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NEWS

MPs facing notable riding shifts next election are doing 'double duty' this summer

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Electoral battle lines have been redrawn as a result of the recent redistribution process, and MPs facing notable riding boundary changes next election say they're doing "double duty" this summer as they work to both stay connected to their current constituents and begin outreach to residents of the new areas they hope to represent.

The exact timing of the next election remains a subject of much speculation, but—as currently set out in the Canada Elections Act—it will happen no later than Oct. 20, 2025, likely making this summer the last moment of calm before the pre-election storm.

"There is a bit of double duty," said Conservative MP John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, N.B.), who's set to run in the rejigged riding of Saint John-St. Croix, which will add the west end of the city of Saint John and ground south and east of Oromocto—including Burton—to the vast majority of his current rural riding.

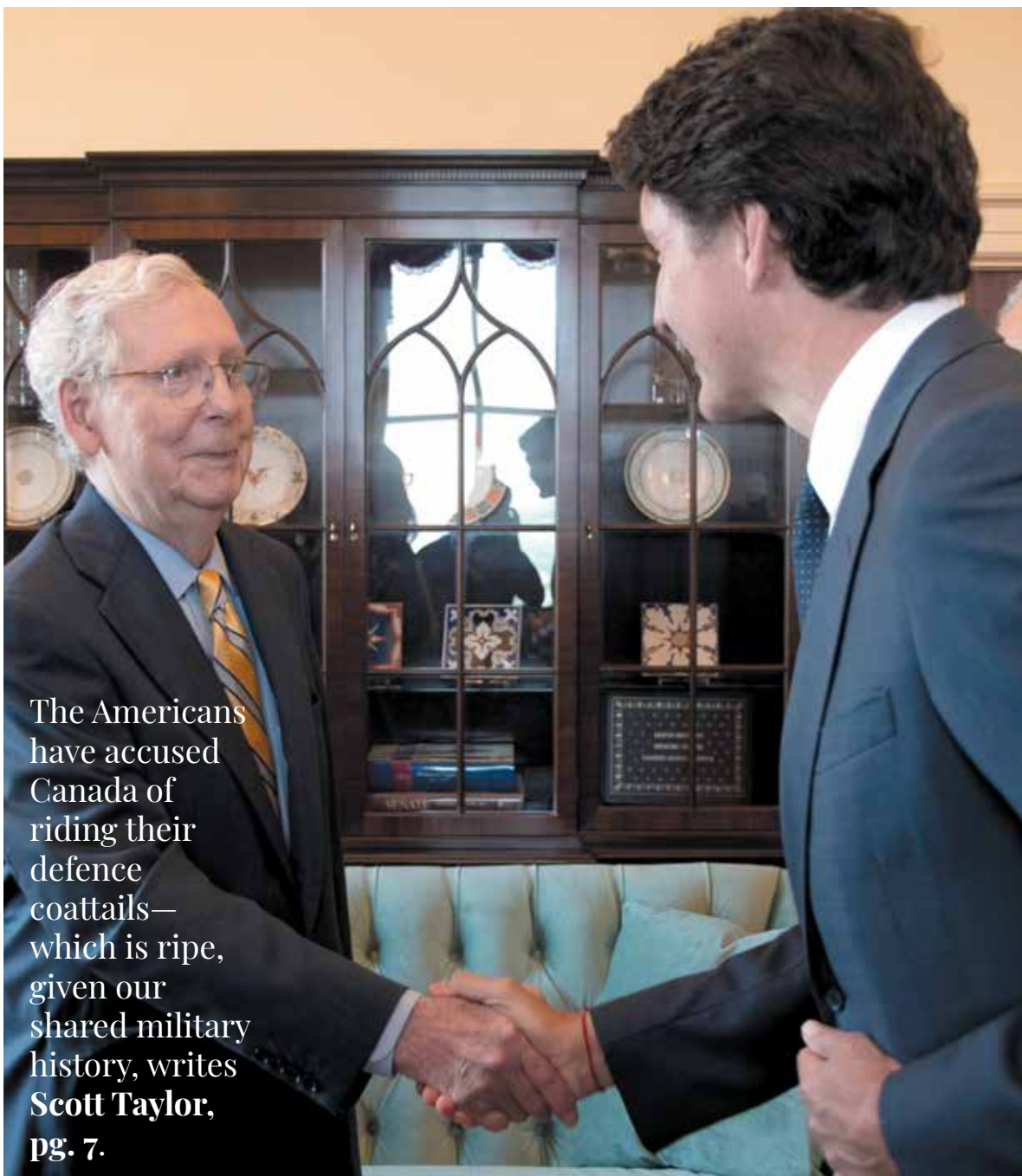
"Members like myself who have ridings that will change ... until that happens, we're responsible for the territory we have, but [we're also] planning for the new territory we'll have to campaign for in the next election, and hopefully inherit if we're successful," said Williamson.

Liberal MP Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Ont.) described

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COMMENT

NATO nagging?



U.S. Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, left, posted a photo of his July 9 meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on X, saying that 'it's time for our northern ally to invest seriously in the hard power required to help preserve prosperity and security across NATO.' Photograph courtesy of X/@LeaderMcConnell

The Americans have accused Canada of riding their defence coattails—which is ripe, given our shared military history, writes Scott Taylor, pg. 7.

NEWS

GAC downgrades chief legal adviser role despite global focus on international law

BY NEIL MOSS

As the federal government declares its support for international law, it is downgrading the top lawyer in the foreign ministry, drawing consternation from former members of the department's legal bureau.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) reclassified its legal adviser post from an assistant deputy minister-level position to that of a director general as part of broader departmental reorganization effort. The legal bureau is also being merged with the consular and emergency management branch.

An overarching report on foreign service modernization by the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee recommended that GAC should maintain a legal bureau, as well as to keep the legal adviser at the assistant deputy minister level. At the same time, the committee also called on the department to look into reducing the number of senior officials, as well to "empower" mid-level executives by giving directors general and other executives more authority.

GAC announced in its 2024-25 departmental plans that its spending reductions—part of government-wide budget cuts—would include "modestly" decreasing its senior management group.

Following the change, GAC's longtime legal adviser Alan Kessel—who had served in the post

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Global Affairs' chef returns to National Arts Centre for Chef's Table weekend



Normally helming the kitchen at Global Affairs Canada and cooking for dignitaries at Rideau Gate, Chef Pascal Ménard will return to the NAC's kitchen this weekend for 'The Chef's Table.' *Photograph courtesy of the National Arts Centre*

This weekend, hundreds of lucky—and hungry—ticketholders will get to dine like heads of state at the National Arts Centre's 1 Elgin restaurant. That's because Chef **Pascal Ménard** is leading the kitchen from July 18-20 as part of The Chef's Table series hosted by the Festival of Small Halls.

Ménard is the executive chef for Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and for Rideau Gate—next door to Rideau Hall and Rideau Cottage—where many visiting dignitaries stay when they're in Ottawa.

While technically NAC staff, Ménard is part of the senior hospitality team on contract to GAC, the NAC's general manager of food and beverage **Nelson Borges** told *Heard on the Hill* last month.

"When there's important dinners, Pascal is involved in doing all those events" for visiting government ministers and foreign leaders, explained Borges, noting that Ménard works mainly on the hospitality floor at the Pearson Building on Sussex Drive.

"When we do those kinds of visits [with state dinners], the whole team over there at 125 Sus-

sex comes over with us because they have to serve the prime minister. They just know the protocol," explained Borges, noting Ménard helmed the kitchen during United States President **Joe Biden's** 2023 visit to Ottawa.

Borges has known the French-born and -trained Ménard for nearly 20 years, and is familiar with his attention to detail, creativity, and his passion for seasonal, local food.

"We call this culinary arts, and that is why we are trying to do the things we do at the NAC. Sticking to our disciplines, we are providing stages for Canadian artists including culinary artists. Pascal fits that mould perfectly," said Borges. "His plates taste as good as they look, and they look really good."

The menu Ménard has

on deck includes gravadlax-style cured Nova Scotia salmon with beet and horseradish, Quebec veal tenderloin stuffed with shrimp and mushrooms, and a pistachio praline Saint-Honoré cake with white chocolate mousse and raspberries.

The Chef's Table event at the NAC was born in 2020. **Mark Monahan**, who runs the Festival of Small Halls as well as Bluesfest, approached Borges with the idea of offering fine dining from a rotating cast of local top chefs alongside NAC resident chef **Kenton Leier**, with music from local musicians. Ménard took part in that first year, and is back for three already sold-out evenings on July 18, 19, and 20. The menu will be the same each night with post-meal music performed by **Mackenzie and Friends**.

Borges is thrilled to bring Ménard out of GAC and back home to the NAC: "When you are doing the level of cuisine that he does, and you don't see a lot of other things that are going on in the industry, that is why I like to bring Pascal back to the building because he gets to learn what other trends are going on."

Tory MP Robert Kitchen won't seek re-election

Last week Conservative MP **Robert Kitchen** announced he will not seek re-election.

"I look forward to continuing on in my role as MP until the next federal election in 2025, and would like to thank the constituents of Souris-Moose Mountain



Caucus time: Conservative MP Martin Shields, left, Senator Michael MacDonald, centre, and MP Robert Kitchen in 2023. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

who have shown me incredible support for the past 10 years," the Saskatchewan MP was quoted in *SaskToday* on July 8.

SaskToday reported that last fall, Kitchen had initially planned to seek another term, "but has since changed his mind."

Shortly after Kitchen's news on July 9, two-term Saskatchewan MLA and former cabinet minister **Steven Bonk** announced he would seek the Tory nomination in Kitchen's riding.

"I am excited to announce that I will be seeking the Conservative Party nomination for the Souris-Moose Mountain riding," Bonk was quoted in *SaskToday*. "I was proud to be co-captain of **Pierre Poilievre's** Saskatchewan team during his leadership race [...] I am thrilled at the opportunity to join his team."

Bonk will, therefore, not run again provincially when the election in that province is called either on or before this Oct. 28.

Grit MP McLeod won't re-offer, either



Northwest Territories Liberal MP Michael McLeod, first elected in 2015, says he's hanging up his political hat. *Handout photograph*

The day after Kitchen's news, Liberal MP **Michael McLeod** also announced he, too, would not be re-offering at the next election.

"After due consideration and many conversations with my family, I have decided that I will not be seeking another term in the next federal election," the three-term MP for Northwest Territories wrote in a lengthy Facebook post on July 11, noting he would be asking the party leadership to begin the search for "a new candidate in advance of the 45th Canadian federal election."

"Elections are designed to ensure opportunity for renewal, and renewal is the lifeblood of democracy. It is now time for me to pass the torch," he wrote, thanking his family and supporters during his "bittersweet, but ... amazing journey" as MP.

McLeod noted he looked forward to reducing his travel, and spending more time at home in the North with his grandchildren.

Northern Affairs Minister **Dan Vandal** replied: "I have really enjoyed working with you for the

last 9 years. We have made real progress on northern issues ... and there are many challenges awaiting."

Chamber of Commerce names new CEO



Candace Laing will succeed Perrin Beatty at the Chamber of Commerce. *Photograph courtesy of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce*

Candace Laing will be the new president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce as of Sept. 1.

Laing will take over from **Perrin Beatty**, whose contract ends on Aug. 30.

Laing is from a Saskatchewan-based farming family, and has experience in both the public and private sectors, most recently at Nutrien and its predecessor firm PotashCorp where she was a senior executive for 10 years.

Laing joined the Chamber's board of directors in 2019. She has been the board chair since 2022.

"The positive influence businesses have on the lives of everyday Canadians is the grassroots thinking that should inform federal policymaking," said Laing in a July 10 press release.

Having led the Chamber for 17 years, Beatty announced his departure back in March, saying he is "looking forward to new adventures," and that while he's been involved in the public service in various forms for 50 years, "I'm not finished yet."

Stephanie Taylor to swap CP for NP

In media moves, **Stephanie Taylor** announced she is leaving The Canadian Press for *The National Post*.

"Byline update: After five awesome years at The Canadian Press, I'm changing it up. I'll be joining *The National Post's* Ottawa bureau later this month," she posted on X on July 9.

"*National Post* is lucky to have gained such a strong reporter. We will miss you in the newsroom," replied CP's **Mickey Djuric**, offering kudos to her soon-to-be former colleague.

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As Canadian exports to China continue to grow, is the diversification strategy working?

Canadian goods exports to China reached \$31-billion in 2023, a jump of six per cent from 2022, according to a new report.

BY NEIL MOSS

Though the Liberal government reset its relationship with China, arguing that Beijing had made it more difficult to engage, Canadian businesses have doubled down on the Chinese market as exports continue to rise.

Many observers viewed the feds' 2022 Indo-Pacific strategy as a long-awaited pivot away from China, with trade missions and offices created in nearby Asian markets as the plan described Beijing as "an increasingly disruptive global power."

But as Canada's goods exports declined overall by 1.4 per cent from 2022 to 2023, merchandise trade heading to China grew by six per cent to \$31-billion. China, along with Hong Kong (up 44 per cent), and the Netherlands (up 14.5 per cent) were the only ones out of Canada's top 10 export markets with positive growth, according to a recently released Global Affairs Canada (GAC) report.

Canada's exports have more than recovered since the economic hit associated with the nadir in Canada-China diplomatic relations amid the Two Michaels affair. At the time, Can-

ada's exports to China dropped to \$24.1-billion in 2019 from \$28-billion in 2018. They have since increased to \$26.1-billion in 2020, \$28.6-billion in 2021, and \$29.2-billion in 2022.

On the flip side, the 2024 State of Trade report, which was released in late June, notes that Chinese imports to Canada declined 13.6 per cent to \$60.2-billion. Services exports to China grew by 17.6 per cent, and service imports went up 4.4 per cent.

In 2023, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said that China had "made decisions over the past years" that made it increasingly difficult for countries to engage.

Gordon Houlden, director emeritus of the University of Alberta's China Institute, said despite the political challenges in Canada's relationship with China, businesses here still see opportunities in the growing power.

"At the end of the day ... government isn't the primary driver of trade. The primary driver of trade is individual businesses making decisions based on a variety of factors; political risk may be one of them—but primary is profit, and market availability and market attractiveness," he said.

He said the business community may be wary of travelling to China, but otherwise their links with the country carry on.

"These are very long-established trading partners that go back decades," he said.

"The government can pick up a flag and march over to country X, but it's the business community that does the purchasing or the sales and the marketing," he said.

Houlden said the Asian markets are "fiercely competitive," and

it isn't a small thing to break into a new market.

"I don't disagree with the general focus of the government in trying to have an Indo-Pacific strategy, and try to do more with South Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern Asian with the exception of China, but you can't ignore the primacy of the Chinese economy in the region," he said.

Carlo Dade, director of trade and trade infrastructure at the Canada West Foundation, echoed Houlden that business isn't following the direction of the federal government in its relationship with China.

He said the effort to generate opportunities in other Asian countries through trade missions has led to a lot of rhetoric about the benefits, but the complexity remains.

"Why would you go to Vietnam to work three times as hard for half the money in the U.S.? Or, you know China, and you know the cost of dealing with China," he said. "I think the diversification stuff is an emperor with no clothes."

Dade said due to the current Canada-China relationship—which sees businesses struggling to gain access to officials, and processing and documentation delays—Canadian business interests are still suffering.

"The private sector suffers, and the private sector would love to see the relationship improve, so that they're not at the back of the line behind the Aussies, the Kiwis, the Americans, and everyone else. That being said, China is going to really have to kick them out to [get] them out. They're not going to leave, they can wait this out," he said.



International Trade Minister Mary Ng has been leading trade missions across Asia to generate new markets for Canadian products. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The GAC report also noted that the U.S. trend of reshoring—to reintegrate supply chains domestically to avoid trade disruptions—hasn't been matched in Canada.

"There is little evidence of Canadian firms reshoring," reads the report, but notes that there is "some indication that international supply chains are restructuring and changing the locations of some input sources," which is a known as nearshoring or—as was dubbed by U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen—as "friend-shoring."

In a major foreign policy speech in Washington, D.C. in October 2022, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) trumpeted the benefits of friend-shoring in an October 2022 speech that became known as the "Freeland Doctrine."

The State of Trade report observes that relocation may be more beneficial for companies looking to reshore as they can "mitigate their vulnerabilities while simultaneously leveraging other countries' comparative advantages."

Former Canadian ambassador Guy Saint-Jacques, who served as Canada's envoy in Beijing from 2012-2016, said what is being realized is that it isn't easy to move away or decouple from China.

He said the Indo-Pacific strategy is the right approach, but it will take time to develop new markets. In the meantime, Canada will face uncertainty when dealing with China, he said.

"There is some vulnerability because I wouldn't expect major

improvements in bilateral relations until after the next federal elections," he said.

"China doesn't hesitate in using coercive measures," he said, noting that in 2019, Canadian exporters faced restrictions in canola and pork exports to China amid a worsening relationship.

The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada's Vina Nadjibulla, vice-president of research and strategy, said the decrease in China's imports to Canada is a sign that the diversification approach in the Indo-Pacific strategy is working.

"Those numbers have gone down because now companies are diversifying from China, and basing themselves in Vietnam and other places in southeast Asia," she said.

She said that aside from the trade in goods, there are signs that the economic relationship is slowing, such as in services trade, and in direct investment.

Nadjibulla said trade with China will never be nonexistent, but the government should find other markets to reduce Canada's dependence on China with commodity exports, and to increase its overall exports.

"There will still be a market in China for this. That is just the fact of the matter—China is a large market. Selling commodities in and of itself is fine as long as we have strategies for economic resilience, and are not overly dependent on a single market, like for instance we were for canola in 2019," she said.

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In 2023, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that China had made it difficult for countries to engage. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

MPs facing notable riding shifts next election are doing ‘double duty’ this summer

Many MPs whose ridings are adding new territory ‘are taking full advantage of this summer to get to know some of these communities a little better,’ says Conservative MP John Williamson.

Continued from page 1
it similarly, saying “it’s like I have two jobs.”

Coteau’s current riding, which he’s represented federally since 2021, will be broken up and merged into three other ridings as a result of the Ontario redistribution commission’s decision to reallocate one riding from Toronto—dropping the city from 25 to 24 seats overall—to elsewhere in the province. Ontario was only given one new riding as part of the 2022-23 redistribution process, but by taking one from Toronto and another from the North, three new federal seats are being carved out in Brampton, and the Halton and Durham regions.

Last month, after Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough–Guildwood, Ont.) made public his decision not to run for re-election, Coteau confirmed plans to run in the rejigged riding of Scarborough–Woburn, which combines much of Scarborough–Guildwood with a sizeable portion of Scarborough Centre, currently represented by Liberal MP Salma Zahid.

“Make no mistake, my No. 1 priority as the MP for Don Valley East is to represent that community,” Coteau told *The Hill*



Conservative MP John Williamson, left, Liberal MP Michael Coteau, centre, and Bloc MP Kristina Michaud say they’re using this summer to meet residents of the new areas they’ll be running to represent next election. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

Times of his summer plans. “But when I do have spare time, I will be in Scarborough–Woburn talking to people, getting a better understanding of some of the local issues, and also looking for ways to build a coalition on the ground to prepare for the next election.”

None of Coteau’s current riding territory will be part of Scarborough–Woburn. Instead, roughly half of Don Valley East will be merged with Scarborough Centre, and most of its western end will be combined with Don Valley West, while its northwest corner goes to the riding of Don Valley North. Coteau said he’d been considering running in the new riding of Scarborough Centre–Don Valley East, but after McKay’s announcement, party brass decided Zahid should run there, and asked Coteau if he wanted to take on Scarborough–Woburn instead. Coteau said “there’s no question” he’ll miss Don Valley East, which he also represented provincially from 2011 to 2021, but he’s “happy” with the decision.

Despite jumping into new territory—and from North York to Scarborough—Coteau has something of a leg up thanks to his experience as both a former Ontario minister, and a former Toronto District School Board trustee for Scarborough’s Ward 17. He also happens to already live in an area that will be part of the new riding of Scarborough–Woburn.

“It’s more difficult [jumping into a new riding] when you’re in a rural riding, or if you’re in a smaller township ... but the Don Valleys and the Scarborougs are very close to each other. There are some significant differences, but there are more similarities,” he said.

Still, even with his existing connections, Coteau said he has a sense of “starting from scratch.”

“I do have those relationships, but when I go to a door in Don Valley East, I’ve probably—in the last 20 years representing it—knocked on that door a dozen times, at least,” Coteau said. “When I get to the door, I know conversations I’ve had with people, I know their family members,

their kids who are now adults that I went to their graduations ... this will be very different. It will be knocking on doors without any specific relationship.”

Taking on fresh territory will make for a “bigger challenge” next election, and this summer presents a key chance to begin “laying down the foundation for a strong campaign” and “to get out, to talk to people, to knock on doors, and to build a larger team” before the pre-writ frenzy takes hold, he said.

“It’s going to be a very different summer from next year. Next year, it will be completely, 100 per cent dedicated to the campaign,” said Coteau.

Williamson also has the benefit of some existing ties to the new areas he hopes to represent.

For one thing, he noted the rail network that links the Port of Saint John to McAdam—where he said freight goes before being shipped off to the United States—runs through his current riding, of which McAdam itself is part. As a result, Williamson said he’s worked on local issues relevant

to Saint John West, and with the area’s current MP, Liberal Wayne Long (Saint John–Rothesay, N.B.). Last year, Williamson visited the area alongside Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) as part of a leader’s tour.

“I’ve already been making frequent trips to Saint John just to get to know and understand it better,” he said. “This summer, I’m adding to that.”

There’s plenty of “overlap” between the rural and urban areas that will be merged in Saint John–St. Croix, said Williamson, noting residents of communities in his current riding that wrap around Saint John regularly “look to the city to get services.”

“The territory is changing, but in many respects it feels like a comfortable pair of sneakers that I’ll be door-knocking in and getting around,” he said. “Even the urban area of Saint John, there’s a lot of overlap. I’ve been going to a couple of community breakfasts they’ve had over the last couple of months, and the reception has been good.”

Among other events, Williamson said he’s planning to attend the upcoming Saint John West Days in mid-August, and the Culture Fest Saint John event organized by the Saint John Newcomers Centre. With a provincial election closer on the horizon, he’ll also be out door-knocking for local Progressive Conservative candidates, and is “hoping to make a good impression” at the door.

“The election that most peoples’ mind is on right now is the provincial election ... but I’ll certainly get a sense at the door of what people think about the federal Conservatives, introduce myself, and as well, get a sense of what people think of the work of our leader, Pierre Poilievre.”

The current 12-week recess from House sittings offers a crucial chance to make those introductions and advance outreach, Williamson agreed. “Waiting another year, I think, would prove to be more difficult because in a campaign things are just busier,” he said.

“I think for people [MPs] that have new territory, many of them have already thought about it, or acted on it, and are taking full advantage of this summer to get to know some of these communities a little better.”

Bloc Québécois MP Kristina Michaud (Avignon–La Mitis–

Continued on page 5



Current riding boundaries for parts of North York and Scarborough are shown left, compared to the new distribution order outlined in teal. Screenshots courtesy of redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca

Continued from page 4

Matane–Matapédia, Que.) faces similar circumstances to Coteau.

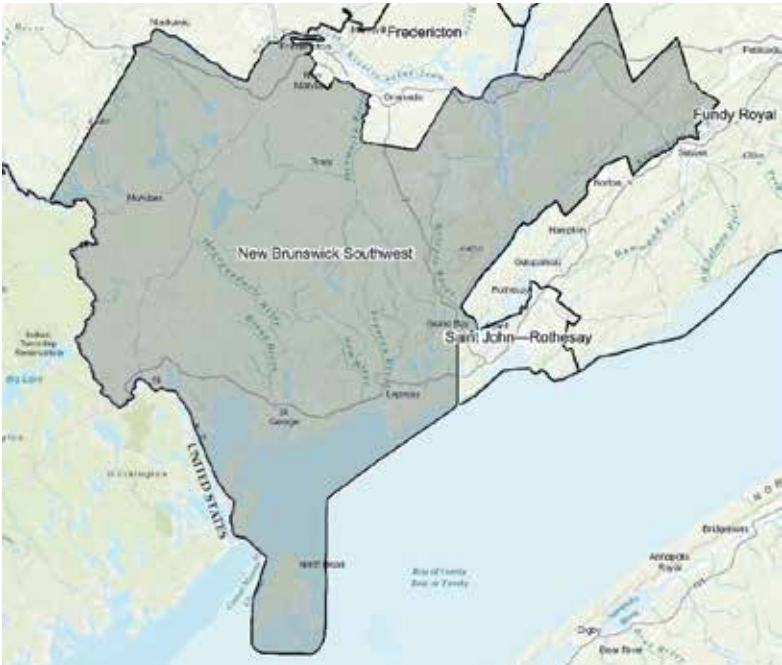
Quebec isn’t getting any new seats—and had in fact been set to lose one before last-minute legislative changes were passed to protect its current 78-seat count—so in order to create a new riding in the Laurentians north of Montreal, the province’s redistribution commission decided to remove one riding from Quebec’s eastern peninsula. The end result of that rejig will see Michaud’s riding split up and divided between two existing ridings: Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, currently represented by Fisheries Minister Diane Lebouthillier, and much of Rimouski–Neigette–Témiscouata–Les Basques, which is represented by Bloc MP Maxime Blanchette-Joncas.

In April, Michaud announced she’ll run in the new riding of Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine–Listuguj, which includes all of Lebouthillier’s current district plus the south and northeast ends of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia.

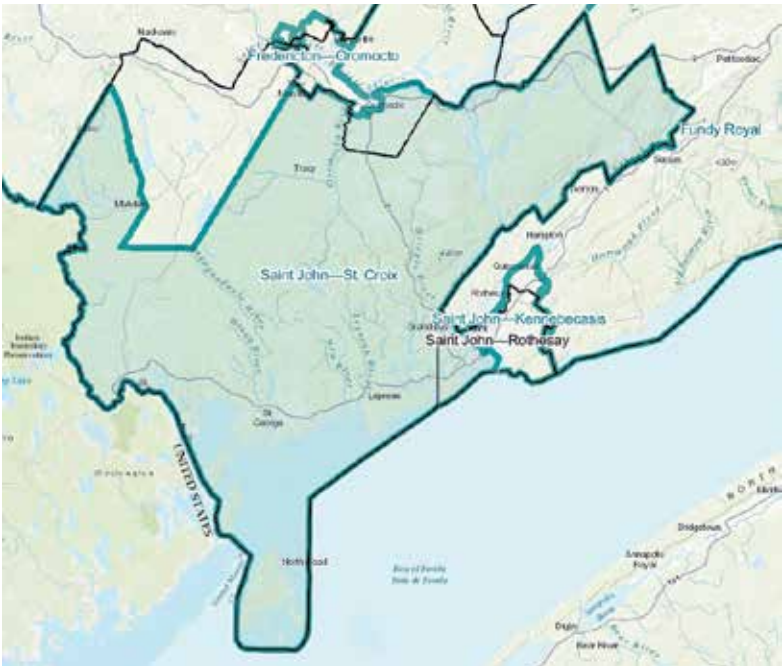
“It was a hard decision for me because I’m from the region” that’s going to the new Rimouski riding, said Michaud.

“It was like heart-breaking a little bit to say I’ll leave my hometown and decide to run in the riding beside it,” she said, but the area will still be “well represented by a Bloc member [Blanchette-Joncas],” and Gaspésie is a region the Bloc has been eager to win. In 2019, the Bloc candidate lost to Lebouthillier by a margin of just 1.7 percentage points, and by 7.1 percentage points in 2021. Michaud noted the Bloc works to stay active in ridings where it doesn’t have elected MPs, and as such, she’s already been responsible for keeping an eye on Gaspésie, making her “very familiar with that riding.”

Michaud’s decision means she’s now facing the prospect of finding a new home—literally. While she’s already begun house hunting, Michaud said she won’t be rushing the move as it’s a “big decision” for her family; one of the biggest cities in the new riding, for example, is a four-hour drive from her hometown of Val-Brillant. In the meantime, she’s looking for more-temporary accommodations to use in the



The current riding of New Brunswick Southwest. Screenshot courtesy of redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca



The new riding of Saint John–St. Croix is highlighted in teal, with the old riding lines marked in black. Screenshot courtesy of redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca

coming months while visiting the new areas she hopes to represent.

“We pass a lot of time in Ottawa, so obviously this summer is the perfect time for us to go and see the people in our riding, and participate in activities, and music festivals, and cultural

summer tour of Quebec. Developments in the fisheries industry in recent months—including the recently announced end to the moratorium on northern cod fishing—have also brought Michaud to the region, she said.

While she said her current riding remains her priority, that outreach is important to ensure people “start to recognize a little bit my face and the possibility that I could be their next MP.”

At times, Michaud said that will mean having to choose if she gets invited to two conflicting events where one is in the area she’s set to lose, and the other is in the new riding.

With one eye on the next election, Michaud said she’s now “making the choice that I should go into the new one because I think it will be more important for me during the long term.”

“It’s starting to get a little bit harder, and I have to make those kinds of choices sometimes,” she said.

Not all ridings are facing such major shifts, and some will remain the same once the new representation order takes effect upon the next dissolution of Parliament.

NDP MPs Peter Julian (New Westminster–Burnaby, B.C.) and Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.) will see comparatively smaller changes to their riding boundaries, with each adding new neighbourhoods to their existing urban ridings.

Both Julian and Gazan said they’ll be doing much the same as any other summer, and that they regularly door-knock in the areas they currently represent. The two MPs each described having existing relationships with community groups based in the new areas their ridings will pick up.



NDP MPs Peter Julian, left, and Leah Gazan say it’s business as usual for them this summer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“I have pre-existing relationships with a lot of the organizations in the north end [that’s being added], and I’m really looking forward to that part of my riding shift because I think the way that the former riding was configured it wasn’t a really good cutoff—I think this is better,” said Gazan of her new riding boundaries.

Julian noted he’ll have the chance to meet residents of the new neighbourhoods being added to his riding this summer when he goes door-knocking with provincial NDP candidates ahead of B.C.’s October election. That outreach will not only help him become familiar with more people—and vice versa—but will also generate feedback that can inform the caucus’ strategy next fall and heading into the next election, said Julian.

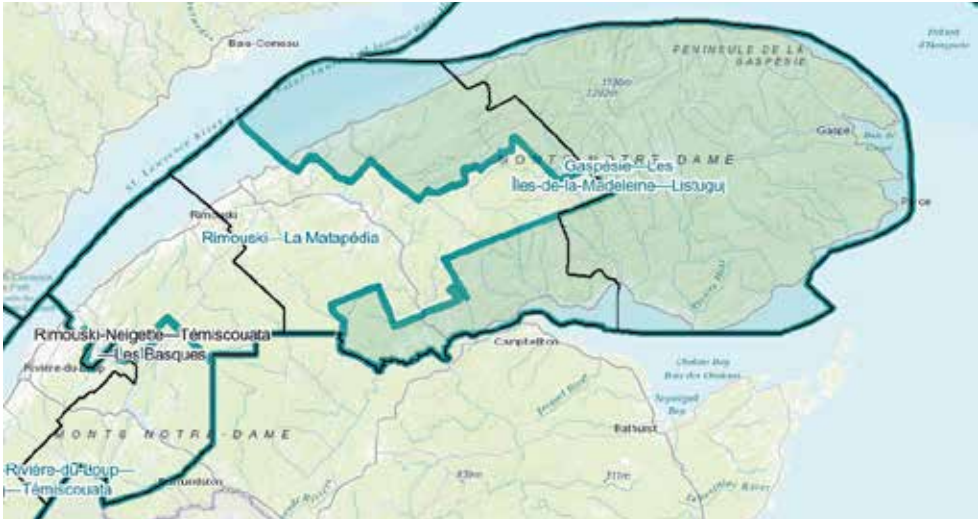
“Every summer is important to get feedback from people,” he said.

Adjusting to the new representation order also means plenty of backend work for the federal parties to split up old riding associations (and their bank accounts), set up new ones, and get candidates nominated. On the riding association front, Elections Canada’s registered association database indicates that currently only the Liberals have set up all 343 new riding associations, with 270 posted for the Conservatives, 235 for the NDP, 136 for the Green Party, and just four for the Bloc Québécois.

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The current riding of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia. Screenshot courtesy of redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca



The new riding of Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine–Listuguj is highlighted in teal, with old riding boundaries marked in black. Screenshot courtesy of redecoupage-redistribution-2022.ca

News

Senate Oversight Committee recommends budget boost, hiring two auditors

Senate Audit and Oversight Committee chair Sen. Marty Klyne says his team will ‘build a launchpad’ over the summer for their request for a \$347,500 increase to this year’s budget, and two new internal auditor hires.

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT ALLEN

The committee charged with monitoring Senate spending is urging the Red Chamber to hire two internal auditors and boost its budget in a move the chair says is important for transparency and oversight.

Progressive Senator Marty Klyne (Saskatchewan), who chairs the Senate Audit and Oversight Committee, told *The Hill Times* he is disappointed Senators chose not to adopt the report tabled June 17, days before they left for summer. Approving its recommendations is a necessary step to carry out the three-year risk-based internal audit plan the committee recently adopted, he noted.

The June report recommends upping the 2024-25 budget to \$881,768 from the \$534,268 assigned to the committee and the Office of the Chief Audit Executive for the current fiscal year. That’s an additional \$347,500, which the report says would pay for two new staff, training, professional services, and other operating expenses.

Klyne said the two staffers would be important additions who could take on some necessary internal audits dealing with results management, succession and strategic planning, and compliance with the Senate’s acquisition card policy, which restricts transaction amounts and the types of goods and services that can be purchased.

Klyne said the committee isn’t expecting to find “many deviations or non-compliance” with the nearly 100 Senator offices, but said it’s good business practice to have built-in oversight.

“We’re not looking at a gotcha agenda. What we’re looking for is identifying ... what we’re doing right, and we want to reinforce that,” as well as any necessary changes.



On June 18, the Senate adjourned debate on a request to set \$881,768 as this year’s budget for the Senate Audit and Oversight Committee, and the Office of the Chief Audit Executive. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Klyne is joined on the committee by deputy chairs Conservative Senator David Wells (Newfoundland and Labrador) and Independent Senator Hassan Yussuff (Ontario), and CSG Senator Colin Deacon (Nova Scotia), none of whom were available for comment. The group also has two external, non-Senator members who can participate in the meetings, but can’t vote.

Klyne said the Audit and Oversight Committee isn’t concerned that things “are going awry” with spending, but Senators need to regard the group as an essential part of the path towards independence.

“We need to do it collectively, in collaboration—because we’re not the big bad boogeyman. In fact, we’re trying to add value to the operations and to the Senators’ offices, and to everything we do in the Senate, from committees to communications to human resourcing to financial control.”

He said it’s important the Senate tracks its compliance with applicable laws and policies. Every year, the Senate’s financial statements are reviewed by an external auditor, “but there are other areas that could benefit from independent assessments, reviews, and audits,” says the committee’s annual report.

“Nobody’s really auditing those things, and there hasn’t been an internal audit since probably in the last decade,” Klyne said. “So things seem to be humming along, but you really need to start peeling back the onion to be able to sleep at night.”

In the lead up to tabling the report on June 17, the committee had numerous background conversations explaining the report with relevant parties, he said. Klyne said he’d watched enough

reports fail that hadn’t put that work in, so he made sure to give presentations to the four Senate groups, current and former clerk, executive committee of the Senate, and more.

“If they [reports] do not have advanced consultation, it makes it go thud when it hits the table. And we wanted to avoid any of that because we knew we were going to run out of runway,” he said. And while the committee thought it could be a simple vote, he said “in hindsight,” the report probably came too late before the last sitting on June 20 when most of the focus was on government legislation.

Sen. Forest ‘uncomfortable’ with amount requested

On June 18, Klyne told the Upper Chamber that the committee was “ready to go, and prepared for launch over the summer” to issue requests for proposals to contract the first two audits they envisioned, and recruit two new permanent financial auditors. “Let’s get this Boeing going,” he said.

During the brief debate that day, ISG Senator Éric Forest (Gulf, Que.) said he was “uncomfortable” with the request—notably a 65 per cent increase on the committee’s existing budget—and planned to vote against the recommendations.

“The objectives are relevant, but aren’t they too ambitious for a start? In terms of resources, we are getting two additional permanent employees. We also have to think about office space and all the work that will require,” said Forest, who noted the \$797,420 bump outlined for the following two fiscal years

represents a 50 per cent increase to the current budget.

Klyne said that breakdown is a misunderstanding of the background. He said the group inherited a budget that hadn’t been properly costed to consider the Senate’s needs or the risk-based internal audit plan, and their recommendations came after a benchmarking exercise that puts the Senate more in line with similar organizations.

ISG facilitator Raymonde Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), recommended the debate be adjourned, telling her colleagues there was relevant information before the Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee, known as CIBA. The audit committee is independent of CIBA, and there are rules in place separating the powerful bodies, including that Senators can’t sit on both, and that two groups must be represented as chairs of each.

Saint-Germain said CIBA had recently heard from the new internal auditor Amipal Manchanda, who was hired as chief audit executive in October 2023. “We asked him questions, and are awaiting the answers. It is important that we receive those answers before voting on this report proposal,” she told the Chamber.

Saint-Germain declined to comment further to *The Hill Times*, citing the in-camera nature of that discussion.

Klyne said the committee promptly answered any questions that came up about their report during consultations, and that Saint-Germain likely had “some consensus around the table” in putting off the vote on their request.

“It sets us back,” he said, noting the end of September is the earliest it’s likely to be debated, and then adding several more months for the hiring process, but he plans to convene the committee to “build a launchpad” to ready for the Senate’s return.

“We’ve maybe lost a couple months, but it’s not the end of the world. We still have good financial management.”

Audit committee annual report highlights delays

That delay in decision-making is not unique to this nearly 10-year process to get the oversight committee up and running. Following the Senate spending scandal that rocked the Red Chamber, Canada’s auditor general issued a scathing report in 2015 that included a key recommendation for the creation of an independent

committee to monitor Senate spending.

After a lengthy debate, the committee formed in October 2020, and in June 2021 two external members were added to the group, which the report calls “an important aspect of the Senate’s governance model.” The committee completed its first task a year later, with the Red Chamber adopting the Senate Audit and Oversight Charter in June 2022, and in January 2023 started a lengthy search for the chief audit executive.

The recent budget boost request follows the committee’s June 6 annual report, which repeatedly notes tardiness tied to Senate financial auditing and reporting do not meet best practices.

“To demonstrate transparency and accountability, the Senate’s financial statements should be approved and made public in a timely manner,” reads the annual report.

For example, the financial statements for the 2022–23 fiscal year were published 11 months after year-end, which the report says “did not meet the committee’s expectations,” and “is not aligned with best practices or the timing set out in the audit plan.”

That significant delay “undermines the relevance of those statements,” but the report says after discussions, the committee “is satisfied that efforts will be made to ensure that the financial statements are published in a more timely manner going forward.”

That was not an isolated incident. The external auditor also reviews quarterly financial statements, but does not see those reports until they are approved by CIBA. The report notes in 2023 these financial statements were repeatedly forwarded months late.

Even worse, financials for the second fiscal quarter from July to September 2023 were not produced at all as their own report. Instead, those months were wrapped into the next quarter and submitted in April 2024, looking back at the months covering that entire period until Dec. 31, 2023.

Klyne said his committee believes it should see the financial statements first, and then CIBA can look at them and approve if they wish, given the time it takes to get things through.

“We don’t want to be looking at quarterly reports at the end of next quarter,” he said. “As an organization, we need to change that.”

The annual report appears to touch on tensions between the audit committee and CIBA, and their respective roles and control over Senate financial oversight.

Klyne didn’t comment on that aspect, but said more generally he sees it as a matter of human behaviour having difficulty with change, tied to the fact that not all Senators understand internal audits, and the “sacred ground of independence.”

“I hope we’re at a mutual understanding ... that things need to be better,” he said.

swallen@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NATO nagging? Defence spending takes heat from allies

The Americans have accused Canada of riding their defence coattails—which is ripe, given our shared military history.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—At last week's NATO Summit meeting in Washington, D.C., Canadian leaders—including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau—braced themselves for criticism from other alliance members regarding our purported lack of defence spending.

It is true that based on the percentage of our gross domestic product (GDP), Canada ranks in the bottom third of the 32 member states. However, when based on the actual dollars spent, Canada ranks seventh in NATO, and—incredibly—16th in the world.

However, back in 2014, NATO alliance members collectively pledged to bring their spending up to two per cent of each nation's GDP. At the time, it was the Stephen Harper Conservatives who signed on to that pledge. For the record, Canada was spending just less than one per cent of GDP on defence at that juncture.

Under the Trudeau Liberals, that percentage has increased to approximately 1.4 per cent of GDP. Under the latest defence policy update, which was just released in April, that figure is set to climb to 1.7 per cent of GDP by 2027. To be fair, the Liberals have only ever promised to strive to attain the two per cent of GDP goal. They never promised to actually meet that goal, until pressure in D.C. led to a stated timeline of 2032. But I digress.

The expected backlash did materialize in Washington, particularly from American lawmakers. One of the most strident voices was that of the United States Republican Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson. In a televised interview, Johnson called it “shameful” that Canada has yet to hit the two per cent goal or provided a realistic plan to do so. “Talk about riding America's coattails.”

This is ripe coming from our neighbour and closest ally. I say this because, while we may not be spending the arbitrary proportion of our GDP on defence, the fact is that we have hardly been riding on America's coattails.

It was their foreign war in Afghanistan that we supported for more than 10 years. As part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, and as part of the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom, Canada had 158 soldiers killed, with another 2,000 people suffering physical injuries or battle wounds. Of the 40,000 Canadian troops who rotated through the Afghanistan conflict, many thousands are still coping with the invisible wounds of PTSD.

Canada cut bait and withdrew from the Afghanistan conflict in 2014. Many a Canadian hawk in the form of politicians and pundits decried this withdrawal as premature as the hoped-for victory was just around the corner.

That myth died in the summer of 2021 when the Taliban emerged victorious. The world's greatest superpower aided by NATO, the world's largest, most sophisticated military alliance ever assembled, lost a two-decade-long campaign against a largely illiterate band of fanatics.

The wild part about all of this was that eventual defeat was always expected by the senior leadership in the Pentagon. This was revealed by the *Washington Post* in 2019 in a bombshell story that was based on a series of documents which collectively have become known as the Afghanistan Papers. The *Washington Post* revelations were based on a series of interviews conducted by the U.S. military's own special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction. The documents reveal that high-ranking officials generally held the opinion that the war was unwinnable, while keeping this view hidden from the public.

Due to the difficulty of creating objective metrics to demonstrate success, information was manipulated for the duration of the conflict. The Afghanistan Papers clearly revealed that senior U.S. officials made “explicit and sustained efforts to deliberately mislead the public.”

What is not known is whether Canadian officials were in on this deception from the outset, or were our U.S. counterparts deliberately misleading Canada and the other NATO members? Neither option will provide any comfort to the families of those Canadian soldiers who paid the ultimate price in the service of their country. Nor will it help to heal the wounds of those who returned from that unwinnable war broken physically and mentally.

When it comes to the war in Ukraine, and NATO's efforts to deter Russian aggression, Canada is also not riding on anybody's coattails. As a nation, we have provided Ukraine with military trainers, military equipment, and \$14-billion in loans and loan guarantees to keep them resisting the Russian invaders.

Since 2017, Canada has forward deployed a battle group to Latvia where we have command of the international NATO brigade. Given the sorry state in



Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly, left, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Defence Minister Bill Blair announce Canada's plan to hit NATO defence spending targets at a July 11 press conference in Washington, D.C. Screenshot courtesy of CPAC

which our military currently finds itself, maintaining that sort of operational tempo has been a challenge, and that effort is set to grow in scale with Canada nearly doubling the manning level of the Latvia commitment.

I recall an incident back in 1998 when British Lieutenant-General Sir Hew Pike took command of the NATO force in Bosnia. Pike made some disparaging remarks about the quality of the Canadian troops under his command.

In response, then-defence minister Art Eggleton rose in the House of Commons to defend the honour of our military. His brief rebuttal was simply, “Take a hike, Pike.”

I would hope that Defence Minister Bill Blair could find a similar quip to dismiss Johnson's allegation that we are riding U.S. coattails.

Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of *Esprit de Corps* magazine. *The Hill Times*

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Editorial

Attempt on Trump’s life a warning not to let rhetoric run amok

There are still plenty of unanswered questions about what happened in Butler, Pa., on July 13. But what seems to be agreed upon is that someone made an attempt on the life of former United States president Donald Trump as he spoke at a campaign rally in his re-election bid.

This paradigm-shifting event that killed an innocent bystander may very well change the entire course of the American presidential election campaign—and North American politics in general—given it’s the first close call on a former president or candidate in the 21st century.

According to Canadian Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, there is “increased vigilance” here at home, but the “information we have to date shows no link to Canada.”

As many similarities as Canada and the U.S. share, one major difference is the lack of a proliferation of firearms, which also contributes to the differing approach and threat when it comes to political violence.

However, it’s not out of the realm of possibility that people will take the wrong lessons from this, especially given the way things have been trending in recent years.

In the immediate aftermath of last weekend’s shooting, there was plenty of chatter and punditry that this violent act could mark a turning point in the already-close U.S. race.

As Global News reported on July 15: “The torrent of online threats against

public officials has led some Canadians to believe they can threaten, encourage, and cheer on political violence with impunity, newly released government documents warn.”

We’ve already seen that this looks like north of the 49th parallel. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appeared at a 2019 campaign event in Ottawa with a bulletproof vest noticeable under his clothes, his home was the target of an armed would-be assailant who crashed the gates at Rideau Hall in 2020 to confront him (and who was released from prison last week), and another person was convicted after throwing gravel at Trudeau during a 2021 campaign stop.

The Hill Times has regularly reported on the hate MPs face that’s increasingly manifesting as physical security threats.

Let’s not brush this off as “it can’t happen here” simply because the circumstances are different.

It’s a time to double down on vigilance and self-reflection. Are you painting your political opponents as “enemies” who need to be taken down or removed? Or are you being responsible with your communication and messaging (and that doesn’t mean just painting someone standing up for vulnerable identities or stating facts as “divisive,” but actual incendiary language.)

We’re allowed to have differences, and democracy thrives on expression of those. But the race for clicks, views, and fundraising dollars cannot supersede human decency and dignity.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Blaming the victim not the answer; blaming frustrated voters not the solution

Re: “Canada’s democracy under attack as MP harassment goes too far,” (*The Hill Times*, June 7); “How many chances have parliamentarians missed to start fixing the toxicity they complain about, asks letter writer,” (*The Hill Times*, June 17); “Claiming a citizen assembly will reduce or eliminate arson, vandalism, harassment, and homophobic intimidation against MPs is magical thinking: Liberal MP McKay,” (*The Hill Times*, July 1).

Liberal MP John McKay is right to argue that bullying and harassment of MPs has no place in a healthy democracy. One is reminded of the excesses of the Freedom Convoy in early 2022 as similarly unhealthy. There is room to be concerned, for sure.

Yet we would do well to listen carefully to what reader Jennifer Ross had to say. That letter comes across to me as the voice of a frustrated citizen. I can see how McKay might read this as “blaming the victim,” but find his own accusations of “magical thinking” misplaced and offensive.

Who were those people in the Freedom Convoy, and why were they there? Were they perhaps frustrated by the whims of our electoral system that concentrated power in a party many of them despised in the 2021 election? Were they citizens who feel systematically unheard, perhaps disempowered by a voting system that regularly deprives them of meaningful and effective voting power, depending on where they live or who they voted for?

Ross appears to choose letter writing over bullying and harassment

to express her frustrations, but she is obviously frustrated enough about McKay’s vote against a citizens’ assembly on electoral reform to cite that as an example. Here was a motion, the gist of which had been strongly supported at the Liberal Party’s own policy convention in 2023. The cynicism with which the party’s leadership and most Liberal MPs voted against that motion was and remains disturbing. The vote in favour of that motion by 39 Liberal backbenchers was—in contrast—a beacon of light showing that all politicians are not cut from the same cloth.

This is not really about bullies and victims. It’s about a political system that is broken to the point that citizens are exceedingly frustrated. Politicians can give us more of the same, and write opinion pieces decrying the behaviour of “neanderthals” and “anarchists,” but that will not resolve the sickness. A citizens’ assembly on electoral reform would have been a healthy dose of medicine that McKay and many of his colleagues refused to consider.

We are *all* of us victims in this story. We can also be agents of change if we choose to be. A lot of the polarization and extremism that we see in our politics today is the result of an electoral system that encourages such behaviour by dividing all citizens into winners and losers. It doesn’t have to be that way.

Réal Lavergne
Ottawa, Ont.

The Bloc opened Pandora’s box: Quebec reader

Re: “The Bloc Québécois is no friend of Canada,” (*The Hill Times*, July 3, p. 9).

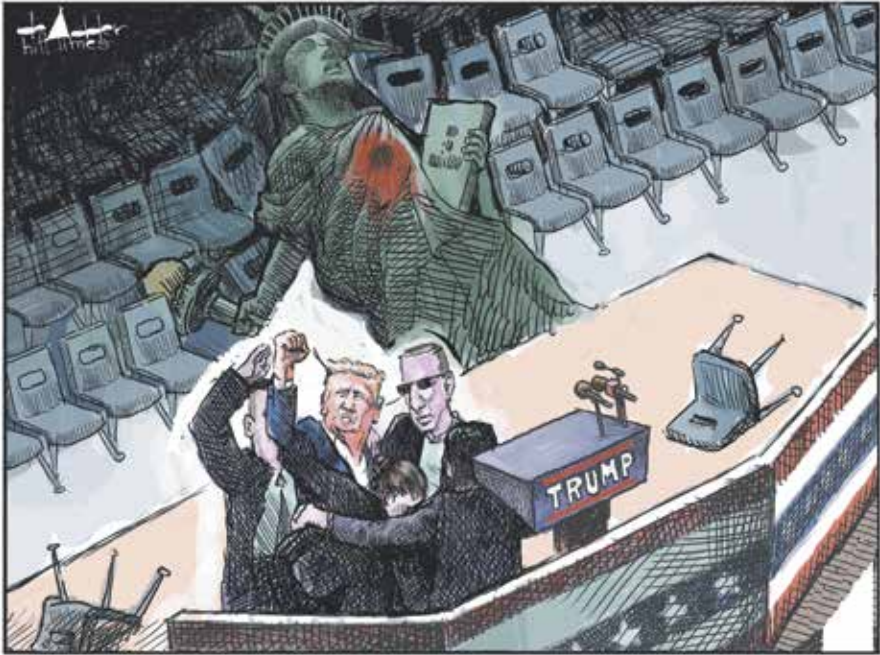
First, the Bloc Québécois should never have been permitted to exist as a federal political party with candidates only in the province of Quebec. It is not a cross-Canada party like all the others; it is a provincial party disguised as a federal one. The creation of the Bloc is a self-inflicted injury that Canada permitted. The elected provincial government of Quebec represents Québec at the federal level, not the Bloc.

The Bloc is no friend of Canada. They are only in it for the financial benefits it provides them. This was proven when the

Bloc MPs voted for extending the official election date of Oct. 20, 2025, by one week so their MPs elected in 2019 who would not qualify for a pension had they lost the election on Oct. 20 but would qualify a week later. The Liberals, NDP, and Bloc voted for this one-week extension. They represent their own pockets and interests.

Now imagine a group of Albertans creating a Bloc Alberta federal political party, or a group of British Columbians creating a Bloc B.C. party? Pandora’s box was opened when the Bloc was created.

Guy Battelle
Gatineau, Que.



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Is the girl-boss era coming to an ignoble end?



In weekend social media posts, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau played nice with Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, right, despite recent *Globe and Mail* reporting that he's looking to replace her. Screenshot courtesy of X/@JustinTrudeau

The Liberals are never held accountable for the female sacrificial lambs they send out for slaughter to save the position of a mediocre man.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



OTTAWA—The machetes are out. We are starting to see the Liberals begin to cannibalize their own, with a divided caucus, deplorable poll numbers, and a deeply unpopular prime minister.

In response, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has begun to court Mark Carney as a potential finance minister, which begs the question: what about Chrystia Freeland?

Last week, *Globe and Mail* journalist Robert Fife reported: “Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has publicly called on former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney to join the government while declining to say whether he wants Chrystia Freeland to stay as finance minister.” Fife’s article goes on to reveal that “senior officials in the Prime Minister’s Office, including chief of staff Katie Telford, are concerned about Ms. Freeland’s effective-

ness in selling the government’s economic message.” I mean, yeah, she sucks at it; however, she is not the only one—the prime minister himself has been incapable of doing the same. But that doesn’t matter because—like the United States Supreme Court—Trudeau is never held accountable for his failures.

You know what else the Liberals are never accountable for? The female sacrificial lambs they send out for slaughter to save the position of a mediocre man.

Since Jody Wilson-Raybould’s high-profile resignation in 2019, the PMO has used women to cover the feces-laden screw-ups by the prime minister. The SNC-Lavalin affair—which really blew open with Wilson-Raybould’s resignation—centred on one question: did the prime minister and his goons try to pressure her into saving SNC-Lavalin from criminal prosecution for a bribery charge? Once Wilson-Raybould refused to play the patriarchy’s games, she was demoted. When she subsequently resigned from cabinet, she did so under a heavy cloud of scrutiny and inspection while some of the men involved got to keep their jobs—I’m

looking at you, Ben Chin. Fellow minister Jane Philpott also resigned from cabinet in solidarity, and one-time parliamentary secretary Celina Caesar-Chavannes left caucus for her own—but not wholly unrelated—reasons shortly after.

Funny thing is, many of the other women in caucus said nothing—nary a whisper, nary a word. Imagine, had all the women in caucus threatened to resign, these men would be too scared not to negotiate for better. But no, since everyone is out for themselves, and they’ve all drunk from the pipe of individuality, women don’t actually support other women in their fights against bigotry brought on by misogyny.

Unfortunately, Freeland—who never really supported

other women—is now being tossed aside—allegedly—to support the whims of a patriarchal political system that uses more qualified women to uplift less-qualified, middling men. Gaining ostensible power from a patriarchal framework will never be real power. In addition, your accomplishments will be diminished to devise a reason for your ouster. Wilson-Raybould was called “difficult.” For Freeland, the chickens have come home to roost.

The girl-boss era has come to its predictable end.

My criticism of Freeland does not diminish her accomplishments, which include childcare, capital gains tax reform, and using the Parliamentary Black Caucus’ idea of cutting off the Ottawa occupiers from their financial source. However, that’s not good enough, as Fife reports that some Liberals think that either Energy Minister Jonathan Wilkinson or Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne could take Freeland’s place as minister of finance.

Who?

So let me get this straight: some Liberals are encouraging a nobody like Wilkinson—please don’t write this paper saying how amazing he has been. The point is, no one knows him outside Parliament Hill—or a minister who couldn’t get his own legislation right, in the form of Bill C-27? You have got to be kidding me. She is way more qualified than both of them put together. And if the problem with Freeland is that she can’t sell the government’s economic policies, what makes PMO think these undistinguished men can? Champagne couldn’t sell his approval of Rogers acquisition of Shaw, given the Competition Bureau tried to block the deal.

At the end of the day, barely passable white men—who have fewer qualifications—are put on the same level as the current female deputy prime minister. When you cape for the patriarchy you will never be spared its misogynistic impacts. It will run over you to the next inferior white man.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the *Bad+Bitchy* podcast. *The Hill Times*



Jody Wilson-Raybould’s high-profile resignation in 2019, the PMO has used women to cover the feces-laden screw-ups by the prime minister, writes Erica Ifill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

A love song to my home

At times like these, we need to be reminded that life isn’t perfect, but it can be amazing when we just take a step back and listen to nature, and one another.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—We had a celebration here for the 350th anniversary of the founding of Kamouraska this week. There were parties, music, food, and drink. And people from the village joined together to celebrate.

The events marked the signing of the documents for the seignury of Kamouraska in 1674 by Olivier Morel, the seigneur of La Durantaye, near Quebec. He had heard the fishing was good downriver, and decided to take on the land for a fishing camp.

When an expedition provided no fish, he lost interest in Kamouraska, and sold it to Charles Aubert de la Chesnaye. De la Chesnaye brought a handful of pioneers to Kamouraska in 1694, but the real influx began after 1709. On the space where the original colony was established stands *le Berceau de Kamouraska*, “the cradle.” All this to say our 350th celebrations are a bit of a fraud, as there were no settlers here for decades in the 17th century except the Indigenous Peoples, who lived here.

However, the actual history was secondary to having a good time. Nonetheless, this weekend, the village was bustling with tourists. The Centre d’Art at the old courthouse was packed for a festival, and the wharf and beach rang to the sounds of children’s laughter.

Meanwhile, in an orchard not far from the Berceau, a series of tents were assembled for

Continued on page 10

Comment

Hold the hypocrisy: Canadian leaders not practicing what they preach on political rhetoric

Playing people off of one another, and exploiting collective anxiety is a common practice among the major party leaders, and is tip-toeing to something worse.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



The calls from parties led by Conservative Pierre Poilievre, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for ending violence and it having no place in our democracies will take likely take a back seat to whatever appears to be the best electoral strategy of the moment, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

OTTAWA—The aftermath of the assassination attempt on former United States president Donald Trump—officially the Republican nominee for his old job—is sadly reminiscent of what we normally hear following mass shootings.

Regardless of your politics, a semblance of humanity and modicum of decency should see us all being relieved that the former president wasn't felled by

a gunman's bullet in a Pennsylvania field. Moving past the obvious, let's get to the predictable.

After shots were fired at Trump on July 13, every media platform was filled with messages about there being no place for violence in politics, and the need to responsibly manage how people communicate. While the first message about keeping violence out of politics is true, it was the second one that was highly hypocritical.

Political leaders, their competitors, and legions of others are constantly using incendiary, inflammatory, or inciteful language to motivate people to act. In the age of social media and deep message penetration—often with a tip of the hat towards the most outrageous use of creative tools to be heard—is it any wonder that we don't see more overt violence?

In Canada, over the last number of months we have had Members of Parliament and would-be

candidates for other elected roles announce they won't be running again, or won't put their hand up for office because the environment is too toxic. *The Hill Times* and other media platforms have been filled with stories from parliamentarians who have told stories of incidents of public harassment or security threats. It is not difficult to drive in any major city in Canada and find someone sporting an "F-Trudeau" poster or flag.

Anybody who spends time talking about politics on any platform has probably received abusive criticism and attempts at intimidation. Sadly, that is more the norm than the exception.

Lots of female reporters and commentators in Canada and elsewhere have thankfully publicly chronicled the disgusting, vile, threatening messages they get. Unfortunately, the public awareness these chroniclers are trying to highlight in hopes that it abates has not yet had that impact.

But back to the aftermath of mass shootings. After these tragic events, we always hear about the victims and their families being in our thoughts and prayers, about how the weapons were too easy to get, that we must act, and we

must do better. But it doesn't seem like much changes.

So, hours after the attempt on Trump when both U.S. President Joe Biden and Trump himself called for unity and the end of political violence, a five-alarm fire of hypocrisy was set ablaze. Given the vitriol that has marked their campaigns against each other, it would have been comical in other circumstances if shots had not just rung out against a presidential candidate.

While thankfully we have not had the same level of political violence in Canada, it was equally hypocritical for our leaders to preach the virtues of higher language and decency. Our politics at the national level has become deeply personal and guttural. Yes, none of our leaders have encouraged a Jan. 6, 2021-like riot, but playing people off of one another, and exploiting collective anxiety is a common practice among the major party leaders, and is tip-toeing to something worse.

I would wager that within a couple of weeks, we will be back to the normal smash-mouth aggressive rhetoric in Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere. The big, bold calls for ending violence and it having no place in our democracies will take a back seat to whatever appears to be the best electoral strategy of the moment. I'd further bet that will have nothing to do with calls for unity, and everything to do with diminishing the other guy and the people that support them. Oh, to be wrong!

Tim Powers is chairman of Summa Strategies, and managing director of Abacus Data. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

The Hill Times

A love song to my home



Kamouraska, Que., may face challenges, but it is one of the most beautiful villages in Canada, and a place to connect to nature and recharge amid political turmoil, writes Andrew Caddell. *Photograph courtesy of Andrew Caddell*

thirds of the population is over the age of 60. In terms of image, we have a tough time attracting new people to live here, as city folk think we are in the boonies, despite great quality of life and services. And when someone purchases a 200-year-old home, the urge to modernize it runs into our comprehensive heritage standards.

Meanwhile, while we are one of the richest villages in the Lower Saint Lawrence region, we try to keep taxes low, but we need \$5-million to repair the wharf, which is a focal point of the town.

On the morning of July 14, I discovered a bird that perched in our hanging plant for two months had flown the nest with her two babies. Then I joined my wife and cycling friend Nathalie to chat over coffee. The previous day, we had cycled 75 kilometres around the area before 10 a.m. In the afternoon, we welcomed cousins for drinks, and later joined friends for a swim as the tide came in. The rolling of the tide still fascinates me, 70 years after I first saw it. My ancestors came here 140 years ago, and had the same attachment to the river, as do my kids.

Most Canadians have their own Kamouraska: their cottage,

their cabin, their camp, their tent, their refuge in the country. It could be anywhere, but it allows us to unwind and marvel at nature. It is what we keep in our heart in the harshness of winter, and when we are away. That connection with nature helps to define us.

All of this takes place in a world that seems to be falling apart, with campaigns seeking to drive wedges between us, with raging insults on social media, where the former head of state of our closest neighbour is targeted for an assassination, and we are not surprised.

I have been writing this column for seven years this week, and sometimes I need to take a break from writing about all the conflicts in this world when so much is negative. It is times like these we need to be reminded that life isn't perfect, but it can be amazing when we just take a step back and listen to nature, and one another.

Andrew Caddell is retired from Global Affairs Canada, where he was a senior policy adviser. He previously worked as an adviser to Liberal governments. He is a town councillor in Kamouraska, Que. He can be reached at pipson52@hotmail.com.

The Hill Times

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two events for the people of the village: a poutine supper, and the celebration of the Berceau. They are the farmers and workers who live here year-round and make it through a long winter to welcome

a few months of glorious summer. The poutine supper was organized and sponsored by several local cultivators.

One of them, Gilles Michaud, is a prosperous potato grower, and the former mayor. He took the time to show me his spec-

tacular collection of restored tractors, dating back to 1923, 1933, and 1945, each speaking of a different era.

While Kamouraska clearly faces challenges, it is one of the most beautiful villages in Canada. Demographically, two-

Assassination attempt underscores U.S. history of political violence

Do assassinations really change the course of history? Intuition says yes, but historical experience says probably not.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



It's sheer nonsense to believe that Donald Trump is the sole cause for the Republican Party's slide into crude nationalism and populism. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

LONDON, U.K.—Almost everybody who feels obliged to comment about the attempted assassination of Donald Trump last weekend is currently insisting that “violence has no place in American politics,” but of course it does. Four United States presidents have been assassinated

while in office, and three others—now including Trump—have been injured in assassination attempts.

Seven presidents out of 45 have been killed or wounded by a would-be assassin's bullet. That's a higher casualty rate than American soldiers suffered in any war of the past century. Violence

plays a considerably larger role in American politics than it does in other developed countries, but it's not clear why.

It can't just be that the murder rate is much higher in America than in other fully developed countries—six times higher than Germany or the United Kingdom.

The U.S. murder rate is similar to that in semi-developed countries like Paraguay, Thailand, or Russia, but none of those countries has a similar rate of political assassinations.

So we're left with the default answer. All those American presidents were shot by guns,

which are universally available in the U.S., but rare elsewhere. America has at least the same share of fanatics and nutcases as other countries, so what did you expect?

The more interesting question is whether assassinations really change the course of history all that much. Intuition says yes, but historical experience says probably not.

“

At this late stage in the cycle, the tactics of subtle misdirection must give way to the cruder distractions of nationalism and populism.

Intuition says that the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865—just after his victory in the American Civil War—delayed the genuine emancipation of Black people in America by at least a century.

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Opinion

China-Canada relations have delivered real benefits to our two nations

We must step up to our historical responsibilities and pass on to our children and grandchildren a China-Canada relationship that's beaming with vitality.

Wang Di

Opinion



It has been nearly two months since my arrival in Canada

on May 24. I was welcomed not only by a pleasant warm Ottawa summer, but also the enthusiasm of Canadian friends from different communities, and their eager aspirations for China-Canada relations. I am greatly encouraged and have gained more confidence about the future of China-Canada relations.

My confidence stems from the traditional friendship between China and Canada. As early as the 19th century, more than 10,000 Chinese construction workers travelled to Canada to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway, starting the friendly exchanges between our two peoples. In the early 1960s, despite the western embargo against China, Canada exported wheat to my nation, a most needed helping hand for China at that time. In 1970, our two countries officially established diplomatic relations. In September 2005, both sides agreed to upgrade our relations

to a strategic partnership. With our joint efforts, China-Canada relations have come a long way, and delivered real benefits to the people of both countries.

My confidence further stems from the way our two countries complement each other to meet the development needs of both sides. China has been Canada's second biggest trading partner for many years, and was the only major export market of Canada that registered positive growth in 2023. Canadian brands such as Lululemon, Canada Goose, and Arc'teryx are highly popular in China. The wonder of the Canadian Prairies and mysterious aurora hold gravitational attraction for Chinese tourists. In the meantime, Canadian friends are also welcome to visit China where they can experience a “city walk” that brings ancient and modern elements together, and presents the development of China in front of their eyes.

My confidence also stems from our similar philosophies for tackling common challenges. On June 26, when I presented my letter of credence to Governor General Mary Simon, she highlighted that in the face of an intricate and turbulent world landscape, the future of all countries is intertwined, so we must build bridges of dialogue, enhance exchanges and mutual learning, and join hands to meet global challenges such as climate change. This strongly echoes with the vision proposed by President Xi Jinping of building a community with a shared future for mankind. It fully shows that China and Canada share the same understanding when it comes to tackle global challenges.

In 2022, China and Canada successfully held the UN Biodiversity Conference—COP15—together, which culminated in the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Frame-

work, a shining example of China-Canada co-operation. Past progress has shown that China-Canada co-operation not only benefits the two countries, but also the whole world by bringing more certainty and positive energy.

More than 50 years ago, it was with enormous political courage and great vision that the statesmen of our two countries established diplomatic ties which greatly benefited our people. Now, China-Canada relations have come to a crucial moment again. We must step up to our historical responsibilities, live up to the expectations of our two peoples, and pass on to our children and grandchildren a China-Canada relationship that's beaming with vitality.

Let us draw strength and wisdom from history, and uphold the spirit of mutual respect, seeking common ground while reserving differences, and win-win co-operation to jointly promote the healthy and stable development of the China-Canada strategic partnership at all times.

Wang Di is the ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Stepping up for Afghan-Canadian language and cultural advisers and their families

Since LCAs are considered contractors, they aren't eligible for mental health services from Veterans Affairs Canada, unlike the soldiers they accompanied in Afghanistan.

Fardous Hosseiny & Brian McKenna

Opinion



A small group of civilians, known as language and cultural advisers (LCAs for short), were a critical—yet largely unknown—part of Canada's more than decade-long presence in Afghanistan. As recent immigrants to Canada, they were recruited to return to Afghanistan and support our 40,000 soldiers, often going “outside the wire”—or, off base—to provide linguistic and cultural advice. At approximately 65 people, they were a small but mighty group.

Despite their critical role in the conflict in Afghanistan, there is little awareness about the existence, role, and contri-



Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde, left, Defence Minister Bill Blair, and Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor speak to reporters in the West Block on Dec. 5, 2023. Baseline awareness and understanding of the needs of language and cultural advisers are crucial for meaningful action, write Fardous Hosseiny and Brian McKenna. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

butions of LCAs. It is the role of this small group in support of Canada's troops that has had such an impact on those same soldiers who now say they feel a sense of responsibility to ensure the LCAs have access to the support they need. Unfortunately, there is limited knowledge on their mental health status and support needs following their return home. In fact, no studies or data specifically on LCAs seem to exist. Instead, much of what we know about them comes from news stories and research on similar groups like contractors. Research on Canadian Armed Forces members tells us that the post-service transition period is critical, and may be when support needs are highest. This may also be the case for LCAs given similarities in their deployment experiences, making

this lack of knowledge especially problematic.

As a first step in building knowledge and improving understanding of this particular group, the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families has published a study on the experiences of former LCAs, guided by an advisory group. What emerged is a significant gap between what is available and what is needed, with many describing an absence of appropriate mental health and well-being supports despite a preponderance of lasting impacts.

Although veterans and their families have options available to them when they need support for injuries related to their service, it is less obvious where LCAs and their families can turn. Because LCAs are considered contractors, neither they nor their family members are eligible for mental health services

from Veterans Affairs Canada, unlike the soldiers they accompanied, or contractors or federal government employees who would have had their own coverage. In fact, LCAs are the only group who does not have a benefit package of some sort relative to their mental health injuries. Directed to go through their provincial workplace safety and insurance boards instead, the uniqueness of their situation means that some have experienced significant difficulties accessing services, or had their claims denied—a decision that remains under review in Ontario. The National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombud has raised the issue in recent months, and continues to keep it on the public radar.

Notably, in response to the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan in 2021, and resultant safety risks to the families of those who worked with international forces, the government recently announced a temporary policy change, extending permanent residency to family members of LCAs. This policy is similar to that for local interpreters introduced back in November 2021. Although also described by some as restrictive, this policy change is welcome recognition of the immense contributions, risks, and sacrifices made by LCAs, and prioritizes the safety of their families.

Nonetheless, there is more to be done to close these described gaps in awareness, knowledge, and action. This study represents a starting point. More work is needed to build on these findings,

and to better understand what LCAs have lived and are still living through.

One potential way forward that emerged through engagement related to this study is to bring the contributions of LCAs into public and political discourse, such as via media stories or education events. Another route focused on the provision of dedicated funding for more research on LCAs, which can then inform the design of policies or programs. Over time, this awareness and knowledge can transform into action—namely, the development of appropriate services—to ensure LCAs and their families get much needed access to mental health supports. Baseline awareness and understanding are crucial for meaningful action.

Afghanistan was not the first—and will certainly not be the last—mission in which LCAs have played an important role. For example, they also played a role in Bosnia and Iraq. It is important to take the right steps now to create a climate of understanding and respect for their contributions and needs, paving the way forward for LCAs and other civilian contractors sanctioned by the Government of Canada to receive the support they need, let alone deserve.

Fardous Hosseiny is the president and CEO of the Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families, and Brian McKenna, CD, is the institute's national strategic adviser for veterans.

The Hill Times

Comment

Assassination attempt underscores U.S. history of political violence

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Realism says the “reconstruction” of race-based attitudes and institutions—especially in the South—was bound to take three or four generations no matter who was president. Indeed, the job is still not finished.

Intuition says that the Second World War would not have happened if any of the nine alleged assassination plots against Adolf Hitler during the 1930s—mostly by Germans—had succeeded.

Realism says the extreme character of the peace treaty imposed on the losing powers after the First World War made the Second World War inevitable. If not Hitler,

then it would have been Heinrich Himmler or Joseph Goebbels or Hermann Goering. If not the Nazis, then some other far-right German group seeking revenge for the “unfairness” of history.

Intuition says the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968—just when he was looking likely to win the U.S. Democratic presidential nomination—was a tragedy that prolonged the Vietnam war, and opened the road to power for the criminal Richard Nixon.

Realism says that Kennedy might not have won the nomination, that if he had he might not have won the election, and if he had become president it would probably have taken him just as

long to find a face-saving way out of the Vietnam mess as it actually took Nixon. True, there would have been no Watergate scandal, but so what?

And what if the July 13 bullet had hit Trump about two fingers' width to the right, and blown his brains out? Half the U.S. population would be enraged, and the other half would be secretly relieved, but how much would really be changed?

The Republican Party in the U.S. would still be much farther to the right than it was 10 years ago, and it's sheer nonsense to believe that Trump was the sole cause for that slide into crude nationalism and populism.

Boris Johnson in Britain, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Marine Le Pen in France, Narendra Modi in India, and half a dozen other populist leaders have been peddling similar falsehoods to similar demographic groups in deniable partnership with the same neo-liberal financial interests for years. Trump is not unique, nor is he irreplaceable.

We are at what may be peak neo-liberalism right now. It began its rise with the elections of Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. in 1979, and Ronald Reagan in the U.S. in 1980, and for the next four-and-a-half decades, the gulf between the very rich and the rest grew steadily wider almost everywhere.

There was nobody to put the brakes on before this process triggered a big political backlash because the global rich are not that well organized. The victims were always free to vote against it, but mostly did not until the damage became too obvious to ignore. That is starting to happen now.

At this late stage in the cycle, the tactics of subtle misdirection must give way to the cruder distractions of nationalism and populism, and the Trumps and Johnsons of the world get their time on the stage. But they are stereotypes filling roles, not original thinkers with real plans.

As a number of people have pointed out, the graveyards are full of indispensable men.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World's Climate Engineers. Last year's book, The Shortest History of War, is also still available.

The Hill Times

GAC downgrades chief legal adviser role despite global focus on international law

The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee recommended in a 2023 report on foreign service modernization that GAC maintain its legal bureau, and that the legal adviser remain a senior official.

Continued from page 1

since 2017—announced his retirement from the foreign service.

Since the outbreak of war in Ukraine and in the Middle East, the Canadian government has reiterated its support for the “rules-based international order,” and its “unwavering” support for international law.

Ottawa is a plaintiff and defendant in three different cases in front of the International Court of Justice, and has been active as the International Criminal Court has sought justice for breaches of international law.

The 2013 Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Act, which sets out the legal responsibilities of GAC, includes a mandate for the minister to “foster the development of international law and its application in Canada’s external relations.”

GAC spokesperson Charlotte MacLeod confirmed that the legal adviser is now at the director general level in the international law bureau. She noted that the department is implementing a reorganization transformation that reduces the number of branches led by assistant deputy ministers from 17 to 11.

“The position of legal adviser has been at the director general level in the past, under various iterations of the organizational structure, including as recently as 2017. As has been the case, the legal adviser will continue to report directly to the deputy minister-level, to preserve the independent provision of international law advice,” MacLeod said, noting that the legal adviser will remain “an active participant in the senior governance structure of the department.”

She said that the department views the “independence and role” of the legal adviser in the senior government structure as meeting the “spirit” of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee’s recommendation.



Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly has proclaimed that Canada has ‘unwavering’ support for international law amid the outbreak of global conflicts. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Former Canadian ambassador John Holmes, who was a member of the foreign ministry’s legal bureau during his time in the diplomatic corps, said downgrading the legal adviser creates two issues for the role’s effectiveness and its credibility.

“A director general sits at the bigger, broader table with the deputies, has access to the minister, but not on a regular basis. An ADM has much more access to the deputies,” he said, remarking that it’s important to be in the room since so many issues that aren’t always evident emerge when discussing policy with the deputy minister and other ADMs.

Holmes said it was the legal bureau which provided the insight that strengthened the Canadian-made initiative against arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations, which was centred on consular affairs.

“If you don’t have the legal adviser there at the table intervening, sometimes you go off on some tangent, and you don’t have the right advice before you make the final decision,” he said.

He added that rank matters on the world stage, and having a less-senior legal adviser could mean that Canada will have fewer chances to chair meetings on international law in multilateral settings.

Holmes said that despite the

government’s rhetoric on the importance of international law, its actions are showing something much different.

“If you say you are going to be doing something, that you strongly believe this as a key element of your foreign policy, back it up [including] with resources, as well,” he said. “If you’re serious about it, and you want to ensure that Canada not only has a place at the table, but can [also] play a leadership role, then you have to back it up with level ... and resources.”

Holmes said it is questionable how much GAC is actually reducing its senior management cadre, despite the downgrading of the legal adviser.

“This is just shuffling the cards without reducing the size of the deck,” he said, remarking that it undermines why a decision was made to reduce the legal adviser role.

He said there is a concern that downgrading the job could lead to the department eliminating the legal bureau altogether down the road.

Holmes—along with six other former members of GAC’s legal bureau—prepared a brief for the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee as it was conducting its study on foreign service modernization in which they raised concerns about the future of the bureau within the department.

“Global Affairs Canada has in recent years been ambivalent about the place of its own legal within governmental legal services,” the brief reads. “The bureau’s role has been questioned by both GAC senior management and the Department of Justice.”

Former Canadian envoy Sabine Nölke, who co-authored the brief, told *The Hill Times* that there is “no strategic value” to the

decision to downgrade the legal adviser.

“I think this is purely cost driven because they needed to cut X number of ADM-level positions, and that was an easy one,” she said.

Nölke noted that, in the past, the legal bureau had been changed so it was co-located with the consular team, but each time that move was eventually reversed.

She said that the legal and consular bureaus are “too large” to operate as one.

“You can’t do either job properly, which is why [when it was merged] it was split up again,” she said.

She noted that the effect could be that the assistant deputy minister—who will now be responsible for consular, emergency management, and legal affairs—is someone with no legal background.

The current assistant deputy minister for consular affairs and emergency management is Julie Sunday, who does not have a legal background, but will soon be departing her role as she has been named Canada’s newest high commissioner to Australia.

Nölke said that Canada is the only G7 country that doesn’t have a lawyer or legal adviser at the senior official level.

“That’s a problem. Getting the credibility for the position; in diplomacy, level matters,” she said. “Seniority means you can get stuff done.”

Both Nölke and Holmes also said there is the added concern that with the reorganization, trade law will be divorced from the legal bureau, and repositioned into the trade policy office.

Independent Senator Peter Boehm (Ontario), who chairs the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, said he isn’t concerned that the legal adviser is being downgraded to a director general-level position since the main impetus behind the recommendation was to ensure that GAC would continue to have a legal bureau.

“The main concern was to keep the international legal functions within the department that cannot be really replicated ... that these should not be delineated to other departments,” said Boehm, a former international development deputy minister at GAC.

Boehm said he has had conversations with Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.), as well as her deputy minister David Morrison about the importance of keeping legal expertise in house.

He said the committee’s report included the recommendation to allow mid-level executives to take on more responsibility to foster greater motivation within the staff at GAC, while addressing senior official burnout.

Boehm also questioned if the downgrading of the legal adviser to a director general level would actually put it out of step with other G7 countries, remarking that comparisons on equivalencies with other foreign ministries cannot be easily drawn.

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The Hill Times



Global Affairs Canada, which is headquartered in the Pearson Building, will no longer have its top lawyer staffed by a senior official. *The Hill Times* file photograph



Neil Moss

Diplomatic Circles

‘We’re nowhere near overcoming’ climate change issues, says Jamaican envoy in wake of Hurricane Beryl

Plus, Danish Ambassador Hanne Fugl Eskjær ends her posting.

After Hurricane Beryl brought devastation to the Caribbean, leading to the death of four Jamaicans earlier this month, Jamaica’s top envoy in Canada says work cannot stop until the threat of climate change is toppled.

The hurricane was the earliest Category 5 storm in recorded history, gaining power from the Caribbean Sea that was four degrees warmer than normal.

Jamaican High Commissioner to Canada **Marsha Coore Lobban** praised Canada’s co-operation to combat climate change, but noted it cannot stop.

“Canada has been a partner, and we hope that we will continue to have that strong partnership and support from Canada continue because it’s clear we’re nowhere near overcoming these issues,” she said.

She said that Hurricane Beryl “underscores” the threat that the Caribbean faces, remarking that there has been recent movement and progress at multilateral forums.

“Are we comfortable? Are we to stop? No, it just underscores that we have to continue until we get to that 1.5 [degrees C] or start to see a turnaround,” she said.

After Hurricane Beryl levelled parts of the Caribbean, including Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, leaders took the initiative to double down on the need to confront climate change.

In a national address, Jamaican Prime Minister **Andrew Holness** emphasized the vulnerability nations like his face compared to its environmental impact.

“While our carbon emissions are miniscule, our region bears the brunt of the impacts of climate change. This hurricane further highlights the urgent need for global climate action and targeted support to enhance resilience against the escalating dangers of climate change,” he said on July 2.

For Jamaicans, Coore Lobban said hurricane season always brings a level of anxiety, with the hope that the island will be spared.

“For the last few years, outside of one or two systems coming up, the region has been relatively OK. But the reality when you see your home destroyed or the infrastructure, you would be hoping and praying, ‘Lord, please don’t let any more come around,’” she said.

She said that Jamaica is increasingly focused on building resilience in its infrastructure when rebuilding to guard against effects from hurricanes, which includes building highways away from the shoreline and buttressing roofs, so they don’t fly off when a hurricane hits.

The Jamaican envoy said the experience of Hurricane Gilbert is still fresh in her country’s mind.

“It really shook us, and made us understand because you sat, and you experience, and you watched the things flying across the sky,” she said. The 1988 hurricane caused the deaths of 45 Jamaicans, and led to \$700-million in damages.

Back then, it took weeks for power to be restored, but in the days that followed this month’s Hurricane Beryl, power came back for most of the 400,000 people that lost it.

Coore Lobban said the “strategic partnership” that was agreed to during the last Canada-CARICOM summit in October has brought “renewed efforts to engage at the highest levels.”

“Over the last year there has been so much impetus and so much momentum, and you feel it, you see it,” she added.

She said she is confident the momentum will continue, remarking that the Jamaican High Commission has engaged Canadian MPs and Senators so everyone is on the same page.

Danish envoy bids adieu after nearly six years

More than five years after first coming to Ottawa as Copenhagen’s top diplomat in Canada, **Hanne Fugl Eskjær** is departing the national capital.

“It is time to say goodbye after five wonderful years in Canada,” she said in a video posted by the Danish Embassy on X, sharing a series of photos from her time as ambassador.

A number of high-profile guests were on hand for Denmark’s recent Constitution Day celebrations on June 5 to mark her coming farewell, including Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly**, International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**, Independent Senator **Peter Boehm**, and former cabinet minister and now-Canadian Ambassador to Denmark **Carolyn Bennett**.

Former Conservative leader **Erin O’Toole** applauded Eskjær’s efforts while ambassador, including “resolving the Whiskey War.” In 2022, Canada and Denmark settled a long-standing border dispute over a small, barren island located in a channel between Ellesmere Island and Greenland. Throughout the conflict, each side planted their respective flags on the island and left a bottle of liquor—Canadians left behind whisky, while the Danes dropped off schnapps.

Eskjær said that she will be moving with her family to Paris.

In other diplomatic news, **Christopher Duggan** was appointed as Canada’s newest ambassador, being named envoy to Kazakhstan on July 10. Holding foreign posting experience in Jamaica, Nigeria, and Romania, he is an alum of the Privy Council Office as well as recently finishing an assignment as a director general in the Department of National Defence.

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The Hill Times

Guyana throws NAC party

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



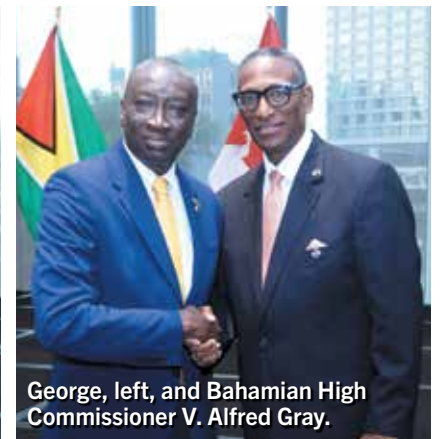
Guyanese High Commissioner Keith George makes a toast at his country’s 58th independence anniversary party at the NAC on June 4.



Liberal MP Alexandra Mendès, left, George, and his spouse Anita Kapildeo.



Guyanese dancers Maresha Arthur, Tevona Cole, and Soprano Hendricks entertained the crowd.



George, left, and Bahamian High Commissioner V. Alfred Gray.



The Kunjaz Steel Ensemble from Guyana performs.

Israel marks independence



Israeli singer Gilad Segev entertained guests at Israel’s 76th independence day reception at the Sir John A. Macdonald building on May 23.



Israeli Ambassador Iddo Moed, left, Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly, and the ambassador’s wife Betty Bat Sheva Oz Moed.



Casey Babb, Macdonald-Laurier Institute senior fellow, left; Liberal MP Anthony Housefather; Moed; and Alex Wilner, associate professor at Carleton University’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs.



United Kingdom High Commissioner Susannai Goshko, right, and Moed.



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

New roles abound in Housing Minister Fraser's office

Changes include Dalton Wakely's promotion to operations and planning director, replacing Sebastian Clarke, who's now director of intergovernmental affairs and external relations.

More than a handful of staff have stepped into new roles in Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Minister **Sean Fraser's** office in recent months.

Most recently, in June, regional affairs adviser for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area **Josh Mbandi** was made a policy adviser. **Zoe Romeo**, legislative assistant and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, has since replaced him as the minister's GTHA adviser, and will also continue as the parliamentary secretary's assistant (PSA).



Zoe Romeo is now regional affairs adviser for the GTHA and assistant to Minister Fraser's parliamentary secretary. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Mbandi is a former constituency assistant to now-International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**, and an ex-Hill assistant to then-Liberal MP **Han Dong** (who now sits as an Independent). He's been working for the federal housing minister since being hired as an Ontario regional affairs adviser to then-minister Hussen in June 2023, the month before the cabinet shuffle that saw Fraser moved into the portfolio.

Outside of federal politics, Mbandi is also a past assistant to then-Toronto city councillor **Ana Bailão**, and while in university, he worked brief stints as a junior policy analyst and contracting officer with Employment and Social Development Canada, and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, respectively.

Romeo has been working for Fraser since October 2023; originally hired as legislative assistant, she quickly took on the added title of PSA. A 2021 Equal Voice



Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Minister Sean Fraser speaks with reporters before a Liberal caucus meeting in the West Block on May 1. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Daughters of the Vote delegate, Romeo is a former assistant to then-Liberal MP **Deb Schulte**, as well as Ontario Liberal MPs **Francesco Sorbara** and **Tony Van Bynen**.

In April, four staff were promoted in Fraser's office, including policy adviser **Michael Kurliak**, who added "senior" to his title.

Kurliak has been with Fraser since his time as immigration minister, and was first hired as a policy adviser in June 2022, a role in which he continued after following Fraser to the housing portfolio post-shuffle last summer. Kurliak is also a former assistant to now-Citizens' Services Minister **Terry Beech** as the MP for Burnaby North-Seymour, B.C., and has previously interned at the British Columbia Legislative Assembly.



Michael Kurliak is now a senior policy adviser to Minister Fraser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Atlantic regional affairs adviser **Natasha Kochhar** has been given the added role of appointments adviser to Fraser. She was first hired to the housing team in October 2023 while still teaching part time as a sessional instructor at Cape Breton University in Nova Scotia, where she previously earned a master of business administration degree. Kochhar previously spent close to four years as an assistant to Cape Breton-Canso, N.S., Liberal MP **Mike**

Kelloway. Her CV also includes time spent as a member relations and communications co-ordinator with the Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce, and as a communications and events assistant with the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation, among other things.

Alexander Derickx, who's been driving the minister around since August 2023, was promoted to special assistant in April. As such, he continues to serve as ministerial driver.

Also that month, executive assistant **Linda Hooper** was made a senior operations adviser. Hooper's been working for Fraser since shortly after the July 2023 shuffle. Over her years on the Hill, she's also been executive assistant to then-Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario minister **Helena Jaczek** and her chief of staff, to then-veteran affairs minister **Lawrence MacAulay**, and to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**, as well as manager of finance and administration in the Liberal research bureau, and assistant to Liberal MP **David McGuinty** and to then-Liberal MP **Borys Wrzesnewskyj**.

A month earlier, Fraser tweaked his senior staff lineup, giving operations and planning director **Sebastian Clarke** the new title of director of intergovernmental affairs and external relations.

Clarke has been working for Liberal ministers since 2017, starting as a special assistant to Hussen as then-immigration minister. He's since been an Ontario regional affairs adviser to both Hussen and his portfolio predecessor, then-immigration minister **Marco Mendicino**, who later promoted Clarke to the titles of policy adviser, and then senior policy adviser. Clarke stayed on after Fraser took over the immigration portfolio following the 2021 election, and was elevated to director of



Josh Mbandi, left, and Sebastian Clarke in Minister Fraser's Laurier Avenue office on Feb. 2. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

operations in January 2023—a role he kept when he followed Fraser to the housing and infrastructure file later that year.

Senior adviser for projects and planning **Dalton Wakely** was subsequently promoted to replace Clarke as director of operations and planning.

Wakely joined Fraser's team in September 2023 after roughly two-and-a-half years working for now-Treasury Board President **Anita Anand**. First hired as an Atlantic regional affairs adviser to Anand as then-public services and procurement minister at the start of 2021, Wakely followed his boss to the national defence portfolio to do the same after that year's post-election cabinet shuffle, and in time worked his way up to senior operations adviser.



Dalton Wakely is now director of operations and planning to Minister Fraser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

A former assistant to then-Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Rodger Cuzner**, off the Hill, Wakely has previously done contract work as a policy analyst and government relations adviser with the National Electrical Trade Council. While working towards a master's degree in management at Université Grenoble Alpes in France, he worked on contract as a policy and planning adviser with the office of the president of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's development assistance committee, and also did a co-op placement as a junior policy officer with the British Embassy in Paris, France.

Savannah DeWolfe is chief of staff to Fraser, whose 21-member office currently also includes: **Kyle Fox**, director of policy; **Micah Richardson**, deputy director of housing policy; **Matthew Paisley**, senior policy adviser; **Alexann Kropman**, director of parliamentary affairs and issues management; **Kevin Collins**, issues manager and senior parliamentary affairs adviser; **Liam MacKinnon**, senior Quebec regional affairs adviser; **Lindsay Basinger**, Ontario regional affairs adviser; **Aman Parmar**, regional adviser for B.C., the Prairies, and the North; **Matthew Dillon**, director of communications; **Micaal Ahmed**, communications manager; **Camellia Celestino**, digital communications adviser; and **Justin Manoni-Millar**, lead creative media adviser.

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Feature

Parliamentary Calendar

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

Trade Minister Ng wraps up G7 meeting in Italy on July 17



International Trade Minister Mary Ng will conclude her participation in the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Trade in Villa San Giovanni and Reggio Calabria, Italy, on Wednesday, July 17. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

MONDAY, JULY 15—WEDNESDAY, JULY 17
Council of the Federation's Summer Meeting—Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston, chair of the Council of the Federation, will host the 2024 Summer Meeting of Canada's Premiers from Monday, July 15, to Wednesday, July 17, at the Westin Nova Scotian in Halifax, N.S.

TUESDAY, JULY 16—WEDNESDAY, JULY 17
Minister Ng in Italy for G7 Ministerial—International Trade Minister Mary Ng will participate in the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Trade in Villa San Giovanni and Reggio Calabria, Italy, from Tuesday, July 16, to Wednesday, July 17.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17
House Not Sitting—The House is on its summer break. It resumes sitting on Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but will take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18 to Dec. 17.

Webinar: 'Can Real Estate Conversion Help Boost Housing Supply?'—Former Toronto deputy mayor

Ana Bailão from Dream and Gensler's Steven Paynter will join StrategyCorp panellists in a live webinar on how building conversion works, what needs to happen for these projects to successfully move forward, and their thoughts on how the three levels of government can help. Wednesday, July 17, at 10 a.m. ET. Register at tinyurl.com/4773pyp3.

THURSDAY, JULY 18—SATURDAY, JULY 20
The Chef's Table with Global Affairs' Executive Chef—Chef Pascal Ménard, the executive chef for Global Affairs Canada and Rideau Gate, will take part in The Chef's Table, a farm-to-table feast with menus curated by Canadian chefs and musical entertainment, presented by the Ontario Festival of Small Halls, and the National Arts Centre's Resident Chefs Program. Thursday, July 18, to Saturday, July 20, at 1 Elgin Restaurant, National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details online: ontariosmallhalls.com.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24
Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate and publish the *Monetary Policy Report*. Wednesday, July 24, at 10 a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

FRIDAY, JULY 26—SUNDAY, AUG. 11
Summer Olympics—Cheer for Team Canada as they take part in the XXXIII Olympic Summer Games. Friday, July 26, to Sunday, Aug. 11, in Paris, France. Details: olympics.com.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 7
Royal St. John's Regatta—Keep an eye out for federal politicians at the annual Royal St. John's Regatta. Wednesday, Aug. 7, in St. John's, N.L. Details: stjohnsregatta.ca.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20
Senator Jaffer's Retirement—Today is British Columbia ISG Senator Mobina Jaffer's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4
Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate. Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 10 a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—TUESDAY, SEPT. 24
UN General Assembly—The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly opens today with a high-level

General Debate. Tuesday, Sept. 24, to Tuesday, Sept. 24, in New York City.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12
Privy Council Clerk Hannaford to Deliver Remarks—John Hannaford, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, will deliver remarks at a roundtable lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Sept. 12, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details online: cdhowe.org.

MONDAY, SEPT. 16
House Resumes Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 16.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23
Space Canada's Annual Parliamentary Reception—Brian Gallant invites you to Space Canada's third Annual Parliamentary Reception featuring networking with leaders of Canada's emerging space ecosystem, food and drinks, several space-related interactive displays, and a special guest speaker. Monday, Sept. 23, 5-7 p.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Details and RSVP to: RSVP@space-canada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24
Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a virtual event, "The Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide." Participants include Ian Scott, former CRTC chair; Bill Murdoch, executive director of Clear Sky Connections; and Elisha Ram, senior assistant deputy minister at Employment and Social Development Canada's Income Security and Social Development Branch. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at a time to be confirmed. Details online: irpp.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25
CUTA 2024 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2024 Policy Forum in Ottawa. Some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts will discuss the industry's future and the role of federal public transit policy. This year's event will focus on affordability, regional coordination and integration, and transit's role in addressing Canada's productivity gap. Wednesday, Sept. 25 at the Hilton Garden Inn Ottawa Downtown, 361 Queen St. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—The fourth annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, is today, honouring the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities.

FRIDAY, OCT. 4—SATURDAY, OCT. 5
The Francophonie Summit—The Francophonie Summit will take place on Friday, Oct. 4, to Saturday, Oct. 5, in Villers-Cotterêts and Paris, France. Details: francophonie.org.

SUNDAY, OCT. 6—FRIDAY, OCT. 11
ASEAN Summit—The ASEAN Summit will take place in Vientiane, Laos, from Sunday, Oct. 6, to Friday, Oct. 11.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 9
Annual Bill Graham Lecture and Dinner—Louise Blais will moderate a discussion featuring former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien and former Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo during the second annual Bill Graham Lecture on International Affairs. Wednesday, Oct. 9 at 6 p.m. at Arcadian Court, 400 Bay St., Toronto. Details online: thecic.org.

THURSDAY, OCT. 10
Frank McKenna Awards 2024—The Public Policy Forum hosts the "Frank

McKenna Awards 2024: An evening celebrating outstanding public policy leadership in Atlantic Canada." Honourees to be announced. Thursday, Oct. 10, at 5 p.m. AT at Pier 21, 1055 Marginal Rd., Halifax. Details online: ppforum.ca.

SUNDAY, OCT. 13
Senator Bellemare's Retirement—Today is Quebec PSG Senator Diane Bellemare's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

SATURDAY, OCT. 19
B.C. Election—Voters in British Columbia head to the polls today for the provincial general election.

MONDAY, OCT. 21
New Brunswick Election—It's general election time in New Brunswick, with the province's residents voting for their next members of the Legislative Assembly.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—SATURDAY, OCT. 26
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting—The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting will take place in Apia, Samoa, from Monday, Oct. 21 to Saturday, Oct. 26. Details online: samoachogm2024.ws.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—FRIDAY, NOV. 1
COP16 Conference on Biodiversity—The COP16 Conference on Biodiversity will take place from Monday, Oct. 21, to Friday, Nov. 1, in Cali, Colombia. Details online: cbd.int.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 23
Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate and publish the *Monetary Policy Report*. Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 10a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—SATURDAY, OCT. 26
IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings—The 2024 annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will take place in Washington, D.C., from Monday, Oct. 21, to Saturday, Oct. 26. Details: worldbank.org.

MONDAY, OCT. 28
Saskatchewan Election—Voters in Saskatchewan head to the polls today for the provincial general election.

TUESDAY, OCT. 29—THURSDAY, OCT. 31
CAEH24: The National Conference on Ending Homelessness—The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness will host its 11th annual Conference on Ending Homelessness in Ottawa from Tuesday, Oct. 29 to Thursday, Oct. 31. Registration is open. Details online: caeh.ca.

TUESDAY, NOV. 5
Senator Omidvar's Retirement—Today is Ontario ISG Senator Ratna Omidvar's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

U.S. Presidential Election—The U.S. presidential election happens on Tuesday, Nov. 5. U.S. President Joe Biden and Republican candidate Donald Trump, who lost the last election, will likely face off against each other in the election happening Tuesday, Nov. 5. It will be the first rematch in a U.S. presidential election in 70 years.

TUESDAY, DEC. 31
Foreign Interference Commission Reports—The Foreign Interference Commission's final report will be released on Tuesday, Dec. 31. For more information, check out foreigninterferencecommission.ca.

