workforce availability, the number of women in the public service increased from 127,043 at



Former clerk of the Privy Council Office, Michael Wernick, says the annual report should serve as a ‘jumping off point’ for a larger discussion around the state of the public service. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the end of March 2021, to 132,299 one year later.

The number of Indigenous Peoples in the public service increased from 11,977 to 12,336 over the same time period, with the number of persons with disabilities increasing from 12,893 in March 2021 to 14,573 in March 2022.

In terms of visible minorities, the total increased from 43,122 to 47,728, with Black employees increasing from 8,754 to 9,809. Non-White Latin Americans and persons of mixed origin both saw increases of 0.1 per cent in the public service population.

Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and South Asian/East Indian employees also saw increases within the bureaucracy’s ranks, as well as Non-White West Asians, North Africans or Arabs, Southeast Asians, or other visible minority groups, according to the report.

At the executive level, the percentage of women increased from 52.3 per cent to 53.2 per cent, persons with disabilities increased 5.6 per cent to 6.5 per cent, and members of visible minorities increased from 12.4 per cent to 13 per cent.

Public service renewal ‘fairly low down on the political radar’

When asked about recent changes both at the top level of the public service with a new clerk, as well as a new Treasury Board president in Anand, Griffith said he thought “sometimes one reads a bit too much into these changes.”

“Public service renewal isn’t [something] that directly affects [most] Canadians,” said Griffith. “It’s fairly low down on the political radar screen—this is largely managed through the bureaucracy—there are checks and balances as there always are, but I don’t really think that any of these changes will drastically modify the path that the current clerk was on, and that likely the new clerk will have more important issues that take up his time.”

Wernick noted that the Liberals left Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.), Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University—Rosedale, Ont.) and Environment Minister Steven

Guilbeault (Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.) where they already were in cabinet, but “it doesn’t explain moving Anand out of defence, frankly, because now you’ve got to bring a new person in in the middle of a defence policy review.”

Wernick also said going through the disruption of the pandemic and now trying to adapt in some places to hybrid work possibilities, there’s now a government “in the late stages, pedal to the metal, trying to deliver stuff.”

“So it’s going to be hard to pay attention to its actual capabilities,” said Wernick, who added that he agreed with what is flagged in the report in terms of organizational health, burnout, mental health, and diversity.

“But there’s not a lot in there about the basic capabilities of the public service,” said Wernick.

‘I know getting here has not always been easy,’ writes Charette on hybrid work

The report also highlights the shift in the past year towards a hybrid work model, a change that made headlines for months and raised the ire of many public servants both in mainstream media and on social media.

“Once we were able to safely welcome more employees back into the workplace, I outlined my expectations for deputies, including that they encourage employees to test new hybrid work models, wrote Charette in the report. “The shift to a hybrid model was about putting our effectiveness first and making a change that would best enable us to support government and serve Canadians, while giving employees flexibility to support their well-being.”

Direction on the common hybrid work model was released in December 2022, which set out guidelines requiring that employees work on-site at least two to three days per week.

“I know getting here has not always been easy,” wrote Charette, noting that the public service is the largest employer in the country and is made up of hundreds of thousands of public servants in a wide range of roles across Canada and abroad.

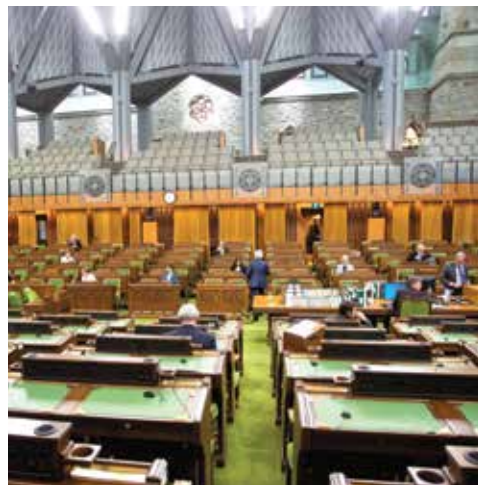
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West Block, 2040: the case for a second Chamber with a round seating plan

Our parliamentary traditions, while nostalgic, are far from modern. While Canada has had countless procedural changes over the years, it has shied away changing the room itself. Let's make a second House Chamber—and make it a circle.

Jonathan
Ferguson

Opinion



Members of Parliament prepare for a meeting of the Special Committee on the COVID-19 Pandemic in the House of Commons on May 13, 2020. Let's allow ourselves a second Chamber to reflect who we are today, writes Jonathan Ferguson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“If we don't want to be consigned to the past, we must stop living in it,” said Lord Kevin Shinkwin during the Parliamentary Internship Program's study tour to the United Kingdom in March 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic had pushed legislatures around the world to adapt. Zoom

forced us to break tradition, to snap out of our holding pattern.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the British House of Commons that same week, as he did Canada's days later, on March 15, 2022. With restrictions

beginning to lift, MPs in both cases crowded in together, for a virtual wartime address. The virtual format was, strictly speaking, unnecessary by COVID-19 standards—Zelenskyy *could* have come in person. Yet both leveraged technology in a different new way, representing historic parliamentary firsts.

Why stop there? Our parliamentary traditions—however nostalgic—are far from modern. While Canada has engaged in countless procedural changes over the years, it has shied away from another elephant in the room: the room itself.

Here is the pitch: make a second House Chamber—and make it a circle.

Revolutionary? Maybe not, but the timing couldn't be better. At some point in the 2030s, the original chamber will reopen. We'll be left with the beautiful space in West Block, which is already serving as the House of Commons. All that will be missing are the seats (those currently in West Block are the Centre-Block originals; they'll be moving back home as renovations conclude). At some point after that, we'll have to decide what to do with the now-empty room.

There is no better use for that space than to turn it into a second Chamber, with a second seating plan. The benefits are practical as well as symbolic. Practically, having concurrent or “parallel” sessions—one in the restored Centre Block and one in West Block—would allow for bills to pass faster than they do

today. Concurrent sessions would also permit MPs more speaking opportunities on issues that matter to them and to their constituencies. Such parallel Chambers already exist at the Australian and British Parliaments. The timing of an adaptation like this would also keep the costs of creating this space low.

The symbolic benefits, however, are even more important. A circular Chamber would convey unity in a time of increasingly polarized politics. A prime minister seated facing the Speaker of the House feels more natural. Question Period as we know it today could continue to be held in the original layout in the Centre Block Chamber. The West Block Chamber, meanwhile, might be preferred for moments like Zelenskyy's wartime address: moments where MPs wish to portray Canada's unity.

This is no original idea: Nunavut has a circular legislature, as does Wales in the U.K. But few—if any—Commonwealth countries have done so at the national level.

Let's stop living in the past, and allow ourselves a second Chamber to reflect who we are today.

Let's do an IKEA run and give it a shot.

Jonathan Ferguson participated in the Parliamentary Internship Program from 2021-2022. He is entering McGill Law this fall, where he will pursue a BCL/JD as a McCall MacBain Scholar.

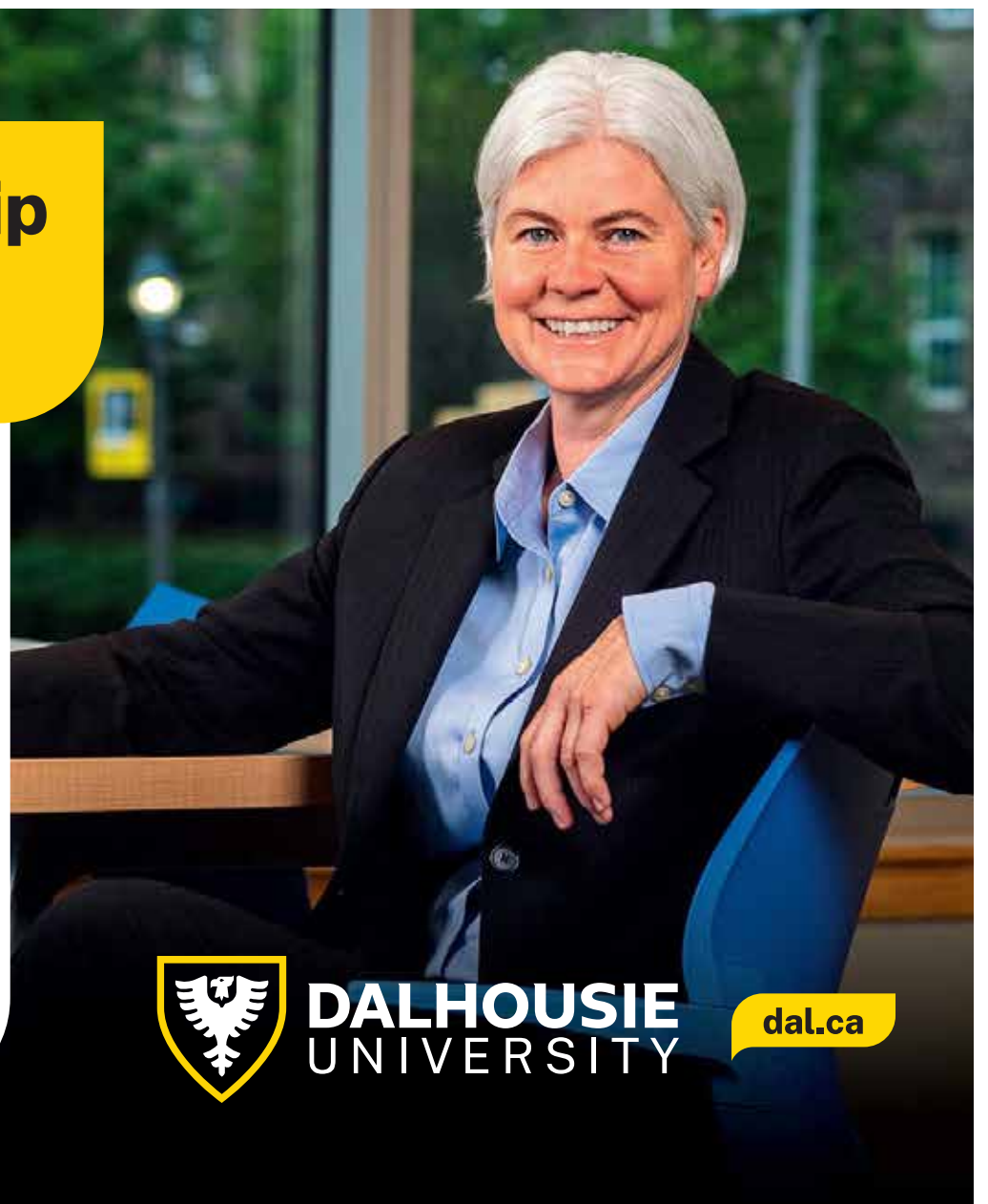
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Editorial

Shuffle sets political tongues wagging, but do voters care?

All eyes were on a stretch of New Edinburgh pavement last Wednesday as politicians waited for a glimpse of who had made it into Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new cabinet.

A mix of familiar and not-so-familiar faces posed outside Rideau Hall for what the prime minister is doubtless hoping will be the last cabinet shuffle before the next federal election.

Alongside new faces, there were also new portfolios, as well as some tweaks to existing ones. Take Jonathan Wilkinson's revamped title, for example; the natural resources minister has had 'energy' added to his letterhead. This new title effectively spells out what has already been the case, but it shows that the government is keen on bolstering its credentials in this area as it pursues a net-zero emissions economy.

The unenviable portfolio of citizens' services has been carved out for Terry Beech, a member of the Class of 2015 and former parliamentary secretary to the fisheries, transport, and finance ministers.

Early reports indicate that the minister will be dealing with situations in which the federal government is dealing directly with the public, whether it be through applications for employment insurance, passport applications, or dental benefits.

Creating such a portfolio is a wise move, especially after the frustrations of

service delays during the pandemic. The images of passport applicants camped in the cold outside overwhelmed ServiceCanada locations is a hard one for a government to shake. If the public's few direct interactions with the federal bureaucracy are painful, it is difficult to regain their trust.

Beech's role is likely to be an important, but thankless one: there will be no plaudits if these services perform the way they are supposed to, but plenty of blame if they do not. Putting a face to the blame means Beech will need nerves of steel in the job.

Assigning newcomer Rechie Valdez the sole duty of small business is also smart retail politics.

In separating the portfolio from Mary Ng's responsibilities with export promotion, international trade, and economic development, Trudeau has a minister purely focused on responding to the needs of small businesses and communicating the government's policies.

We know that the political class was abuzz at the news, but what about the wider public? Were swing voters paying attention to the changes in portfolios and, if they were, did it change their perception?

At the end of the day, the government's brand is tied to its leader, and his role did not change on Wednesday. It remains to be seen whether last week's reset will change his political fortune.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Climate crisis accelerating, unprecedented heat, wildfires, drought: McElroy

Re: "Heat waves are carrying us to the point of no return," (*The Hill Times*, July 19, by Gwynne Dyer). The climate crisis is here and accelerating. Unprecedented heat, wildfires, and droughts are causing widespread death, suffering, and environmental destruction. The primary cause is the burning of fossil fuels. Where is the fossil fuel industry in this picture? Are they working with governments to transition to a safer source of energy? No, they are abandoning green energy and plotting a massive expansion of oil and gas production. For decades they knew the scientific truth that their industry is fuelling climate change. Rather than working toward an energy transition, they have used their massive profits to fund a disinformation campaign to convince the world to continue its reliance on fossil fuels. The industry executives are guilty of crimes against humanity.

The International Criminal Court may be our last resort to stop this. Criminal charges require that individuals acted with intent. This is evident from the fact they fired their scientists once the reality of climate change was confirmed.

Eschewing expert advice and the recommendation to invest in other energy sources to protect their shareholders, they hired flack artists to spin a web of deceit

to propagandize people to believe that scientific assessments were unreliable. As projections of huge changes in the environment—like the vanishing Arctic sea ice—became fact, industry poured billions of dollars more into disseminating disinformation.

The oil cartel has infiltrated international organizations, national governments and even small environmental groups to stymie green power development. The current retrenchment of oil companies, like Shell, and their abandonment of green energy initiatives means governments around the world must coordinate and take control or nationalize oil companies to force change. The industry principals are committing criminal acts in supporting fossil fuel profits at the expense of human life.

The people running these companies are no less culpable for the deaths of millions than the most despicable political autocrats. Democracy must prevail to protect humanity. Even with the most aggressive policies, it is not clear whether our youth will have great-grandchildren. And if they do, they will be living in a climate hell, not the comparative heaven that we inherited.

Tom McElroy
 Toronto

World needs Canadian LNG to reduce global emissions, writes Enbridge

David Crane's opinion column in the July 24 issue of *The Hill Times*, "Dear government: don't be pressured by the hype from natural gas producers and pipeline owners," tries to make the case that exporting Canadian natural gas as liquefied natural gas (LNG) is not in the best interest of Canada nor the energy security of our global allies.

Nothing could be further from the truth. First, we have plenty in government who say reducing global emissions is an urgent matter. Yet in recent years we have done little to develop or spur Canadian LNG exports that, in displacing coal power generation, would deliver a greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for the planet than the act of Canada meeting its own net zero commitment (Canada accounts for just 1.5 per cent of the world's emissions).

Second, Crane tries to make the case that building the necessary infrastructure will take too much time and too much money. He overlooks the point that a big part of the time and money constraint is a less than friendly regulatory regime. He also ignores what our neighbours have

done in the last decade. U.S. LNG exports grew from 0.4 billion cubic metres in one year (2014), to exporting 0.3 billion cubic metres a day today—and 104.3 billion cubic metres for all of 2022. Meanwhile, Canada stood still.

Third, while acknowledging that German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and other allies have asked for Canada's support in supplying LNG, he fails to acknowledge the potential energy security aspects of Canadian LNG supply. For years, much of western Europe has been dependent on Russian natural gas, as have places like Turkey and China. The events in Ukraine have brought this to a point of criticality.

The world needs Canadian LNG—to reduce global emissions and for long-term energy security. As Enbridge's CEO Greg Ebel has said, rather than saying sorry to our allies, industry, and government should accelerate plans for LNG exports—and turn that "sorry" into a "you're welcome."

Mike Fernandez
 Enbridge SVP & chief communications officer
 Calgary, Alta.



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With the cabinet shuffle, Trudeau fires first salvo of next election campaign

If the ballot question is the economy, the prime minister stands a fighting chance of re-election. If the question remains a need for change, his bold cabinet move won't mean much.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Justin Trudeau has rolled the dice.

Last week's massive cabinet shuffle makes one thing certain: The prime minister plans to lead the Liberal Party into the next election.

The ballot question he is aiming for is the economy, and Trudeau is banking on enough

political runway to convince Canadians that the best masters of the economy are already in the job.

The shuffle is a not-so-tacit admission that Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre is hitting the mark when he travels the country on his so-called "Axe the Tax" tour.

It matters little that the majority of Canadians are actually getting money back because of the way the carbon tax remittance has been structured. Canadians are reeling from rising prices and the hike in national interest rates. Global issues may be responsible for the cash crunch, as Trudeau mentioned during his press conference lauding the new cabinet team. But all politics is local.

Polls show that local politics right now is hitting the Liberals hard. On the same day as Trudeau announced the massive change in cabinet, Abacus Data released a poll showing the Conservatives were 10 points ahead of the Liberals. Pollara put out a poll earlier in the month claiming the Tories were 12 points ahead among Indigenous voters.

Trendlines are clear. Tories are climbing and the Liberals are lagging. The shuffle is supposed to staunch the political bloodletting.

Highlights included the appointment of Arif Virani, Canada's

first Muslim attorney general and Rechie Valdez, the first Filipina woman in a Canadian cabinet.

Original reports cited the appointment of a first Filipino, but that was amended, as the first Filipino member of cabinet was Rey Pagtakhan in the cabinet of Jean Chrétien.

The demographic changes to cabinet are pretty clear evidence that the shuffle is intended to launch an election team. As well as specific nominations in the Muslim and Filipino community, the prime minister also named a Tamil Canadian as minister responsible for Crown-Indigenous relations.

Gary Anandasangaree will have big shoes to fill because outgoing minister Marc Miller developed an excellent relationship with Indigenous communities, as both portfolios he has held in the past eight years involved work with those communities. Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu has regional experience with Indigenous peoples because of her home riding in Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.

Anandasangaree is a risky choice because his urban Scarborough background is not exactly a hotbed of Indigenous politics. However, he has a reputation as

being accessible and active, and worked on an Indigenous consultation process for the Rouge National Urban Park.

He wouldn't be the first minister to build a relationship with Indigenous peoples from scratch. But the popularity of Miller and Hajdu were undeniable, and, given the government's commitment to reconciliation, the decision to make a change is potentially tricky.

The Trudeau inner circle of cabinet makers must be banking on the fact that these new appointments will buttress the party in areas of the country where they will be in pitched battles with the Conservatives. Suburban GTA ridings are always a dogfight, so the appointments of Anandasangaree and Valdez could have an impact on potentially tight races.

Trudeau is also trying to change the "change" message. With three terms under his belt, the prime minister is well known to the public and somewhat shopworn.

As my mother taught me, politics is the only job where the more experience you get, the more people want to get rid of you, and in three terms, you make enemies who want you out.

The change narrative is the movement when governments are voted out. It doesn't matter what kind of a job they have done; their political time is up. In most instances, people vote governments out, they do not vote opposition parties in.

A new government is given the benefit of the doubt. The thinking is, with this sizeable change in positions, there is an element of newness surrounding the team. While that is true, there is no element of newness in the leader.

Trudeau is obviously banking on the fact the surly side of the Conservative leader will convince enough voters that Poilievre is not the right person to lead the country. While Trudeau may no longer be loved by all, his opponent has never been loved by many.

If the ballot question is the economy, the prime minister stands a fighting chance of re-election. If the question remains a need for change, his bold cabinet move won't mean much at the ballot box.

This past week, the next election got started.

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

It's okay for partisans to be nice

In this day and age, we're so conditioned to see Liberals and Conservatives tear each other apart in public that when we see civility, it surprises us.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—It says something about the nature of politics today that when a Conservative says something nice about a Liberal, it actually makes headlines.

Case in point, I recently came across a CBC news story headlined: "Poilievre ally calls Trudeau one of the 'most successful' politicians of his generation."

Now that's a headline that seems designed to stir up partisan emotions!



John Baird, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It says something about the nature of politics today that when a Conservative says something nice about a Liberal, it makes headlines, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Jake Wright

In fact, it likely made Liberals smile and Conservatives fume.

After all, it seems even one of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre's supporters believes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is praiseworthy.

That's got to be embarrassing for Poilievre, right? I mean, with allies like that, who needs enemies?

Yet, if you read the accompanying story, it's actually not all that dramatic.

First off, the "Poilievre ally" noted in the headline is former Conservative cabinet minister John Baird, who, yes, did endorse Poilievre's leadership, but who's now retired from politics, meaning he's no longer required to



verbally joust with his political foes.

In short, he can now be polite in public to people from rival political parties.

Secondly, when Baird called Trudeau one of the "most successful" politicians of his generation, he did so in the context of introducing the prime minister at the Canada-Australia Economic Leadership Forum, a gathering where politicians and business leaders meet to discuss economic and policy issues.

In such a situation, Baird, who is also one of the Forum's Canadian co-chairs, would, of course, say something nice about Trudeau.

I mean, could you imagine if he'd introduced the prime min-

ister by saying something like, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce our next speaker, Justin Trudeau, an incompetent, scandal-ridden, disaster of a leader whose wrong-headed policies are driving a once proud country into the ground."

That wouldn't exactly be appropriate, would it? (Though, admittedly, it'd be funny!)

I'd also like to note that Baird calling Trudeau a "successful politician" wasn't so much a compliment, as it was a mere statement of fact.

My point is: even someone who doesn't like Trudeau must admit he's had a long string of impressive political successes, from resurrecting a moribund Liberal Party seemingly on the edge of extinction, to winning three consecutive federal elections. (Although, to be sure, he's only won one majority.)

Besides, I'd argue calling someone a "successful politician" isn't even necessarily much of a compliment.

Keep in mind, it's possible to be both a successful politician and an unsuccessful leader, since winning an election is sometimes easier than governing.

Indeed, often politicians are successful precisely because they refuse to make unpopular—but

necessary—decisions and are content to kick problems down the road.

Now, I'm not putting Trudeau into that category, but I'm pretty sure Baird would.

But what about Baird calling Trudeau one of the most successful leaders of this "generation"? Surely, dishing out that impressive accolade goes beyond simple politeness?

Maybe.

But remember, political success is relative, and when you consider the success rate of other political leaders during this generation, perhaps Baird's compliment is not really such high praise.

So, given that Baird's compliment of Trudeau was rather banal, why did the CBC report make that the story's lede?

As a matter of fact, Trudeau's remarks to the conference (which you'd think would be the most newsworthy aspect) were buried deep in the report.

Well, I think the answer is, in this day and age, when savage political warfare is the norm, we're so conditioned to see Liberals and Conservatives tear each other apart in public, that when we see civility between them, it surprises us.

That's kind of a sad state of affairs.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant. *The Hill Times*

Politics

We desperately need to rethink how we conduct politics



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with reporters at Rideau Hall after he shuffled his cabinet on July 26, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Beyond the talking points, slander and the incoherence of constant polling, voters don't really know the people they are voting for because politicians never have to enter a forum where they have to think.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Last week's federal cabinet shuffle made all the usual headlines, but raised another issue not often mentioned: the desperate need to rethink how we conduct politics.

Let's start with the first part. In that brief burst of hope that flashes whenever a government hits the reset button, there were stories about who was in, who was out, and who was brand new.

And, of course, stories about which Liberal cabinet ministers might now be best positioned to contest for the top job, should Justin Trudeau get tired of being swarmed and sworn at in public by thugs and boors posing as protesters.

In the category of people to watch, Dominic LeBlanc, Sean Fraser, and Anita Anand all voyaged upward, at least they did according to the metric of their now-greater ministerial status.

The second matter raised by the cabinet shuffle? The crying need to examine how we conduct our public life in this country, and to do something about it.

When it came time for Pierre Poilievre to offer his reaction to the government's facelift, the leader of the opposition proved once again that he will have to do a lot more than take off his glasses to improve his image with Canadians. Not even a ski mask could conceal the meanness of his response.

Politics is not Sunday school. No one—including yours truly—expected Poilievre to offer any bouquets to the ministers, old and new, of what will likely be Trudeau's election cabinet, whenever voting day comes. But there wasn't a pinch of civility, a drop of statesmanship, or a scintilla of decorum in his response, just a dreary litany of the government's alleged failures. Poilievre claimed that after eight years of Trudeau, the sky is falling. It sounded so old.

Canadians, he claimed, have to choose between heating their homes and eating. The carbon tax, you see, is to blame. Immigrants can't work. Housing is unaffordable. Mortgage payments and rents have doubled. Housing costs in Canada are the highest in the G7. There is disorder in the streets. Every town and metropolis has tent cities, and violent offenders roaming the streets who have been released from prison. And, of course, Chrystia Freeland is not the minister of finance, she is the minister of deficits. Bottom line? After eight years of JT, everything is broken. Only PP can make Canada great again.

It is one thing to cast the appropriate lights and shadows over your opponent's record. Every politician does that to some degree. But it is quite another to paint a portrait in black of every single thing that any government, including the one to which Poilievre used to belong, does or did.

And it is something less than honest to offer such a blanket condemnation of your opponent without offering anything by way of explaining how firing Trudeau and hiring Poilievre would leave Canadians better off.

How would Poilievre make housing cheaper? How would he control food and energy prices, the main drivers of the kind of inflation that everyone feels? I take it he is still a free-market guy, so wage and price controls aren't the answer. So what is? No real substance from Poilievre beyond "common sense" solutions.

Really?

Like ditching the carbon tax while the planet is alternately drowning or burning? Like not regulating the energy industry, as the Harper government chose to do when it was calling the shots? By firing the governor of

the Bank of Canada? By using bitcoin as a hedge against inflation?

In blaming Trudeau for everything that is wrong in this upside-down world, Poilievre never comments on a remarkable thing. Trudeau is not the president of the United States, the prime minister of Britain, or the chancellor of Germany.

Yet all of these countries—and many more—are facing the same problems as Canada: inflation, high housing costs, large deficits, and worried citizens. In a global environment, Poilievre remains a parochial thinker.

The plain truth? A lot of the problems in Canada are not made in Canada. And it is intellectually dishonest to pretend otherwise.

Which, in a way, is the chief problem with our politics. The extreme adversarial system that our democracy has morphed into has replaced dialogue with tedious talking points. None of us really knows who Justin Trudeau, Pierre Poilievre, or Jagmeet Singh really are. We know them through soundbites, screw-ups, and scripted lines aimed at skewering the other guy. We know them when someone throws a stone in their direction. But we don't have a clue of what they really think.

Beyond the talking points, the slanders and slurs, beyond the incoherence of constant popularity polling, voters don't really know the people they are voting for. The main reason for that is that our politicians never have to enter a forum where they have to think. With the fast-food media leading the way, they just water-ski across the surface of events, and never have to enter the depths.

Our so-called televised debates during elections are not designed to showcase the knowledge of candidates, or their real differences. They are an exercise in insulating them from any meaningful exchange. Since truth resides in a nuance, voters learn little from these corseted encounters. The whole exercise has come down to watching to see if someone gets skewered with a rapier thrust. You know, the way Brian Mulroney nailed John Turner back in the day.

Here is my answer to our dilemma, to the informational starvation everyone is suffering from.

Why not create a special series of hour-long television shows, say four times a year, in which our political leaders engage in conversation?

Not person-to-person combat, not media cage-fighting, but real conversations where the viewer could see how the people who want to run the country really think. A format where you couldn't get away with glib one-liners, but one where your knowledge or lack of it would be on display.

Now that would be an item for pay TV.

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

Strengthening Canada-India relations: a shared journey for global progress

The time for a stronger Canada-India partnership is now. Guided by the principles of democracy, compassion, and the belief that the world is indeed one family.

Devinder Chaudhary

Opinion



OTTAWA—As an immigrant from India who found a new home in Canada, I am a proud Canadian of Indian descent. My personal journey is a testament to the invaluable contributions that both countries have made in shaping my identity, values, and opportunities. Canada, with its unwavering support and boundless opportunities, has provided me with more than I could have ever imagined. Today, as the G20 heads of states prepare to gather in New Delhi from Sept. 9-10, it is crucial for us to foster a strong alliance between Canada and India, working together to create a better world.

Recently, there have been notable differences in our views on geopolitical matters, hindering the co-ordination and co-operation to which both nations are committed. It is imperative that we approach these issues thoughtfully, taking into consideration each other's sensitivities. Canada is a progressive society upholding democratic values, while India proudly holds the distinction of being the world's largest democracy. Our shared commitment to democracy forms the foundation upon which we can build a harmonious and productive relationship.

Over the past four-and-a-half decades, India has grappled with a separatist movement. Not unfamiliar to Canada, these movements can strain domestic and international relations, particularly when human rights violations are of concern. Therefore, both countries understand the importance of and strive to maintain inclusive, diverse, and socially cohesive populations.

As India emerges as an economic powerhouse, Indians are making remarkable contributions to various domains, from social advancements to technological breakthroughs and cultural achievements. India has developed a newfound sense of pride and responsibility, a transformation that has given rise to a profound commitment to the well-being of not just its own citizens, but also people across the globe.

India's chosen slogan, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, derived from ancient Hindu texts, encapsulates the spirit of unity and

harmony—declaring “The World Is One Family.” With shared values and a deepening bond fostered by the presence of almost two million Canadians of Indian descent, Canada and India are akin to close family members. It is in this spirit of familial connection that we must approach the upcoming G20 meeting, leveraging our shared experiences, aspirations, and

dedication to create positive change on a global scale.

As G20 leaders gather in New Delhi this fall, it is my hope that Canada and India will seize this opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to cooperation, dialogue, and understanding. By transcending our differences and focusing on the common goal of creating a better

world, we can pave the way for enhanced bilateral ties.

Together, Canada and India can set an example for the rest of the world, showcasing the power of collaboration, inclusivity, and respect for democratic principles. Let us bridge the gaps, acknowledge our shared heritage, and embrace the immense potential that lies in working together as allies. By doing so, we can shape a brighter future not only for ourselves but for the generations to come.

The time for a stronger Canada-India partnership is now. Let us seize this moment and embark on a shared journey towards global progress, guided by the principles of democracy, compassion, and *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the belief that the world is indeed one family.

Devinder Chaudhary is owner of the Aiana Restaurant Collective in Ottawa a director at the Ottawa Board of Trade. The views in this op-ed do not reflect the Ottawa Board of Trade's positions.

The Hill Times

THE HILL TIMES' POLITICAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING INTERNSHIPS FOR INDIGENOUS AND BLACK PEOPLE

The Hill Times is excited to announce its internship program for aspiring Indigenous and Black journalists. We are seeking passionate applicants who are eager to pursue a career in journalism and have a keen interest in politics, policy, and governance. These paid internships will take place at The Hill Times newsroom located in Ottawa.

About The Hill Times:

The Hill Times is a dynamic, twice-weekly newspaper and daily news service dedicated to providing comprehensive coverage of Parliament Hill, the federal government, and federal politics. Our readership includes cabinet ministers, Members of Parliament, Senators, federal public servants, political insiders, lobbyists, foreign diplomats posted to Canada, industry associations, authors, journalists, and academics. We pride ourselves on our unique insider perspective, offering unparalleled insights into federal politics.

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This internship is a paid, full-time, contract position. Internships vary in duration from three months to one year, depending on the availability of the applicant and the newsroom. Please state your availability on the application, keeping in mind there is a three-month minimum.

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For this internship, we will be considering both candidates who have studied and worked in journalism, and other professionals who have strong writing skills, a passion for politics and governance, and want to take up a career in journalism.

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- Life experience that contributes to your development/ability as a journalist.

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We thank all applicants for their submissions, but only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted.

‘Ya gotta dance with the one that brung ya!’ Next election expected to be a ‘game of margins,’ Trudeau ‘doubles down’ on Liberal ‘red wall’ in cabinet shuffle, say politicos

In a ‘deeply divided and fragmented electorate,’ all parties are ‘playing on the margins’ and every seat counts, says Abacus Data CEO David Coletto.

Continued from page 1

ral Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.); Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan (Vancouver South, B.C.); Sport Minister Carla Qualtrough (Delta, B.C.); Minister of Citizens’ Services Terry Beech (Burnaby North-Seymour, B.C.); Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Alta.); and Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.).

In the last federal election in 2021, the Liberals won 139—or 87 per cent—of the 160 seats from the red wall provinces. They won only two in Alberta, four in Manitoba, and 15 in British Columbia.

The cabinet announced last week, which is expected to be the one Trudeau takes to the next election, creates the perception that the Liberals don’t see any hope of

growth outside of Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

“The reality is that the Liberals can’t hold on to power unless they’re doing well in specifically Quebec, Ontario, and, to a lesser extent, Atlantic Canada,” said Nik Nanos, chief data scientist for Nanos Research. “So they can’t afford to lose seats anywhere. And right now they’re trailing the Conservatives [in polls], the Conservatives are in minority territory. They [the Liberals] need to somehow change the trend line.”

Seven ministers were either dropped from cabinet or announced they wouldn’t seek re-election. Most other ministers’ portfolios were shuffled. Trudeau promoted six parliamentary secretaries and a backbench MP to succeed the outgoing ministers. Like his past cabinets, starting in 2015, the new one is also gender balanced and has a significant representation of MPs from visible minority communities. Trudeau also moved some senior cabinet members with visible minority backgrounds who were holding internationally focused portfolios to new roles with a domestic focus. Women and cultural communities are a critical part of the Liberal Party’s voter coalition that brought the prime minister to power in 2015.

One key element in elevating some MPs from marginal ridings to the front bench is to boost their

profile and name recognition, which could help them in getting re-elected.

For example, Liberal MP Arif Virani (Parkdale-High Park, Ont.), an Ismaili Muslim who joined the cabinet last week as the minister of justice and attorney general, won the last election with only a 3.2 per cent margin. Similarly, Liberal MP Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Que.) won in 2019 by a razor-thin margin of 0.6 per cent of the votes, and the 2021 election by a margin of 6.5 per cent of the votes. The Chilean-Canadian MP joined the cabinet last week as the minister of tourism and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.

Rookie Liberal MP Jenna Suds (Kanata—Carleton, Ont.) won her suburban Ottawa riding by a margin of 3.2 per cent in 2021. This riding is on the Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) Conservative Party’s target list for the next election. Poilievre represents the neighboring riding of Carleton. Suds was promoted to cabinet as minister responsible for families, children and social development.

Liberal MP Terry Beech (Burnaby North-Seymour, B.C.), who won the 2021 election by a margin of 10 per cent but was in the fight of his political life when he came within a three per cent margin of losing his seat in 2019, has been promoted to minister of citizens’ services. According to the most recent Nanos Research poll,



Arif Virani makes his way to be sworn in as minister of justice. In an attempt to reset his government, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shuffled his cabinet on July 26, choosing 87 per cent of his new front bench from the Liberal ‘red wall’ regions of Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

the Liberals are 13 points behind the Conservatives in British Columbia, and five points behind in Ontario. In Quebec, the Liberals are 10 points ahead of their second place competitor Bloc Québécois.

All rookie ministers representing marginal ridings will get more

visibility and name recognition because of their new prominent roles both nationally and in their regions.

Liberal MPs from diverse backgrounds, who represent safe Liberal ridings but can help the party across the country in their

respective communities with fundraising and votes, have also been promoted.

Liberal MP Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Ont.), a Tamil-Canadian who represents a safe Liberal riding in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), also

received a big promotion, moving into cabinet as the minister of Crown-Indigenous relations. First-term Liberal MP Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont.), a Filipina-Canadian, joins cabinet as minister of small business. Ya’ara Saks (York Centre, Ont.), a Jew-

ish-Canadian, is the new minister of Mental Health and Addictions and associate minister of health. “I would describe the new cabinet as a battleground cabinet, where you have the new entrants who are either coming from ridings that are battleground ridings, or else they are shoring-up communities that are part of battleground areas,” said a Liberal MP who spoke on a not-for-attribution basis to offer their candid analysis of the cabinet shuffle.

Among senior ministers who have been shuffled within cabinet, Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.), a Hindu-Canadian, leaves defence to become the Treasury Board president. Former international development minister Harjit Sajjan, a Sikh-Canadian, takes on emergency preparedness, as well as responsibilities for the King’s Privy Council for Canada and the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada. Kamal Khara (Brampton West, Ont.), a Sikh-Canadian and former minister for seniors, is now minister of diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities.

Trudeau, however, did not shuffle some of the most important ministries like finance, industry, international trade, foreign affairs, and environment.

“If you look at the big ministries, where are they? Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic,” said one former senior Liberal. “I’d say they’ve doubled down on the red wall. As they say, ‘Ya gotta dance with the one that brung ya!’”

New Canadians with diverse backgrounds play a key role in the outcome of swing ridings, especially in major urban centres like the GTA, Vancouver, B.C., Calgary, Alta., and Montreal, Que., that decide who forms government. The Poilievre Conservatives believe that the next election is theirs to lose, and are going all-in to secure support from visible minorities—an important part of the Liberal voter coalition.

Some recent polls are showing that the Liberals are trailing the Conservatives by six to 10 points, and about 80 per cent of Canadians want a change in government. At the same time, the Conservative advantage in the polls has not been reflected in recent federal byelection results. Coletto said that there might be a high demand for change, but that won’t happen unless Canadians are satisfied with the alternative.

An Abacus Data poll released on the day of the shuffle suggested that the Conservatives were leading the pack with the support of 38 per cent of Canadians, followed by the Liberals with 28 per cent. The NDP was at 18 per cent, the Bloc Québécois had seven per cent, the People’s Party was at four per cent and the Greens were at five per cent. The online poll of 2,486 Canadians was conducted from July 20 to July 25, and had a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

In a Nanos Research poll, the Conservatives had the support of 35.4 per cent of the Canadians, the

Liberals 28.6 per cent, the NDP 19.2 per cent, the Greens 5.9 per cent and the PPC 2.3 per cent.

According to a *Hill Times* analysis of the 2021 election results, if the Conservatives had garnered 16,928 more votes in 24 ridings across the country, they would have won more seats than the Liberals. Similarly, if the Liberals had won 7,144 more votes in 10 ridings that were decided by close margins, Trudeau could have won a majority government.

“You’re playing on the margins, you’re not taking any seats for granted, and especially for a government in its eighth year,” said Coletto.

The senior Liberal interviewed for this article said that for the next election where it appears at this time that no party will be able to win a majority, all parties will put in all of their efforts in Get Out the Vote, recruit top-quality candidates, and put in as many resources as they can in marginal constituencies in the hopes of winning those ridings.

“The reality is a little twist this way, that way, during the campaign, a bunch of ridings can fall,” they said.

“In the game of margins, this is where the play comes in because all you’re trying to do is maybe shift 50,000 votes, 25,000 votes, and you pick your 25 ridings, or 30 ridings or 40 ridings, that’s what you target.”

arana@hilltimes.com
icampbell@hilltimes.com
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Kamal Khara, who won Brampton West, Ont., with 55.3 per cent of the vote in the last election, is pictured July 26, 2023, after being sworn in as the minister of diversity, inclusion and persons with disabilities. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Pascale St-Onge has been promoted to the role of Heritage Minister. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Rechie Valdez, who won Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont., with 47.3 per cent of the vote in 2021, is sworn in as minister of small business by Clerk of the Privy Council John Hannaford at Rideau Hall on July 26, 2023. She is the first Filipina member of cabinet. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Three-term GTA Liberal MP Gary Anandasangaree has been promoted to the front bench as Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Opinion

Trudeau can't afford more unaffordable housing



When it comes to re-election, new housing minister Sean Fraser, third left, may hold the fate of the Trudeau government in his hands. Also pictured are Jenna Suds, left, Randy Boissonnault, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Seamus O'Regan, Dominic LeBlanc, and Jean-Yves Duclos. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Pierre Poilievre is offering quick fixes on housing. Sean Fraser has to show tangible, multiple and highly visible fixes before the next election. The future of this government could depend on it.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



CHELSEA, QUE.—When it comes to re-election, newly-appointed federal housing minister Sean Fraser may hold the fate of the Trudeau government in his hands. (No pressure, Sean!)

That is because, as of today at least, the Trudeau government's greatest vulnerability with a restive, youthful constituency is the ongoing lack of affordable housing in most Canadian cities—and all its attendant consequences. These include growing numbers of homeless encampments; difficulty in staffing restaurants, construction sites and retail outlets in some cities because even moderate-wage earners can't afford to live there; and, finally, those

not-entirely-fictional young adults living unhappily in their parents' basements. They'd be disinclined, one would think, to vote for any incumbent government, including Trudeau's.

This is the demographic being ardently—and, potentially, successfully—courted by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre. Unlike some of his more quixotic campaigns, this one—addressing the despair of so many people at ever being able to afford a home, or even a reasonably priced apartment—resonates broadly.

That doesn't mean Poilievre has brilliant solutions to what is a damnably complex problem. But he has glib remedies, resounding bullet points, dramatic Twitter videos and a likeable (and adult) housing critic in Parry Sound-Muskoka MP Scott Aitchison.

Their back-of-the-napkin fixes include withholding federal infrastructure funding from municipalities that won't open up suburbs and pricier neighbourhoods to multi-unit housing. In Poilievre's framing, cities that play ball and get housing built—over the loud objections of the already well-housed—will be rewarded with “bonuses” from his government, while those that don't will be “fined”.

Poilievre also said he will force municipalities to build highrises around new transit stations and sell off 15 per cent of surplus federal office buildings—“big, ugly and empty”—for conversion to housing. That could amount to 5,000 to 6,000 buildings and brownfield sites that are, in his view, ripe for redevelopment. (In

reality, as some planners argue, renovating an old office building can be more expensive than removing it and building something new.)

He also promises to cut the bureaucracy that delays building permits—how, he doesn't say, since this is largely a municipal arena, but it is part of a piece of his war on “gatekeepers.” That some of those “gatekeepers” enforce safety, environmental requirements, building materials quality and traffic flow—fundamentals of sustainable development—is a nuance he skirts.

That said, some of these measures could produce new housing, and some are not very different from Liberal proposals. But Poilievre's more urgent ambition is to blame Justin Trudeau for everything that isn't working, and to pit the under-housed against wealthy, older “elites” living in detached homes with lawns and gardens. Even pools.

In fact, the housing crisis—which is unfolding in most major cities in developed countries—has many fathers (and mothers). They include municipal governments with exclusionary zoning, protecting great swaths of serviced, suburban land for single family homes (although Vancouver City Council is considering opening half of its single-family neighbourhoods to laneway houses, triplexes, and even simplexes.)

Provinces—the overlords of cities—have also failed to use their muscle in recent decades to increase housing supply, often favouring urban sprawl over densification of existing neighbourhoods. And the federal gov-

ernment, a bit-player in housing constitutionally, has been largely missing in action since the Pierre Trudeau era.

While the feds have no direct control over city zoning, urban planning, or cumbersome municipal approval processes, they can bankroll social housing of various types to address the most urgent needs, and encourage construction of affordable rentals with tax incentives. But, despite promises, blueprints, and many new acronyms, existing affordable housing efforts haven't produced enough in the way of new units.

That has allowed Poilievre to play his favourite role: champion of the little guy. Sometimes, however, his class warfare rhetoric backfires, as it did recently when the opposition leader described a modest home in Niagara Falls as an overpriced “shack,” to the chagrin of the young woman renting the place. Poilievre issued a rare apology.

Meanwhile, Aitchison, a former mayor of Huntsville, Ont., and real estate professional, saves his fire for NIMBYS, but, overall, takes a more thoughtful and compassionate approach than his boss. In his campaign for the Conservative leadership in April 2022, Aitchison endorsed, among other things, investing “in more affordable and social housing in partnership with home builders” concluding that “everyone deserves a safe bed to sleep in.” What we hear from Poilievre, by contrast, are harangues against provinces that provide safe injection sites for street-involved addicts.

The new Liberal housing minister would no doubt concur

with Aitchison on some points. But Fraser was mere hours into his new job before he criticized Poilievre for threatening to deny money to cities that don't build housing, rather than “creating incentives to empower good actors to do more.”

That is why the 39-year-old Nova Scotian was given the job—for his superior “comms” skills, an acknowledgement that, on the housing file, the Liberals are getting clobbered in social media by a sharper, more focused Conservative effort. Unfortunately for Fraser, however, he doesn't have much of a counter-narrative to sell.

In 2017, the Trudeau government introduced a national housing strategy, and has since supplemented and refined it with an \$82-billion investment over 10 years. Sounds impressive, but the strategy amounts to a collection of niche programs for first-time buyers, municipalities, Indigenous communities, non-profits, rental and shelter projects, and so on, (dog houses are not yet included). According to most housing experts—and growing homeless encampments, visible to all—it has had little impact, so far.

Critics on the left complain that most money is directed to market housing and private developers, which has only succeeded in providing more overpriced housing. The grand strategy—originally welcomed as the feds' long-delayed return to the housing field—landed in a time of urgent need, increasing labour shortages, record immigration and soaring construction costs. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation says we need to build 3.5 units beyond those currently under construction by 2030. Meanwhile, National Housing Strategy programs are dribbling out new units practically in the single digits. (And a one-time, \$500 payment for low-income renters is not a sustainable solution.)

The problem is hugely challenging and complicated, and the federal programs seem unnecessarily complex and underfunded. It would be better for the feds to focus their money on fully funded social housing, in the form of co-ops, subsidized rentals, special needs units on available federal land, or with interested non-profits. Let municipalities, provinces and the market meet the needs of the middle class.

Of course, if you are spending way too much on rent, can't even dream of buying a house, are tied to an expensive city by family and a job, you want a quick fix—or, the promise of a fix—not a long-winded analysis of the housing crisis—or, worse: a justification.

Poilievre is offering quick fixes. Fraser has to do him one better: he has to show tangible, multiple and highly-visible fixes and he has to do it before the next election. The future of his government could depend on it.

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

The Hill Times



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published his 'New Agenda for Peace' on July 20, laying out a route for stronger world co-operation. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Guterres' new agenda for peace ignored by most big media

It is sad that the UN chief cannot be heard over the clatter of ongoing war. The pressure to send more arms to Ukraine is warping public culture into thinking that more militarism is the best way to peace.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—When UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published his “New Agenda for Peace” on July 20, laying out a route for stronger world co-operation to avoid future wars, I searched the mainline media

for the next 24 hours to see what kind of coverage he received. I came up with a big zero.

The principal news shows of CBC, CTV, and Global had nothing. *The New York Times* and *The Globe and Mail* had nothing. My hometown newspaper, *The Edmonton Journal*, had nothing. I'm not saying there was no news story somewhere in the general media, but it is safe to say the media was not seized of Guterres' new plan for peace.

The sad truth is that the secretary-general of the United Nations cannot be heard today over the constant clatter of ongoing war. The pressure to send more arms to Ukraine is warping public culture into thinking that more militarism is the best way to peace.

Guterres thinks otherwise. Here are highlights of his 12 recommendations for action:

1. Eliminate nuclear weapons and, until they are eliminated, commit never to use them;
2. Boost preventive diplomacy in an era of divisions. Use UN good offices even when states are at war or do not recognize each other;
3. Develop national prevention strategies to address the different

drivers and enablers of violence, and conflict in societies;

4. Accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address the underlying causes of violence and insecurity;

5. Introduce concrete measures to secure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making on peace and security, including via gender parity in national government cabinets and parliaments;

6. Recognize climate, peace, and security as a political priority, and strengthen connections between multilateral bodies to ensure that climate action and peace-building reinforce each other;

7. Reverse the negative impact of unconstrained military spending, and focus on the profound negative societal effects of public resources diverted to military activity rather than sustainable development and gender equality;

8. Strengthen peace operations and partnerships; they are an essential part of the diplomatic toolbox of the Charter of the United Nations;

9. The increasing fragmentation of many conflicts and the proliferation of non-state armed

groups have increased the need for multinational peace enforcement, and counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations;

10. Support the African Union and subregional peace operations;

11. Conclude, by 2026, a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems; and

12. Make urgent progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make it more just and representative.

Is this comprehensive plan by the head of the chief organization legally charged with maintaining peace and security in the world not worth reporting?

Give me a break. The media is so fixated on the singularity of making war that they cannot deal with the complexity of building peace in a multi-polar world.

Guterres accompanied his agenda with stark warnings: “This new era is already marked by the highest level of geopolitical tensions and major power competition in decades.” “Concerns about the possibility of nuclear war have re-emerged.” “New potential domains of conflict and weapons of war are

creating new ways in which humanity can annihilate itself.”

In short, Guterres is saying that the dangers of further risks of humanity's annihilation are now so great that only a burst of cooperation among nations will get the world back on track towards peace. It's not so much the UN itself that can bring peace, rather that nations must step up and re-engage using the UN's help.

That message has at least been heard by Global Affairs Canada, which welcomed Guterres' agenda, especially the emphasis on prevention, disarmament and peace-building, and insistence on norms and principles of human rights and inclusion, which are at the heart of the UN Charter. Global Affairs pointed out that Canada has already contributed \$70-million to the UN Peace-building Fund over a three-year period. A government spokesman said tepidly, “We look forward to working with the UN to continue to refine the approach and advance our common goal of pursuing international peace and security.”

That's not exactly an energizing endorsement. Yet Canada is doing more to build peace than is generally appreciated. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau co-chairs with Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates group, which promotes fighting climate change, protecting nature, and empowering women and girls around the world. These themes are a part of the secretary-general's huge agenda. The day after his new document was released, Guterres met with Trudeau in New York.

If Trudeau really wants to hold the line on NATO's obsessive demands to increase military spending to 2 per cent of GDP, he should push his government to wake up and grasp the magnitude of the diplomacy now required for peace. This won't be easy — especially if no one has heard of the “New Agenda for Peace.”

Former Senator Douglas Roche's new book, *Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World*, will be published in the fall.

The Hill Times

Roche requested Global Affairs Canada to comment on “A New Agenda for Peace,” asking, “In what way does the government express its support of the document?”

Global Affairs Canada responded: “Canada welcomes the UN secretary general's policy brief on The New Agenda for Peace. We are pleased to see an emphasis on prevention, disarmament, and peacebuilding, all while committing to uphold the norms and principles of human rights and inclusion, which are at the heart of the UN Charter. Canada has supported these themes tangibly, most notably through its contribution of \$70-million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund for 2021-2024. We look forward to working with the UN to continue to refine the approach and advance our common goal of pursuing international peace and security.”

Opinion



The Chapel Creek wildfire north of Blue River, B.C. In an average year, wildfires burn about 2.5 million hectares in Canada—equivalent to four Prince Edward Islands. So far, Canada lost at least 11 million hectares to wildfires this year alone, writes Gary Zed. Photograph courtesy of the BC Wildfire Service

The surprising obstacle in Canada's climate fight: land shortage

Our fragmented land-use approach hinders seizing a rare chance to fight climate change. Addressing this and better collaboration are vital for safeguarding the environment, achieving climate goals, and embracing the green economy.

Gary Zed

Opinion



In the fight against climate change, Canadians may be surprised by the land shortage. When then-natural resources minister

Seamus O'Regan announced the \$3.2-billion, 10-year 2 Billion Trees project in 2020, he emphasized that "There is no path to net-zero carbon emissions that doesn't involve our forests." Canada's potential to impact climate adaptation and mitigation globally is significant, but progress has been slow. Canada's Environment and Sustainable Development Commissioner, Jerry DeMarco, warned that at the current pace, fewer than four per cent of the promised trees will be planted by 2030. Securing appropriate land for forest planting is one of the program's significant hurdles.

For several years, Canada's forest cover has held steady at about 42 per cent of land area. Due to new approaches in forestry, logging now represents less than one per cent of deforestation while localized reforestation and afforestation projects continue. However, climate change's direct impacts like infestations, flooding, and wildfires still threaten our nation's forest cover. The 2 Billion Trees project aimed to plant two billion trees over a decade, resulting in over 1.1 million hectares of new forest cover, twice the size of Prince Edward Island. Yet, in an

average year, wildfires burn about 2.5 million hectares in Canada—equivalent to four Prince Edward Islands. So far, Canada has lost at least 11 million hectares to wildfires this year alone, more than 19 Prince Edward Islands.

Canada must plant more trees than are lost

Over 80 per cent of Canada's surface area is uninhabited, with 89 per cent being publicly owned. However, the issue lies with land jurisdiction. Approximately 41 per cent is federally controlled, with large portions in the northern territories, where the terrain is unsuitable for forest planting. Provinces control the remaining 48 per cent of public-owned land. NRCan's 2 Billion Trees administrators have been negotiating bilateral 'agreements in principle' with provinces and territories, but three years in, only half have signed on, while prominent players Ontario and Quebec are not yet on board.

The slow pace of the 2 Billion Tree project shows the lack of a comprehensive national land-use accord is holding us back. Reflecting on criticism faced by

justice minister David Lametti for inadvertently suggesting the idea of looking at provinces' constitutional authority over natural resources, we clarify that we are not suggesting revisiting constitutional powers. Land use policy is complex and sensitive for provincial governments. We point to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's research, suggesting a multi-departmental and multi-jurisdictional approach to understand and manage land use synergies and trade-offs. Brazil, France, Indonesia, Ireland, Mexico, and New Zealand are all working to improve the coherence of their national strategies and plans, enhancing coordination and aligning policies for biodiversity, climate mitigation, food, and land-use objectives.

Our global competitiveness is also on the line

Transitioning to a sustainable economy is a global race. When U.S. President Joe Biden announced a multi-billion-dollar investment in a clean energy future, people called for a

"made-in-Canada" response. Transitioning faster to meet a market desperate for sustainable goods and services offers opportunities for Canadians to develop our forests sustainably, beyond timber production. Innovation in bioenergy, technology, non-wood forest products, and ecosystem infrastructure services like soil improvement or flood mitigation is crucial. Emerging green jobs will respond to these demands.

Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson acknowledged the challenges of the 2 Billion Trees project, calling it a "marathon rather than a sprint." Considering the scope and urgency, Canadians must expedite collaboration among stakeholders—including provinces, territories, Indigenous leaders, and industry representatives—for nationwide solutions. Scaling Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, and setting common principles for responsible resource development are among the strategies. Developing shared incentives and credits for small private landowners can encourage their participation. A more coherent and accelerated approach to the voluntary carbon credit market and biodiversity investment opportunities is also essential. A cross-Canada land-use strategy, free from short-term election cycles, will leverage our natural resources for a sustainable economy.

Canada's fragmented land-use approach hinders seizing a once-in-a-generation opportunity with viable solutions beneath our feet. Addressing the land "shortage" and enhancing collaboration are vital for safeguarding the environment, achieving climate goals, and embracing an emerging green economy.

Gary Zed is founder and CEO Canada's Forest Trust.
The Hill Times

Solving the productivity puzzle is our most urgent challenge



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne tests out an F-35 fighter jet simulator at the CANSEC trade show in Ottawa on June 1, 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Without better economic performance, we can't advance the Canadian dream of individual opportunity for advancement and an inclusive society of high-quality public services. In fact, the challenge could be to retain what we have.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—The latest World Economic Outlook from the International Monetary Fund shows the Canadian economy on

a clear downward track. Economic growth, which came in at five per cent in 2021 and 3.4 per cent last year, is projected to rise only 1.7 per cent this year and an even lower 1.4 per cent next year. This should focus the minds of the new Trudeau cabinet.

Without better economic performance, we cannot advance what might be called the Canadian dream of individual opportunity for advancement and an inclusive society of high-quality public services, starting with education and health. In fact, the challenge could be to retain what we have.

To be sure, our economy doesn't operate in isolation from what is going on in the rest of the world, and especially in the United States. Global growth has fallen from 6.3 per cent in 2021 and 3.5 per cent in 2022, to a projected three per cent for this year and next. U.S. growth fell from 5.9 per cent in 2021 and 2.1 per cent last year to a projected 1.8 per cent this year and 1.0 per cent in 2024.

The rise in inflation and the decision to fight it by significant increases in interest rates is a major factor in slowing growth. But not the only one.

High levels of public and private debt are becoming a growing burden. According to the United Nations, public sector debt worldwide reached a record US\$92-trillion last year. The subsidy war launched by the United States to attract investment at the expense of other countries—including Canada—along with the misguided pursuit of “friend-shoring” which will raise the cost of many products through new and more costly supply chains will damage economic prospects.

The risks of financial instability driven by high levels of private debt in rich nations and by unsustainable levels of public debt in low-income countries, the geopolitics of the U.S.-led Cold War against China, the cost of the Russia-Ukraine war including pressures for major increase in non-productive defence spending, and the growing urgency of addressing climate change—including a costly transition to new energy systems—are other factors affecting the economic outlook both around the world and here at home. They are what the IMF calls “downside risks” to future growth prospects.

But there is another issue, which reflects Canada's failure to address underlying structural problems in the country. This is summarized in our weak productivity growth, and consequently a potential growth rate that is too low for a healthy economy in the future, one where we are able to afford to do the things we would like to do, let alone sustain existing programs as society ages.

The potential growth rate is the rate of growth that can be sustained without triggering higher rates of inflation and the need for anti-inflation programmes such as higher interest rates and curbs of government spending.

Some of this is set out in a recent report from TD Economics: *Mind the Gap: Canada is Falling Behind the Standard of Living Curve*. It spells out a disturbing picture of our recent economic performance, arguing that we have only appeared to be doing well because of the growth coming from a population increase driven largely by immigration, and a commensurate increase in hours worked. Without immigration, we would be worse off.

The reality is that “in recent years, Canada has lagged

behind the U.S. and other advanced economies in terms of standard of living performance (or real GDP per capita).” And the reason is poor productivity performance. As TD economist Marc Ecolao writes, “economic growth does not necessarily equate to economic prosperity.” The size and growth of the economy is one thing, but standard of living is another—the growing economy has to be divided by a rising population. And when that is done, our economic performance looks much less impressive. In fact, it looks quite discouraging. And this performance has been worsening since the pandemic.

In fact, “since the 2014-15 oil shock, Canada's performance has gone from bad to worse. Canadian real GDP per capita has grown at an average rate of only 0.4 per cent annually, piling in comparison to the advanced economy average of 1.4 per cent,” Ecolao writes. And the underlying reason is poor productivity performance which has plagued Canada for many years despite some efforts to address it.

There are many explanations. Canadian businesses underinvest in machinery and equipment compared to other leading industrial economies. Yet technology adoption is a key factor in productivity performance. Our businesses also underinvest in research, development and other intangible assets, contributing to an innovation gap. In fact, R&D spending by Canadian business has been in decline, as a share of GDP, for about 20 years while in most competitor countries it has been rising.

As well, Canada has a relatively large concentration of small companies. As Ecolao points out, “firms of smaller scale tend to export and invest less than their larger counterparts.” We don't have many large anchor firms that are Canadian and which can provide leadership for innovation and growth. Our lax foreign takeover rules enable the acquisition of high-growth-potential firms by multinationals so that their scaling-up potential for Canada is never realized.

With the July 26 cabinet shuffle, we now have a new government. But it is far from certain that it will do a better job than the pre-shuffle team in putting Canada on a better path. This is not just a Canadian problem. U.K. Labour Party leader Keir Starmer—potentially Britain's next prime minister—said that his priorities would be to prioritize economic growth, wealth creation, investment and entrepreneurship. This, he said, “is the only game in town for those who dream of a brighter future.”

Productivity, clearly, is the first step. But the benefits of productivity growth are not automatically shared so that measures for better distribution of these gains to avert the inequalities we find in society also matter. But solving the productivity puzzle is the most urgent challenge.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com

The Hill Times

Opinion



Firefighters at the site of a wildfire in Alberta earlier this year. We can no longer avoid our national failure to act to mitigate and respond to the future impacts of the climate emergency, writes Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. Photograph courtesy of New South Wales Rural Fire

Canada is unprepared for the climate emergency and we need to work as one nation to fight it, not 13 separate and sovereign fiefdoms

As in the fights to arrest acid rain and protect the ozone layer, Canadians need to rally behind the political leaders with a clear vision and the courage to get there.

Green Party Leader
Elizabeth
May

Opinion



SAANICH-GULF ISLANDS, B.C.—As the climate crisis accelerates, we are increasingly unprepared. The voices of the few who deny that burning fossil fuels has led to expensive and terrifying extreme weather events are dwarfed by the reality. Yet we are still increasing our dependence on fossil fuels, and failing to take necessary steps to save lives.

We can no longer avoid our national failure to act to mitigate and respond to the future impacts of the climate emergency. Canada

responds to multiple crises as though we were 13 separate and sovereign fiefdoms instead of 10 provinces and three territories operating as one nation.

For decades, provincial and federal governments have utterly failed to co-ordinate an appropriate response to avoid this and a multitude of other threats to our future posed by the climate crisis.

But this level of dysfunctional response is not baked into our federation, nor to our Constitution.

Back in the 1980s, these same eastern Canadian provincial governments and Ottawa were actually capable of ending the threat of acid rain. It wasn't easy, but it got done. Tough talks between the federal government and each of the seven eastern Canadian provinces to halve acid rain-causing emissions actually worked. With the domestic plan in hand, Ottawa then negotiated with the Ronald Reagan Administration to get the United States to meet our targets.

During the acid rain battle, not everyone was onside, and New Brunswick dug in its heels. Then-premier Richard Hatfield even testified before the Commons committee against the agreement, but it didn't delay action. In the end, New Brunswick moved from laggard to leader in putting scrubbers on all the

fossil-fired power plants in the province, and shutting one down altogether.

Several key lessons have emerged from those successes from the 1970s and 1980s: leadership from the top matters. Consistent policies matter, policy coherence matters, and ensuring agreements—whether domestic and bilateral, or global—have teeth really matters.

The failure to move through federal-provincial co-operation to avoid the current existential threat is baffling. We know how to do this. We did it for acid rain, and we negotiated a successful global treaty to save the ozone layer. But current governments have consistently rejected or ignored lessons from history.

One key marine ecosystem in the region has been ringing alarm bells for climate scientists. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, kissing the coastlines of Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and western Newfoundland and Labrador, is undergoing dramatic changes due to shifts in massive ocean currents. The multi-billion-dollar fishery is at risk. Typically, cold water from the Labrador Current used to bring water with high oxygen levels to recharge the gulf. Recent years have seen the Labrador Current displaced by the warmer waters

of the Gulf Stream bringing de-oxygenated waters—threatening the whole ecosystem. It is now identified as one of the critical dangerous tipping points of massive climate shift.

Recently, a new tension in the federal-provincial response to the climate crisis has emerged. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick want the federal government to commit to the hundreds of millions of dollars it will cost to protect the low-lying land connector called the Chignecto Isthmus from being overwhelmed by storm surges and sea-level rise driven by the climate crisis. Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc has said no. This is a lost opportunity in getting Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the table to cut greenhouse gases, and a bargaining chip in cutting those provinces' coal-burning emissions. It's also a sensible and necessary infrastructure investment.

The climate threat to the Chignecto Isthmus is not new. Back in 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had warned of the huge threat to Nova Scotia of a warming climate. Then-Nova Scotia MP Bill Casey grasped the threat and was alarmed, and we worked together to raise awareness.

We discussed it after Hurricane Katrina devastated New

Orleans in 2005, and called for a detailed study of the risk that climate change-induced sea level rise and storm surges could overwhelm the isthmus. Back in 2017, we held a joint press conference to rally concern that we needed real climate action to avoid the national economic disaster of Nova Scotia being physically separated from New Brunswick and the rest of Canada.

On July 18, 2023, Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston and New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs said they want Ottawa to cover the whole \$400-million to \$600-million bill to protect the vulnerable isthmus. The feds said they are prepared to cover up to half the cost, but Houston has pushed back, saying he is willing to go to court over the matter.

Most provinces seem to agree that the costs to them created by the climate crisis should be zero, and the costs of the climate crisis should be 100 per cent the federal government's responsibility.

And Ottawa keeps obliging: approving fossil fuel projects, increasing subsidies to help the industry, and actually purchasing a climate-killing pipeline.

LeBlanc is drawing a line on climate spending, arguing it is not for the federal government to take on all the costs of protecting the isthmus, but it's the wrong line. It will be very interesting to see what the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal decides.

There is no political movement to separate Nova Scotia from the rest of Canada, but there is a real risk it physically will happen. Had provincial governments listened to Casey's warnings, perhaps they would have phased out coal.

Meanwhile, the key to a prosperous post-carbon economy lies in electrifying as much as we can for heating and transportation. And that would be possible if we had an integrated north-south-east-west electricity grid. We could use the grid like a battery, storing up increased production of renewable energy from solar, wind, low-flow hydro, geothermal and tidal power, and pulling it out when needed, sharing across provincial boundaries. But that would require at the very least cooperative between provincial agencies to set aside their current monopolistic supply-based business models for one grounded in a smart grid.

We need to harness collective energies to transform federal-provincial squabbles into collaboration. We are years late in even talking about the critical need to build the national electrical grid. But we need the vision of that linked smart grid, such as we already see in the nations of the European Union to be shared and supported by Canadians as the key to prosperity in the post-carbon economy. The longer we postpone that conversation, the harder the transition will be.

As in the fights to arrest acid rain and protect the ozone layer, Canadians need to rally behind the political leaders with a clear vision and the courage to get there.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May represents the federal riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.

The Hill Times

One step forward out of climate denial, many more to go

An electric-powered OC Transpo bus is parked at Ottawa City Hall for an announcement of new federal support for electric vehicle infrastructure on June 30, 2023. We are waking up to the absolute need for effective mitigation, but half-measures won't cut it any longer, writes Bill Henderson. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



When it comes to mitigating climate change, no more kicking the can down the road unpunished.

Bill Henderson

Opinion



The heat domes, forest-fire smoke, storms, and flooding are waking up the public—if not also policymakers—to how serious climate breakdown is becoming. There is a new tone of panic in the media coverage. Think what will happen even 10 years down the road if we keep warming: heat deaths, uninsurable living, vast areas becoming uninhabitable with huge flows of destabilizing migrations.

There has been an equally important surge of climate science papers and media coverage concerning tipping points, doom loops, and ice sheets melting irreversibly, all warning about a possible non-linear acceleration of warming that could squash humanity like a bug.

But so far there hasn't been much awakening to our denial about climate mitigation. Yes, most commentators attribute the heat and fires and ominous polar melting to our use of fossil fuels, reiterating the need to 'phase down' its use. But there has been little change in governmental policies. We are still playing pretend with mitigation, as we only engage in indirect, ineffectual 'energy transition' attempts to 'phase down' what we know is killing us.

So far, the very real impediments to effective mitigation remain unnamed, unchallenged. Our first-past-the-post governance system within our evolved service sector market economy—a business ecosystem nurtured to provide our wants and

needs—does not allow even consideration of the deep systemic change that will be necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a scale and at a speed that is now needed.

Citizens and policymakers are waking up to the absolute need for effective mitigation, but our collective imagination is still limited to policies and actions that won't negatively impact the economy or our fortunate lifestyles. The people who really govern our society—those running the firms that leverage their control over government—insist that climate mitigation policies must not affect their company's or personal bottom lines.

And so we stay pretending, while each year the climate events get worse, the imperative timeline gets more impossible, and emissions continue to increase.

Is there no hope? How do we change so that we at least have a chance at preserving climate safety, and might even return to that much more secure Holocene climate in a possible future?

We must regulate a rapid wind-down of fossil-fuel production, locally, nationally, and globally. This is the only fail-safe way to reduce emissions on the scale now needed.

This will require leadership from major fossil fuel-producing countries such as Canada and Australia, hopefully followed by the all-important United States and China. This will require a strong, binding, global fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty as well as carbon club buy-in by trading nations and Marshall Plan-style support for developing countries.

This is deep systemic change that is daunting to even consider, difficult to implement, and dangerous in a world where realpolitik is nuclear armed. But without making the necessary changes, our predicament gets worse every day.

The only way to get to a regulated wind-down of production in Canada is by educating our legislators and getting everyone on the same page about the real climate dangers. We must find agreement that this requires a

real—not pretend, not indirect, not 'hopeful-throw-lots-of-cash-and-technology-at-it'—mitigation plan to actually keep fossil fuels in the ground, unburned, until they can be used safely.

Then we require a coalition, wartime-style emergency government with effective mitigation and transition as the unquestioned priority.

The pandemic provided a peek at what innovation and leadership is needed from a government. Cutting production and emissions by at least half by 2030 is the first stage. Reducing our national dependence on exporting fossil fuels will be difficult, but doable. Reducing Canadian energy use per capita by half in seven years, while daunting, still leaves us in a very survivable energy use equivalent to what we had in the 1960s (but with much improved utility and efficiency). This is difficult, but easily doable if we realize this is now the only path out of the horror we have been building.

Real mitigation reopens up a hopeful future where, after we solve this problem, we can someday return—with clean energy and diminishing extreme weather events—to growing the economy.

Most importantly, ethically, this is what we owe future generations. There is no other real choice when you awaken from denial. To continue as a major emissions-producing nation is unconscionable. I have a great deal of empathy for anybody in government today faced with this unprecedented predicament, but this has been a long time coming. I knew that we needed to wind-down fossil fuel production in 2015 when the Trudeau Liberals succeeded the Harper Conservatives. A real climate leader with a deep understanding of governance in our time would have used the prime minister's bully pulpit to inform both the public and his fellow policymakers that half measures would not reduce emissions enough. Instead, our new prime minister did nothing. He continued business as usual, and he even bought a disastrous pipeline as he tried to continue fossil fuel expansion in this country.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation—admitting failure on the all important climate file—would be a big step forward out of denial and towards needed action, nationally, and globally. His resignation could be a momentous wake-up call explaining and affirming the need for real change: out of denial; toward needed coalition governance; from pretend leadership, to an acknowledgement of climate as an emergency.

His message would be heard in every Canadian community and by every government globally. No more kicking the can down the road unpunished. This could be the wake-up call and big step forward we all need.

Bill Henderson is a climate activist based in Gibsons, B.C.
The Hill Times

News

Off script: exploring the 'electorally hazardous' role of 'authenticity' in politics

In the age of soundbites, rigid party discipline, and intense media scrutiny, some academics are considering the role of images of authenticity in Canadian politics, and the balance between MPs presenting less polished versions of themselves and the rise of populism.



Former U.K. prime minister Boris Johnson, pictured, and former U.S. president Donald Trump have both been described as authentic even though both were 'chronic and shameless liars,' according to Clive Veroni. Picture by Simon Dawson/No 10 Downing Street

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trust in our institutions and political leaders, but she also cautions that authenticity isn't always seen as a positive thing.

Anna Esselment, associate professor at the University of Waterloo's department of political science, has started a project about the role of authenticity in Canadian politics, including how voters perceive and assess the concept, what politicians think of it, and whether our parliamentary norms limit the extent to which politicians feel that they can be their authentic selves in elected office.

"Part of what motivates this is the concern about an eroding of trust in our institutions, in our political leaders, in our representatives," she told *The Hill Times*. "Part of that is often linked to [the idea] that politicians toe the party line, they are very disciplined, and MPs aren't free to do or say what they want to do or say."

The rise of populist political leaders around the world—including former president Donald Trump in the United States, ex-prime minister Boris Johnson in the United Kingdom, French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, and Dutch Party for Freedom leader Geert Wilders—has spurred discussions about the role of authenticity in politics

in other countries. But to date, little formal research has been conducted on how those concepts play out in a Canadian context.

Part of Esselment's research is examining the extent to which Canada's political system either constrains or discourages politicians from showing their more authentic side.

"The tendency—and this will have to be supported by evidence through media analysis—it strikes me is that when there is a slip, or when someone does go off-script, it's labelled immediately as a 'gaffe' either by the media or by an opposing party," she said. "You don't want to be the centre of that attention, and the party doesn't want you to be the centre of that attention."

Working alongside the Canadian Study of Parliament Group, Esselment is interviewing current and former MPs about their experiences.

"What I'd like to do is be able to say, 'How do MPs feel truly about their own political authenticity or their own authenticity?' and either how that might constrain their behaviour, and whether or not it might improve our politics if we were more tolerant of authentic behaviour," she said. "That [authenticity] is not necessarily linked to populism."

What is authenticity?

The concept has been studied previously from a business marketing perspective, Esselment said, but there has been little formal study of authenticity in a Canadian political context. Part of the difficulty comes from the loose definition of authenticity itself, she said.

"How do you measure authenticity; what does that look like? Can you break it down to say it [means] sincerity, it means transparency, it means immediacy? Then, how do you measure that in speeches, for example, or in physical behaviour?" she said.

Alex Marland, Jarislowsky Chair in Trust and Political Leadership at Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., said that in any discussions about the topic, it is important to note the difference between somebody projecting an image of authenticity versus actually being their true self.

"Even authenticity isn't itself always authentic," he told *The Hill Times*. "The first thing to remember is there's always a difference between what we see publicly and what is real. ... We don't normally hear about the fact that [former U.S. president] Barack Obama smoked [cigarettes]."

Marland said it tends to be easier for those in opposition to project an image of authenticity rather than those in government.

"When you are the head of government, you're a part of the state, you're a part of the institutional mechanisms that run the state, and you're essentially an elite," he said. "Part of authenticity involves anti-elitism, and it also dabbles into populism."

Clive Veroni, a Toronto-based author and political branding and marketing specialist, said that the term "authenticity" was being increasingly used as a synonym for populism. He pointed to descriptions of both Trump and Johnson as authentic, "but both of them are chronic and shameless liars."

"It's become shorthand for people speaking their minds, and saying politically incorrect things," he said. "But to me, speaking your mind and saying politically incorrect things doesn't necessarily make you authentic. It could just make you obnoxious."

That perception of "authenticity," Veroni said, is part of a larger trend toward anti-intellectualism and the denigration of experts in populist circles. It's also shifted the perception of authenticity from the merits of the politician to the expectations of their audience.

"This shifting definition has moved away from defining the character of the speaker to defining the sensibility of the audience that says, 'Yeah, I want to hear people say all of those horrible things that I've been thinking all these years and have been too afraid to say out loud,'" he said.

Lori Turnbull, an associate professor and director of Dalhousie University's School of Public Administration, said projecting a non-populist image of authenticity could be a major gamble for politicians.

"There's a certain amount of risk to say, 'Like it or lump it, I am this way, and this is what I represent. I am going to wear the clothing that I feel comfortable in, I'm going to say the words that resonate with me. I am going to wear glasses, if that's what works for me. I am going to speak about the issues that are most important to me, even if they're not the ones that are most important to everybody else. I want to say things even if it offends some people the way I say it,'" she said.

"It's almost like that's asking too much of politicians, because we're asking them to do things that are possibly electorally hazardous," Turnbull added. "So it's a kind of a race to this sort of over-polished, over-rehearsed politician."

That risk is heightened for political leaders who also carry the fortunes of the party they represent.

"They're the brand of the party, and if any of us is our authentic self, we are flawed, we are contradictory. We screw up, we make mistakes. There's ugliness in every authentic person," she said. "The collective [approach] of political leaders has become almost not to be that authentic person. It's about being this beyond-reproach brand that people who hold your values will aspire to that."

Marland said that while opposition leaders could employ populist messages to a greater extent than government figures, there was a limit to how much it could be employed if that leader is seeking the prime ministership.

"If you're trying to form government, you have to be able to show that you are going to have a level of officialdom," he said. "Authenticity suggests a level of amateurism compared to the professionalism of a professional politician, but if you want to form government, you have to have a level of professionalism to produce you can't be amateur all the time."

Marland said that despite the rigours of party discipline and a scrutinizing public and news media, social media has offered politicians an outlet for authenticity that was not available to them in the past.

"Because there's such a drive for content, it means that political handlers are looking for things that will connect with people and resonate on a personal level," he said. "They end up showing personal interests, they show leaders who are not dressed in business

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appears to resonate with the public the most when he is straightforward in his answers, said Lori Turnbull. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

“I think that’s always a difficult role to play. It probably works well in Quebec, I doubt that it works everywhere else in the country, but it’s not designed to work anywhere else in the country,” he said. “That’s, I think, somewhat limiting, and there’s only so much anger you can put out into the world before people grow weary of hearing you whine about it.”

Doug Ford

Turnbull and Veroni both suggested Ontario Premier Doug Ford as a Canadian politician who has successfully employed a brand of authenticity.

“Somebody like Doug Ford, I think, comes across, lets people identify with him, but in a way, he’s the most branded of them all in that he’s making authenticity his brand,” Turnbull said.

“Certainly as a populist persona, he’s a guy who seems to speak from the heart, and has a more emotional than rational discourse when he speaks about issues,” Veroni said of Ford. “He says things that people might be thinking themselves about an issue, and speaks in a way that maybe ordinary people would speak about these issues amongst themselves. He’s probably the most successful when I think about a politician trying to affect an authentic persona.”

Turnbull also pointed to former Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil, whose authentic self resonated during the COVID-19 pandemic, including his memorable exhortation for people to “stay the blazes home” in April 2020.

“He always said what he meant, even if it pissed people off, but when his authenticity started to resonate with people was during COVID,” he said. “[It was] his cranky uncle personality, which he always wore on his sleeve... purely coincidentally, I think, his way of communicating really worked during that time.”

sjeffery@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

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clothing, show them out there travelling around the country, they might show family members and their children, personal interests, hobbies, or cooking.”

Leaders and authenticity

Justin Trudeau

Marland said that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) is a “very unique case of being somebody who’s been a celebrity in the public eye since birth.”

“Trudeau is showing his authentic self as much as possible, but the reality is he’s wrapped up in being prime minister, and inherently being an elite,” he said. “It’s very hard, I think, to detach yourself from the official name of the office.”

Veroni said that Trudeau’s manner of speaking “sounds like political speech. It sounds overly scripted, overly cautious, and so for that reason, he comes across as inauthentic.” At the same time,

he noted that the prime minister has been a successful politician during a period of divisiveness, including high levels of personal animosity against him.

“I think what Trudeau’s supporters would say about him is that it’s his actions that express his authenticity, it’s the policies that he supports, the legislation that is brought forward, the things that he’s done as prime minister that make him authentic, not the way he talks about them,” he said.

Turnbull also noted Trudeau’s use of soundbites, but said that he is at his most successful when being straightforward.

“Times like when he was before the Rouleau Commission on the use of the Emergencies Act, those are his best moments,” she said. “When he actually just answers the question and doesn’t have a whole bunch of rhetoric and stuff to go with it, he’s quite convincing and that’s when you see his approval ratings go up. So there’s an appetite for authenticity and politics.”

Pierre Poilievre

Turnbull said that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.), who was an MP for a long time before he became party leader, has a reputation for being pointed, aggressive, and sarcastic in the House.

With his recent changes to his image, she asked whether that past version was Poilievre’s authentic self, and if he was “trying to soften his image now because, if the pre-leader version of Poilievre was authentic, this is a hard sell for a prospective prime minister?”

“I think people who have made up their mind about Poilievre have made up their mind about him,” she said. “In the change of appearance, he’s trying to get the attention of people who haven’t looked at him yet. For him, the authenticity question is showing up in that he doesn’t have as high a resonance with voters as Trudeau. If Trudeau started showing up very differently, he’d have a different kind of authenticity crisis.”

Marland said Poilievre was also employing social media in a way to craft an image of authenticity.

“When it looks like Pierre Poilievre is holding a camera himself, and it’s kind of shaky, he’s just talking to the camera by himself, that in itself—regardless of his message—portrays authenticity in a different way than when Justin Trudeau is photographed professionally,” he said. “The more professional the production, the less authentic it seems. I think that’s some-

thing to keep in mind, that once you become a head of government, especially in a G7 nation, it’s rare to see these things that are not professionally produced.”

Other leaders

Jagmeet Singh

Veroni said that, if he were advising the NDP and its leader, Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.), he would note that they had been overly cautious since the leadership of Tom Mulcair.

“I think if there was a Bernie Sanders-like leader of the NDP, they would do much better than they are doing today,” he said. “I think there is room in the Canadian political landscape for a Bernie Sanders left-wing populist. No-one’s actually taken on that challenge, yet, as far as I can tell.”

Yves-François Blanchet

As for Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, Que.), Veroni said his brand was the “angry defender of Quebec rights,” which was effective for his audience to an extent.



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre’s style of filming on social media could lend greater authenticity than more professionally produced photo opportunities, according to Alex Marland. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Ontario Premier Doug Ford is among the most successful modern Canadian politicians to craft a persona of authenticity, said Clive Veroni. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Staff exits ahead of cabinet shuffle



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, left, Trade Minister Mary Ng, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault, and Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu—who have all kept their portfolios—made staffing changes in their offices shortly before the July 26 cabinet shuffle. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

For one, deputy chief of staff Chantal Gagnon left Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly's office shortly before the July 26 cabinet shuffle, and now has a new job off the Hill.

Change is in the air in Ottawa, with only eight ministers in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's 38-member cabinet sticking to their portfolios.

New ministers (of which there are seven) and ministers who were shuffled into new portfolios (23 of them were) have 30 calendar days to sort out staffing for their offices. During that time, existing staff continue to be paid and can opt to either leave the Hill, or wait for job offers—to be rehired in their current roles, or in new positions or offices. After 30 days, any staff who haven't sealed the deal are deemed to have been laid off, and are eligible for separation pay (at the minister's discretion).

Typically starting with chiefs of staff, news of cabinet staffing decisions will soon start trickling out.

In the meantime, there are some recent pre-shuffle staff moves to note.

Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** was among the eight ministers to keep their portfolios. Her deputy chief of staff, **Chantal Gagnon**, left the Hill earlier this month and is now director of regulatory affairs for Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, a prominent pension fund company that, as of December 2022, had net assets totalling \$402-billion.

Gagnon had been working for Joly since the 2021 federal election, having

joined the minister's team fresh from the Prime Minister's Office where she'd been working since August 2017, starting as a senior press secretary and ending as deputy director of communications. A former Quebec Liberal staffer, Gagnon's first gig on the Hill came in early 2016, when she was hired as press secretary to then-foreign affairs minister **Stéphane Dion**.

Shortly before the July 26 shuffle, deputy communications director **Emily Williams** was promoted to replace **Maéva Proteau** as director of communications to Joly, with Proteau taking on the new title of director of security and consular affairs to the minister.

Williams has been working for Joly since the fall of 2020, starting as a senior communications adviser in Joly's office as then-economic development and official languages minister. A former Liberal staffer at Queen's Park, Williams is also an ex-press secretary to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Carolyn Bennett** (who is now no longer in cabinet, having



Emily Williams was promoted to director of communications to Minister Joly earlier this month. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Maéva Proteau changed titles in Minister Joly's office shortly before the July 26 shuffle. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

announced on July 24 that she will not seek re-election).

Proteau has also been working for Joly since the fall of 2020, having previously been communications director in the economic development and official languages office. She's also a former press secretary to then-finance minister **Bill Morneau** and previously worked at Quebec's national assembly, including as press secretary to then-minister for international relations and La Francophonie **Nadine Girault**. (Girault died this past February.)

Like Joly, International Trade Minister **Mary Ng** remains in the same portfolio as before. In Ng's office, policy adviser **Husain Aboghodieh** exited at the end of June. He'd been working for the minister since early 2022.

Environment and Climate Change Minister **Steven Guilbeault** was another to keep his portfolio, and in his office, **Caroline Lee** was hired as a new senior policy adviser as of July 10. She's spent the last almost four years working for the Cana-

dian Climate Institute, starting in the fall of 2019 as a senior research associate and ending as director of mitigation research. Lee is also a former energy policy analyst with the International Energy Agency's environment and climate change unit, and has experience working as a climate change mitigation policy analyst and economist for the Government of New Brunswick, among other past jobs.

Innovation, Science, and Industry **François-Philippe Champagne** has similarly kept his cabinet portfolio. In Champagne's office, **Sukhdeep Khaira** recently exited as executive assistant to chief of staff **Sarah Hussaini**. She was replaced by **Nina Sartor** as of July 24.

Khaira spent a year working in Champagne's office overall. Sartor was part of the Parliamentary Internship Programme's 2022-23 cohort, which saw her work in the offices of Conservative MP **Luc Berthold** and Liberal MP **Kody Blois** (PIP interns do two internship placements as part of the program, one with an MP from the governing party, and one with an opposition MP).

Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu**, another of the eight ministers who kept their portfolios, added a new full-time policy adviser to her team in June, **Alyssa Schatz**.



Alyssa Schatz was made a full-time policy adviser to Hajdu in June. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Schatz interned in Hajdu's office over the summer of 2022, after which she was hired to work in the office part time. Her past experience includes time as a junior policy analyst with Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada's team focused on implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Now-former transport minister **Omar Alghabra** was dropped from cabinet in the July 26 shuffle, with **Pablo Rodriguez** now serving as Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant. A few weeks prior to the shuffle, Ontario regional affairs adviser **Ayesha Khan** bade farewell to the transport office. A former constituency assistant to Ng as the Liberal MP for Markham-Thornhill, Ont., and to new Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** as the Liberal MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park, Ont., Khan had been working for Alghabra since March 2022.

Marie-Claude Bibeau was shuffled from the agriculture portfolio to national revenue on July 26. Just before the cabinet change-up, operations and tour manager **Olivia Scieur-Aparicio** bade farewell to Bibeau's agriculture team. Scieur-Aparicio has since taken charge of Sherbrooke, Que., Liberal MP **Élisabeth Brière's** constituency office, starting there on July 24. She previously worked as an aide to Brière before joining Bibeau's office in June 2022.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Trudeau to host cabinet retreat in Charlottetown, P.E.I., Aug. 21-23



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will host a cabinet retreat in Charlottetown, P.E.I., Aug. 21-23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, JULY 31

House Not Sitting—The House has adjourned for the summer and is on break for 12 weeks. It will resume sitting again on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15). It's scheduled to return on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024.

MONDAY, JULY 31—THURSDAY, AUG. 3

Webinar Series: 'Long-term and Continuing Care'—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a series of region-specific webinars on "Long-term and Continuing Care" from Tuesday, July 25, to Thursday, Aug. 3. The focus groups' primary objective is to further discussions from the First Nations-led engagements conducted from 2021-2022, funded by Indigenous Services Canada, and to identify existing gaps within both programs. Details online: afn.ca.

THURSDAY, AUG. 10

MP Lantsman to Attend Fundraiser—Conservative Deputy Leader Melissa Lantsman will take part in a fundraiser barbecue event for the Ajax Conservative Association. Thursday, Aug. 10, at 6 p.m. ET, at 4 Pinoak Rd., Ajax, Ont. Details online. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, AUG. 14

MP Barrett to Attend Breakfast Event—Conservative MP Michael

Barrett will take part in a summer business breakfast event hosted by the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce. Monday, Aug. 14 at 7:30 a.m. ET at Catered Affairs, 820 Heritage Dr., Kemptonville, Ont. Details online. Register via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, AUG. 17—FRIDAY, AUG. 18

AFN 2023 Youth Safe Drinking Water Summit—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its 2023 Youth Safe Drinking Water Summit from Thursday, Aug. 17, to Friday, Aug. 18, focused on building and developing a Youth Vision for the Future of First Nations Water through national youth engagement. This event will take place at Le Parc-de-la-Montmorency, Que. Details online: afn.ca.

MONDAY, AUG. 21

Summer Cabinet Retreat—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet are expected to attend a summer retreat from Monday, Aug. 21, to Wednesday, Aug. 23, in Charlottetown, PEI.

TUESDAY, AUG. 22—SATURDAY, AUG. 26

Global Environment Facility General Assembly—Canada will host the Seventh Assembly of the Global Environment Facility in Vancouver, B.C., from Tuesday, Aug. 22 to Saturday, Aug. 26. Details: thegef.org.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 7

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver an Economic Progress Report, discussing the bank's recent interest rate decision and Canada's economic outlook, hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

Thursday, Sept. 7 at 11:30 a.m. MT at the Hyatt Regency Calgary, 700 Centre St. S. Details at calgarychamber.com.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 7—SATURDAY, SEPT. 9

Conservative Policy Convention—The Conservative Party of Canada is holding its policy convention Sept. 7-9 in Québec City. Party members will be voting on party policy, training for the next election, and will hear from conservative speakers. Registration opens at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 7. Opening ceremonies are from 7-9 p.m. on Sept. 7, and the hospitality suites will open from 9 p.m.-12 a.m. For information on hotels, flights, and more, go to cpc23.ca.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 9 - SUNDAY, SEPT. 10

G20 Leaders' Summit 2023—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to attend the 18th G20 Leaders' Summit 2023 from Saturday, Sept. 9, to Sunday, Sept. 10. This year's theme is 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. Details online: g20.org.

MONDAY, SEPT. 11—TUESDAY, SEPT. 12

CABE Economic Outlook Conference—The Canadian Association for Business Economics hosts its annual conference from Sept. 11-12 on the theme: "Post Pandemic Economics: What does the 'New Normal' look like?" Speakers include Catherine L. Mann, external member, Monetary Policy Committee, Bank of England; David Dodge, senior partner, Bennett Jones LLP, former Bank of Canada governor; Rupa Banerjee, Canada Research Chair in Economic Inclusion, Employment and Entrepreneurship of Canada's Immigrants; and Armine Yalnizyan, At-

kinson Fellow on the Future of Workers, Atkinson Institute. Monday, Sept. 11 -Tuesday, Sept. 12 at the Delta Hotel, 1 Johnson St., Kingston, Ont. Details online: cabe.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 12

Chief of Defence Staff Eyre to Deliver Remarks—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Wayne Eyre will deliver remarks as part of a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 12 p.m. ET in Suite 300, 67 Yonge St., Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

Lecture: 'How Can Canada Build More Mines Faster?'—The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade hosts a lunch event, "How Can Canada Build More Mines Faster?" featuring Pierre Gratton, president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada. Tuesday, Sept. 12, at 11:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 W Georgia St. Details: boardoftrade.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 13—FRIDAY, SEPT. 15

IPAC's Annual Conference—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada hosts its 75th national conference from Sept. 13-15, exploring the role of public administration in a time of instability and social change, and addressing issues such as the housing crisis, AI & Chat GPT, digital government, mental health, municipal innovation, immigration, and labour shortages. An Indigenous-led panel will discuss how public servants can collaborate more successfully with Indigenous governments. U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen will deliver remarks. Wednesday, Sept. 13 to Friday, Sept. 15 at the Delta Hotels by Marriott Ottawa City Centre, 101 Lyon St. N. Details: ipac.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 18

House Resumes Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 18. It will sit for three weeks (Sept. 18-Oct. 6), and will adjourn on Friday, Oct. 6, for a week. It will resume sitting on Monday, Oct. 16, and will sit for four consecutive weeks (Oct. 16-Nov. 10). It will break for one week (Nov. 13-17) and will resume sitting on Monday, Nov. 20, and will sit for four weeks (Nov. 20-Dec. 15). It's scheduled to return on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 22

Kimberly Murray to Deliver Remarks—Kimberly Murray, independent special interlocutor for missing children and unmarked graves and burial sites associated with Indian residential schools, is among the speakers taking part in a webinar entitled "Leading with Impact: Leadership Insights from Recipients of Ontario's Highest Honour for Public Service," hosted by IPAC. Friday, Sept. 22 at 12 p.m. ET taking place online. Details: ipac.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 26—FRIDAY, SEPT. 29

G78 Policy Conference—The Group of 78 hosts its 2023 Annual Policy Conference from Sept. 26-29 in Ottawa and online. Speakers and panellists will explore peace practices that can effectively prevent or curtail conflict, and inform policies and strategies of intergovernmental bodies, governments and civil society to mitigate violence. Tuesday, Sept. 26 to Friday, Sept. 29. Details: group78.org.

TUESDAY, OCT. 3

CRTC Chair to Deliver Remarks—Vicky Eatrdes, chair and CEO of the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission, will deliver remarks as part of a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Oct. 3, at 12 p.m. ET in Suite 300, 67 Yonge St., Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

TUESDAY, OCT. 3—WEDNESDAY, OCT. 4

Energy Storage Canada Conference—Energy Storage Canada will be holding its eighth annual conference Oct. 3-4 at the InterContinental Hotel in downtown Toronto. This year's theme is "Charging Net Zero," which speaks to the critical role of energy storage in enabling (or charging) Canada's ability to reach its ambitious net-zero targets. More information can be found here: canplaninc.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 4—THURSDAY, OCT. 5

Conference: GovConnect Canada—The Canadian Institute hosts GovConnect Canada, an invitation-only event. The theme is "Digitally Transforming the Relationship Between the Public and Public Services." Wednesday, Oct. 4 to Thursday, Oct. 5 in Ottawa. Details: canadianinstitute.com.

FRIDAY, OCT. 13—SUNDAY, OCT. 15

NDP Policy Convention—The federal New Democrats are holding a national policy convention from Friday, Oct. 13 to Sunday, Oct. 15 in Hamilton, Ont. It will be the party's largest gathering in more than three years. Details: convention.ndp.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 25—MONDAY, OCT. 30

Ottawa International Writers' Festival—The Ottawa International Writers' Festival will take place Wednesday, Oct. 25 to Monday, Oct. 30. Details online at writersfestival.org.

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