

House
Speaker's
race



THE Hill Times

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mistakes

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Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured on May 20, 2025, on his way to a cabinet meeting at Meech Lake. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Throne Speech's location and furniture will be unique to King Charles



Now those are chairs fit for a King and Queen: The monarch's throne, left, and companion consort's throne are bespoke to the temporary Senate building. Photographs courtesy of the Senate of Canada, *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia, and illustration by Neena Singhal

Much has been made of who will be delivering the Throne Speech on May 27—**King Charles III**, in a rare reading by the monarch himself—but two key things will make this speech unique from the last one his mother **Queen Elizabeth II** gave in 1977: the building and the furniture.

This will be the first time Canada's monarch has read a Throne Speech at the Senate's current digs in Ottawa's former train station, the Senate's media relations team told **Heard on the Hill** recently. The Red Chamber relocated there in February 2019 as its temporary home during the

decade-long renovations taking place in Parliament's Centre Block. Since then, the Beaux-Arts-style building has hosted two Throne Speeches: one by then-governor general **Julie Payette** in 2019, and then by Governor General **Mary Simon** in 2021.

And the actual thrones that Charles and **Queen Camilla** will sit on are different from the one Elizabeth sat on, too. That white-oak throne, originally made in 1878 in a medieval design, is—like the rest of Parliament—undergoing “much-needed conservation treatment” according to the Senate's website. Two new thrones

of walnut wood were designed by then-dominion sculptor **Phil White** explicitly for the temporary Senate building, and were crafted by craftspeople from Quebec and Ontario in 2017.

The design of the monarch's throne, the smaller consort's throne, and the third piece in the suite, the Speaker's chair—which is removed ahead of the Throne Speech—are inspired by the 1920's-era building itself and feature sprays of maple leaves, as well as the cypher of Queen Elizabeth II and the lion crest from the Coat of Arms of Canada.

Ian Brodie now at New West Public Affairs

Ian Brodie, a former chief of staff to then-prime minister **Stephen Harper** and ex-executive director of the federal Conservative Party, has joined Calgary-based New West Public Affairs.

“There's no rest this summer for the public affairs teams,” Brodie told *The Lobby Monitor's* **Hunter Cresswell** in a May 15 phone interview. “In most normal cycles, clients would spend some time over the summer getting to know the new players...and look ahead to an active fall of trying to advance files,” said Brodie.

“But this time, because of the urgency of dealing with the Trump administration, I think the whole process of getting up to speed with the new government and then feeling your way through how to advance issues is now moving at light speed instead of at centipede speed.”

Brodie's position at New West is part-time, as he is also a professor of political science at the University of Calgary and an adviser at the U.S.-based procurement technology company, EdgeworthBox Inc.



Ian Brodie has joined New West Public Affairs as a part-time senior adviser. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

U15 taps Robert Asselin as new CEO

“I'm honoured to be stepping into the role of chief executive officer of the U15 – the organization representing Canada's leading research-intensive universities,” **Robert Asselin** announced on social media last week.

Currently the Business Council of Canada's senior

vice-president of policy, Asselin has over a decade of experience advising the highest levels of government, including as policy and budget director to then-finance minister **Bill Morneau**. Asselin will take over from Dr. **Chad Gaffield** on June 9, 2025.



Robert Asselin is U15's new CEO. Photograph courtesy of Robert Asselin

Pearson Centre names new board members

An ex-Liberal staffer, a First Nations chief, and a former prime minister's grandson are among the new members of the Pearson Centre's Board of Directors, the non-partisan think tank announced on May 20.

Now based in Vancouver with Wellington Advocacy, **Zita Astravas** served in a number of senior leadership roles in the government of then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**, including in his PMO. She's also worked for then-Ontario Liberal premier **Kathleen Wynne**.

Chief **Jeffrey Copenace** is Anishinaabe from the Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation in Treaty #3 Territory in northwestern Ontario. A former adviser to then-PM **Paul Martin**, Copenace has also worked as deputy chief of staff to then-AFN national chief **Shawn Atleo**, and also for



Former Liberal PMO staffer Zita Astravas has joined the Pearson Centre's board of directors. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

then-Indigenous Services minister **Jane Philpott**. He was elected chief in 2021.

Former public servant **Michael Pearson** is the grandson of former prime minister **Lester B. Pearson**. Based in Ottawa, “Michael is a respected contributor to non-partisan public policy discussion in Canada and a soon-to-be-published author,” reads the press release.

Other new board members include **Kate Dalgleish**, director of Public Affairs at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; **Michael Hatch**, vice-president of Government Relations at the Canadian Credit Union Association; and **Donald Abelson**, author and professor of Canada-U.S. Relations, at McMaster University's Faculty of Political Science.

Marland, Wesley publish update to 2019 book

“It's kinda neat to see a book hot off the press,” posted Acadia University professor **Alex Marland** on LinkedIn recently in response to publication of *The Public Servant's Guide to Government in Canada, 2nd edition* the latest book he co-authored with University of Alberta prof **Jared J. Wesley**.

Published by University of Toronto Press, this five-chapter, 128-page paperback is an update of the original 2019 book by the same authors. “Written for university students, early-career public servants, and those shifting into government from other sectors, the book demystifies spaces between politics and public administration,” reads the publisher's blurb.

This is just the first of two books Marland and Wesley are collaborating on this year. Expected in October, the two academics will add *l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*



The Public Servant's Guide to Government in Canada is published by University of Toronto Press. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

researcher **Mireille Lalancette** to the joint byline of *No I in Team: Party Loyalty in Canadian Politics*, also published by UTP.

CBC's Panetta hits pause on journalism

Washington, D.C.-based CBCNN correspondent **Alexander Panetta** announced his latest assignment: diplomatic spouse and master's student.

“I'm taking a two-year break from daily journalism, and a break from Washington, D.C.,” he posted on X on May 21. “Initial cause: A meaningful and exciting diplomatic assignment for my wife in Ankara, Turkey.”



Alexander Panetta is joining his wife for a two-year posting in Ankara. Photograph courtesy of X

Panetta noted he will be pursuing a master's degree online “in a field I expect to write about for years to come. Artificial Intelligence policy.” Formerly with The Canadian Press and Politico, Panetta has been with the CBC in D.C. since 2019. He will leave for Ankara next month.

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Westinghouse Congratulates Canada's New Government and Commits to Supporting the Energy Transition

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NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Top 10 most influential Liberals in Carney government

Gerald Butts and David Lametti hold no official roles in the Liberal government, but Prime Minister Mark Carney regularly seeks their advice on key political matters, say Liberal sources.

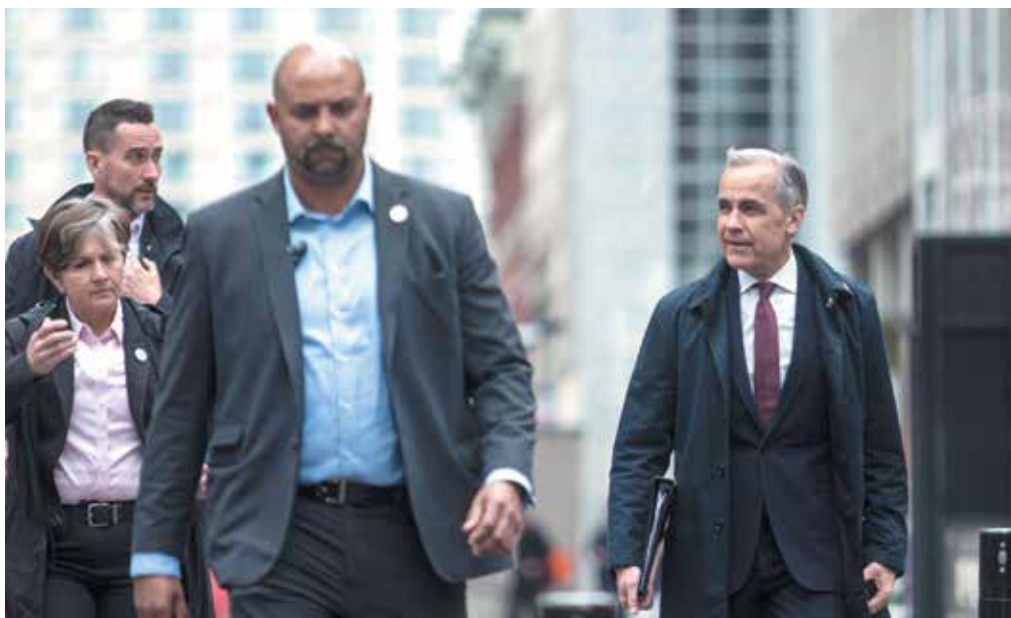
BY ABBAS RANA

The federal Liberals owe their surprising comeback to Mark Carney who officially entered in the political arena just five months ago. A former central banker who led both the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, Carney emerged as a compelling figure during the Liberal leadership campaign, particularly amid rising tensions from the trade war with the United States. Many Canadians believed Carney's financial background uniquely positioned him to handle the sensitive and complex trade issues and U.S. President Donald Trump's threats to annex Canada. Given that Canada and the U.S. exchange \$1-trillion in goods and services every year, and more than a million jobs depend on this relationship, the stakes are high.

Now, as a prime minister with no prior political experience, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) will need a capable team of advisers and cabinet ministers to manage the trade conflict and tackle the cost-of-living crisis—a key issue that helped push Justin Trudeau out of the Prime Minister's Office. These two policy fronts will define the success or failure of the Carney government.

Until this past January, the Conservatives were widely projected to win a historic majority with over 200 seats. At the time, the Liberals were bracing for a possible third- or even fourth-place finish in the 2025 election. However, the political landscape shifted dramatically following Trudeau's resignation and Carney's entry into the Liberal leadership race. The Liberals gained early momentum during the first three weeks of the campaign, but lost steam in the final stretch as the Conservatives surged, largely driven by voter concerns over the cost of living.

In the end, the Liberals edged out a narrow victory in the popular vote—43.7 per cent to the Conservatives' 41.3 per cent. Even now, both parties are tied in a statistical dead heat. A Nanos Research poll released last week stated that the Liberals were at 41.4 per cent, the Conservatives at 39.6 per cent, the NDP at 8.5 per cent, the Bloc Québécois at 4.7 per cent, and the Greens at 3.9 per cent.



Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, is the most influential figure in the new Liberal government. His leadership will be judged largely by how effectively he tackles the two issues foremost on Canadians' minds: Canada-U.S. trade relations and the rising cost of living. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

François-Philippe Champagne Finance Minister



After Prime Minister Carney, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne holds the second-most

influential position in the government. As U.S. tariffs and the cost of living remain pressing issues, Champagne is expected to play a pivotal role in addressing these issues. A prominent Quebec Liberal, Champagne was once considered a potential successor to Trudeau, but opted not to enter the leadership race, choosing instead to concentrate on his duties as industry minister during the escalating trade tensions sparked by Trump's return to the White House following the November presidential election.

One challenge Champagne faces is working under a prime minister with deep financial expertise. Political insiders expect Carney to scrutinize all major economic decisions. Champagne is set to deliver his first federal budget this fall, which will be closely watched.

Dominic LeBlanc Canada-U.S. Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister

An impressive bilingual communicator, Dominic LeBlanc is tasked with managing Canada-U.S. trade—an



assignment that revitalized the Liberals' prospects during the election campaign. He has been in regular contact with senior Trump officials, and was previously known as the Trudeau government's crisis fixer. First elected in 2000, LeBlanc has been re-elected in all subsequent federal elections and

has held a number of senior Cabinet portfolios, including finance, government House leader, public safety, and fisheries.

Tom Pitfield Principal Secretary



Tom Pitfield, Carney's principal secretary, is a veteran Liberal strategist and CEO of Data Sciences, the

firm behind Liberalist, the party's voter outreach tool. A lifelong friend of Justin Trudeau, Pitfield faced allegations from the Chrystia Freeland campaign during the recent Liberal leadership race for allegedly aiding Carney while working as a party contractor. He served as the party's executive campaign director and chief strategist in the last federal election.

The son of Michael Pitfield—a former clerk of the Privy Council and Senator—Tom's long-term role in the Carney government remains uncertain, as he may eventually return to his private business. However, even if he steps away from his official post, Pitfield is expected to remain a key behind-the-scenes unofficial adviser. Should he depart, his successor will inherit a highly influential role with direct access to the prime minister, making the position critical to the inner workings of Carney's team.

Anna Gainey Minister for Children and Youth

Anna Gainey, the former Liberal Party president and current MP for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, is the minister of State for Children and Youth. She is married to Tom Pitfield and is



the daughter of Montreal Canadiens legend Bob Gainey. Both she and Pitfield are key members of Carney's inner circle.

Anita Anand Foreign Affairs Minister

Anita Anand, a former law professor and an expert on governance, brings extensive academic, corporate and



legal experience to the Foreign Affairs portfolio, and is expected to play a crucial role in navigating Canada-U.S. relations. She has previously served in major cabinet roles, including Treasury Board, defence, and procurement. The Canada-U.S. file will be a real test, and it remains to be seen how she delivers on this tricky file.

Tim Hodgson Minister of Energy



Tim Hodgson, a former Goldman Sachs investment banker, Bank of Canada executive, and past chair of Hydro One, is a trusted confidante of Prime Minister Carney, and has been appointed to oversee the energy portfolio—an area central to both interprovincial relations and Canada-U.S. ties. Renowned for his operational acumen, Hodgson is expected to wield significant influence over this complex and politically sensitive file.

Marco Mendicino PMO Chief of Staff

Marco Mendicino, a former three-term MP and cabinet minister, currently serves as chief of staff to Prime Minister Carney—one of the most influential roles in Ottawa. In

this position, he manages access to the prime minister, oversees scheduling, and collaborates closely with the clerk of the Privy Council on key government files. Although Mendicino did not run in the most recent election, he supported Carney's leadership campaign and joined the PMO in March following Carney's victory. Carney announced in a May 22 social media post that he had asked Mendicino to remain in the role until the House adjourns for the summer, and Mendicino agreed to stay on.

Whoever succeeds Mendicino after the summer is expected to hold a similarly influential role within the current government, wielding the same level of access and authority as the current chief of staff.

Gerald Butts Former PMO principal secretary

Gerald Butts became known nationally in 2015 after he played a key role in then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's



election win. A wily strategist, Butts served as principal secretary in Trudeau's PMO, but left after the SNC-Lavalin controversy in 2019. He's a close friend and informal adviser to Carney. Even before the start of the Liberal leadership that the prime minister won handily, Butts—who now works for the Eurasia Group—had been advising Carney on strategy. Even though he's not officially part of the Carney government, Butts is still an influential player who has direct access to Carney.

David Lametti Informal Adviser



Former justice minister David Lametti, a longtime friend of Carney's from their days at Oxford University, played a key role in Carney's leadership campaign and later transition to government. A respected legal scholar, Lametti helped to vet cabinet appointments and remains a trusted adviser. Although he left Parliament in January 2024, insiders predict that he could take on an important role in the new administration.

Liberal Caucus

An unhappy Liberal caucus played a major role in ousting Trudeau, whose declining popularity and poor caucus management alienated many MPs. While Carney's leadership has brought renewed energy, his May 13 cabinet announcement left numerous backbenchers frustrated. Managing expectations and maintaining cohesion among the 170-member caucus will be one of Carney's biggest political tests moving forward.

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NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Middle-class tax cut and trade barriers to form top priorities in early Carney government

Prime Minister Mark Carney set a goal of removing federal barriers to internal trade by July 1, along with implementing a middle-class tax cut that he said would save two-income families up to \$825 a year.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Prime Minister Mark Carney's minority government will be under time pressure to follow through quickly on a middle-class tax cut and addressing inter-provincial trade in the coming weeks, and over the longer-term may focus on a narrow range of priorities in a shift towards a "mission government," according to politicians.

"I see the internal trade barriers and middle-class tax cut as being the most urgent legislative priorities ... and I don't anticipate that the government will have any trouble ensuring passage of those initiatives, which I would expect the Conservative Party to support," said Andrew Perez, a Liberal strategist who is also the founding principal of Perez Strategies.

"Looking to the fall and this government's duration, the priorities will be ... forging a new economic, new trading and security relationship with the United States, tackling the affordability crisis, removing the GST for first-time home buyers purchasing homes that are less than a million dollars building large scale infrastructure projects that are of national interest, like west-east pipelines."

Carney (Nepean, Ont.) laid out priorities for his government during a news conference on May 2, which he said would be "embarking on the biggest transformation of the economy since the Second World War."

He reiterated comments he's previously made that this country's old relationship with the U.S. was over, adding that he would fight for Canada to get the best deal, while also strengthening relationships with reliable trading partners and allies.

"Canada has what the world needs and we uphold the values the world respects," said Carney on May 2. "We will reinforce our strength here at home by building



Prime Minister Mark Carney laid out priorities for his government during a news conference on May 2, which included 'embarking on the biggest transformation of the economy since the Second World War.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

an economy that creates jobs, grows incomes, and withstands shocks."

During the news conference, Carney also set a goal of removing federal barriers to internal trade by July 1, along with implementing a middle-class tax cut that he said would save two-income families up to \$825 a year.

Perez told *The Hill Times* that, while he doesn't think a government should be run like a corporation, he does think that Carney will be running his government "along the lines of a board of directors."

"I think the mission-oriented government is an attempt to bring that results-oriented approach, which is more of a corporate approach," said Perez. "Carney's spoken about bringing back cabinet government, whereby ministers actually have spheres of influence—are able to drive agendas themselves."

A mission government model employs a narrow focus on a small set of national priorities and builds clear accountability for achieving them. Perez argued a Carney mission government could focus on priorities including affordability, addressing crime, and building large-scale infrastructure projects.

In contrast, the previous Liberal government under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau employed a "deliverology" approach, which involves identifying a broader range of government priorities, tracking progress, and holding ministers and departments to account.

"Ultimately what happened is, as the government went on and won subsequent terms, they were weighted down by hundreds and hundreds of commitments that they had made, and invariably, the public service became overwhelmed," said Perez. "Many public servants were weighted down by this, and I don't think there was enough leadership and

enough of a focus on delivering results, and who is accountable for those results."

Yaroslav Baran, co-founder of Pendulum Group, an ex-Conservative Hill staffer and a former Conservative Party campaign communications director during Pierre Poilievre's leadership campaign, told *The Hill Times* that the Liberal government's "No. 1, absolute must do" is to pass the supply bills because the governor general's special warrants, which allow for funding to departments and agencies so that the normal government operations can continue following the dissolution of Parliament, may only be issued up to 60 days following the date fixed for the return of the writs after a general election.

"They need to pass supply ... otherwise, no money for salaries for public servants ... [and] no money to keep the lights on in departmental buildings," said Baran.

Other priorities for the Carney government will include introducing legislation to help workers affected by the trade war with the U.S., said Baran.

"I would not be surprised if they introduce legislation on this unless they determine that, in the near term, legislation isn't actually required—that they can create easier access to programming ... without legislation. But if legislation is required, then that would probably be the third of three priority bills," he said.

Carney said he intends to "protect the programs that save families thousands of dollars a year," which includes pharmacare and \$10-a-day daycare. He also promised to expand Canadian Dental Care to eight million Canadians.

In terms of housing, Carney promised to lower costs for first-time home buyers by cutting GST on new homes at or under \$1-million, and to lower the GST on homes between \$1-million

and \$1.5-million. He promised to unleash "the power of public-private cooperation at a scale not seen in generations," and slash development charges in half for all multiunit housing.

Leah Young, a Bluesky Strategy Group consultant with a Conservative background, told *The Hill Times* that Carney's agenda is ambitious, but "the concern is in execution."

"His housing strategy relies heavily on federal intervention, which may not address the real barriers, like zoning and municipal red tape. His decision to replace a carbon tax with other incentive-based programs is bold, but we'll need to see if those tools deliver results," she said. "He also delayed the federal budget, which raises questions of the government's readiness."

Carney announced on May 18 that the federal government will present a budget in the fall, arguing there was "not much value in trying to rush through a budget in a very narrow window—three weeks — with a new cabinet."

Young argued that delaying the budget and having a smaller cabinet compared to Trudeau suggests Carney could be more concerned with managing optics than delivering immediate solutions.

"This cabinet has more of a corporate tone, with several Bay Street figures in key positions," said Young.

Kait LaForce, a senior consultant at Summa Strategies and a Liberal strategist who previously worked with the party's research bureau, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on May 21 that it's evident that Carney's legislative priorities will centre around restoring economic confidence, driving green industrial policy, and accelerating Canada's productivity and competitiveness.

"Carney's team is tightly aligned and focused on the early goals that they have committed to, which are movement on inter-

provincial trade barriers and middle-class tax relief," said LaForce in the email. "On interprovincial trade barriers, I think the fact that Carney named it as a short-term priority in his first press conference shows he's serious about modernizing how Canada's economy functions internally and not just at the federal level."

Carney promised to build a stronger Canadian Armed Forces, to strengthen border security with a thousand more Canada Border Services Agency officers, to hire at least 1,000 more RCMP officers and give law enforcement "more tools to fight crime."

Other priorities Carney outlined include a promise to return immigration to sustainable levels by capping the total number of temporary workers and international students at less than five per cent of Canada's population by the end of 2027. Carney also stated that the government's operating budget has been growing by an unsustainable nine per cent every year, which he proposed to bring down to two per cent.

"We will not cut any transfers to provinces, territories, or individuals. Instead, we'll balance our operating budget over the next three years by cutting waste, capping the public service, ending duplicative programs and deploying technology to boost public sector productivity. We will use scarce taxpayer dollars to catalyze massive private investment," he said.

Tom Parkin, a principal at Impact Strategies and an NDP strategist, told *The Hill Times* that Carney's government is also facing a big problem regarding complaints from Alberta, and on the assessment of pipelines legislation.

Bill C-69, formally known as the Impact Assessment Act and Canadian Energy Regulator Act, has been a contentious bill since it passed in 2019. The act grants the federal government authority to consider how climate change might be affected by proposed natural resource projects when undergoing federal approvals, although critics have nicknamed the legislation the "No More Pipelines Act," arguing it would damage the energy sector by delaying major construction projects.

Carney made it clear on April 1 that the Liberals have no plans to repeal that law.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith released a list of nine demands on March 20, 2025, which she said were for the next prime minister to address within the first six months of their term in order to avoid "an unprecedented national unity crisis."

These demands included repealing Bill C-69, scrapping the Clean Electricity Regulations, and guaranteeing Alberta "full access to unfettered oil and gas corridors to the north, east, and west."

"I think Carney's going to want to, at least, seem to make some changes to [Bill C-69], [or] to make some sort of overtures, or to take away some cards that Danielle Smith can play," said Parkin.

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THE CANADIAN VAPING
ASSOCIATION



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CANADIENNE DE LA VAPE

Ignoring the Legal and Regulated Vaping Industry Only Fuels the Black Market. **This Must Be Fixed.**

Canada's legal vaping industry is under threat; not from competition or market forces but from policy recommendations initiated by anti-nicotine lobbying organizations that overlook the very people they claim to protect. As Parliament returns, the Canadian Vaping Association urges policymakers to commit to science-backed and evidence-based regulation that protects youth without destroying a sector built on harm reduction, compliance, small business entrepreneurship and with employment in the tens of thousands.

The legal vaping industry was created to offer adult smokers a less harmful alternative to combustible tobacco. In just two years since the excise tax was introduced, nearly **\$1 billion in tax revenue** has been collected. This indicates the legal market's scale, legitimacy, and value to Canada's economy, which is now over \$2 billion in market size.

Flavour bans and excessive taxation may be politically appealing, but they are **public health mishaps** with real consequences.

We have seen this play out in Quebec. Following its recent flavour ban, smoking rates are creeping back up, illicit trade is booming, and local business owners with legal vape shops are closing their doors and letting their staff go. Youth vaping hasn't stopped either, it has simply shifted to unregulated channels with no oversight, accountability or tax revenue.

This isn't harm reduction. It's harm deflection.

Advocacy means looking past fear-based narratives and engaging with the facts.

Canada's National Tobacco Strategy acknowledges that vaping is less harmful than smoking. A recently published study from the Public Health Agency of Canada shows flavours are the main reason why adult smokers successfully transition away from deadly cigarettes. Removing them from the legal market doesn't stop demand, it just moves it into the shadows and into the hands of organized crime.

With the rollout of provincial excise taxes beginning in October 2024, layered on top of existing federal levies, the pressure on legal businesses has become unsustainable. These compounded costs are not just squeezing margins. They are forcing closures. In Ontario alone, nearly 20% of specialty vape shops shut down in Q4, 2024. When legal pathways are closed, illegal ones flourish.

This is not regulation, it's abdication.

The vaping conversation doesn't need more division; it needs dialogue.

We call on the Prime Minister and the federal government to engage in **meaningful consultation with industry stakeholders**, including the thousands of legal vape shop owners from coast-to-coast-to-coast working in good faith to support Canada's goal of a less than 5% smoking rate by 2035.

Canada's approach to vaping must reflect a balanced, pragmatic strategy that recognizes the important role that the legal industry plays for tobacco harm reduction, youth prevention, adult choice, economic growth, and combating the rise of the illicit market.

There are many solutions that can be effectively implemented to protect youth and adult consumers. Punishing legal small businesses through excessive taxation, flavour bans, insufficient enforcement resources, and low penalties on illicit dealers is not a viable solution or strategy.

With close to \$1 billion already delivered through the excise tax, Canada's vaping industry doesn't just deserve smart and effective regulations, but equitable representation.

The legal industry is ready to be part of the solution. The alternative is just not worth it.

We've paid our dues; we deserve a seat at the table.

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Editorial

Editorial

Carney needs to work on his caucus management skills

Prime Minister Mark Carney, who brought the Liberals back from death’s front door last month by winning a strong minority government, will have to sharpen up his caucus management skills—and quickly—because there could be trouble.

Some disgruntled Liberal MPs who didn’t make the cabinet cut are complaining about Carney’s May 13 minister picks, and have been griping about his outgoing chief of staff Marco Mendicino. If they continue to grouse, it could present a problem for this new minority government, which is trying to do some serious work at a time in history when Canada faces very serious threats from the president of the United States. Canada is headed for some very difficult times, and it would be better if backbench MPs helped their government and their Parliament shoulder these challenges rather than ankle-bite about their own personal ambitions. People don’t care, and they don’t want to hear about it.

Yet, MPs have not officially taken their seats in this 45th Parliament, and the grumbling has begun. Already, it’s getting old. Liberal MPs who were dropped from cabinet are unhappy and have bruised feelings—and some rightly so—but this is also the big, bad world of politics. It’s important for these Liberal MPs to remember why they’ve been elected by 8.6 million Canadians, and why they’ve been sent to Ottawa. Voters selected them to act as federal lawmakers sent to the House to pass laws which will hopefully improve the lives of Canadians. Being in cabinet is extremely important, but

being an effective MP is also powerful. This is forgotten when politicians get blinded by cabinet posts.

Several Liberal MPs told *The Hill Times*’ Abbas Rana, on a not-for-attribution basis, that they’re frustrated by Carney’s choices. They don’t understand why he dropped Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Arielle Kayabaga, Kody Blois, Rachel Bendayan, Ali Ehsassi, and Bill Blair after selecting them less than two months before. Many said they “feel betrayed,” and “double-crossed,” noting qualified people have been bypassed.

But as seasoned pundit Chantal Hébert told Peter Mansbridge and Rob Russo on Mansbridge’s popular *Good Talk* podcast, Carney deserves at least some grace period. “Every single Liberal MP should be thankful that Mark Carney exists because they would be fighting for jobs as opposition critics if he hadn’t come on the scene to bring them to victory, and that does earn him a pass from caucus unrest for quite a while,” Hébert said.

However, at the same time, Carney needs to channel a bit of former Progressive Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, who was one of the best prime ministers at managing a caucus, even in the toughest times. Carney’s going to have to stroke some egos, make people feel important, and boost caucus morale. It’s also time for the grumbling MPs to put on their big-boy and big-girl pants and get to work because Canada is facing some serious challenges ahead. MPs just got re-elected to help fight these challenges, both in cabinet or out.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Putin has no intention of ending the war in Ukraine until he owns the whole country: McElroy

Re: “Trump 2.0 and the End of NATO,” (*The Hill Times*, May 19, by Gwynne Dyer). The Russian bear is now breathing heavily on Europe. The West needs to act now, not on Gwynne Dyer’s five-year concept. We are at risk of repeating dangerous historical mistakes.

Going into the Second World War, Americans were isolated and indifferent to the fate of countries in Europe. Former U.K. prime minister Neville Chamberlain declared “peace in our time” with a pact with the Nazis. But after they laid waste to Europe, the United States began to realize that world domination, with its threat to North America, was a possible outcome of Hitler’s adventure in Europe. The drumbeat of war is now increasing with U.S. President Donald Trump’s isolation from the rest of the world, and his belief that Russian President Vladimir Putin is his friend and colleague. The Europeans have been lulled into believing that Trump will pull a rabbit out of the hat and make a sensible peace between Russia and Ukraine. Decisive action is needed now—not over the next five years—before the Russian

bear leaves still more foot-prints in Eastern Europe.

Putin has no intention of ending the war in Ukraine until he owns the whole country. His talk about peace is a delaying tactic as he scoops up more ground in Ukraine. He intends to take over Europe, one country at a time. And after Europe, perhaps the world. It is daylight madness to think that Trump can out-think and control the incredibly clever Putin. Look what Putin has done so far. He seized a chunk of Ukraine, in spite of Russia’s agreement to abide by the UN Charter, in 2014. The West took him at his word that it would bring stability. Now he’s trying to take the whole country, and could have, but for the clever, prepared and plucky Ukrainians. Otherwise, the Russians would now be slaving over the border at Poland on their way west.

Urgently, Europe and even NATO must put their boots on the ground in Ukraine to show Russia that this slow takeover of Europe will not happen and that international rule of law still matters.

Tom McElroy
Toronto, Ont.

Insider's Guide to Parliament **COMMENT**

Long live the King, maybe

Mark Carney wants to send an international message of strength. But that message could be double-edged.

Sheila
Coppes

Coppes' Corner



OTTAWA—Long live the King. Maybe.

When it comes to Canada, there are few more controversial issues than whether we should continue with the monarchy.

French-Canadians and the Irish, in particular, are not happy to have a head of state which reminds them of past travails.

In the case of Quebecers, the defeat by the English on the Plains of Abraham is seen as the beginning of the end of a sovereign French nation.

As for the Irish, those who come from the south have already split from the United Kingdom and see no reason to pledge fealty to the same monarchy that they rejected in their own country.

Battle-scarred opponents of the monarchy are more vocal than those who support the institution. When Queen Elizabeth II was nearing the end of her life, Canadian pundits were suggesting that she would be our last monarch.

King Charles III would never make it to the throne because most people respected his mother and did not have the same feeling toward him.

Then the King took over in 2022, and has spent the last several months showing people exactly why he is the right person for the times.

Divorced—an unheard-of marital state in the last century, but pretty common with commoners in this century. So he is a little bit like all of us.

He also has a sense of humour and is totally prepared to laugh at himself, something that was not in the character of the Queen.

The King is prepared to participate in the quirky and the bizarre.

Just last month, he was filmed playing a carrot—yes, a carrot—with the London Vegetable Orchestra. One cannot imagine the Queen putting her lips around the top of a taproot to make music.

But King Charles was always the quirky one. He was interested in organic food long before it became popular with the general public.



Camilla, then-Duchess of Cornwall, left, and Charles, then-Prince of Wales, on their royal visit to Ottawa on May 18, 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

When he visited Canada in 1996, he got what was described as a “rock star welcome” in my hometown of Hamilton, Ont. We spent the visit together, and I was able to personally observe the depth and breadth of his interests. He visited an Indigenous school in Manitoba, and was given the honorific title of “Leading Star.”

Long before the public was engaged, the King soaked up knowledge about Indigenous challenges and spent much time reflecting on how to improve things.

During this week’s visit, a group of Indigenous leaders has asked to meet with him to discuss the issue of a separation threat by some citizens in Alberta.

Just as Prime Minister Mark Carney wants the King to stay out of American politics, so do the

Indigenous leaders want the King to wade into Alberta politics.

Indigenous leaders have told Premier Danielle Smith that they oppose the province’s decision to simplify the rules for a separation referendum.

Smith is of the view that Indigenous leaders’ votes will be counted in any referendum, but the chiefs believe their territory’s integrity cannot be impacted by any provincial referendum.

As their treaties have been with the Crown, the King is obviously in a position to support their claims.

But he also has to be cautious when getting involved in domestic politics.

Reading the Speech from the Throne is an exception because the sovereign will only be repeating a message already approved by the prime minister and his office.

And taking a position in favour of one commonwealth country may cause problems in another.

Take King Charles’ second invitation to United States president Donald Trump to visit the United Kingdom.

Carney was very unhappy with the invitation and, in a surprising move, he made it known publicly. In an interview with British Sky News, about the invitation, Carney said Canadians were not impressed by that gesture “given the circumstance. It was a time when we were being quite clear, some of us were being quite clear, about the issues around sovereignty.”

The King’s invitation was delivered by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who was in the midst of negotiating a free trade agreement with the U.S.

In supporting British political objectives, the monarch was forced to bypass Canadian interests.

Such is the challenge of a king. In the same vein, the Canadian prime minister has to be cautious about King Charles’ trip to Canada. It could provide fodder for Quebec separatists who see the crown as a symbol of everything they do not want in a country.

Carney wants to send an international message of strength. But that message could be double-edged.

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

The Hill Times

Carney’s boomer base

Mark Carney’s alliance with the boomer generation could pose future challenges for the Liberals. For one thing, if the Liberals do anything that boomers consider to be an attack on their retirement savings, it could spur a revolt.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—Political organizations like to attract younger supporters to their causes, but in this context, “younger” is a relative term.

To show you what I mean, let me tell you a story about how,



Generation X: Pierre Poilievre, left, and Mark Carney, are both generation Xers, people born between 1965 and 1980. Poilievre was born in 1979 and Carney was born in 1965, but Carney comes across like a boomer, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and illustration by Naomi Wildeboer

years and years ago, while working for a conservative advocacy group called the National Citizens Coalition, I hired a consultant to help us figure out ways to infuse more youth into our membership base.

At the time, the average age of an NCC supporter was about 75 years old, so yes, the organization needed to get younger, since—to put it bluntly—our membership was dying off.

Anyway, the consultant confidently assured me she could come up with a strategy to con-

vince people in their 20s and 30s to join our group.

At that point, I had to interrupt her and say, “Sorry, let me be clear about an important point: When I say I want ‘younger people,’ I mean people in their late 50s and early 60s.”

Essentially, I needed “seniors.”

The reason for that is simple: people who are retired or who are approaching retirement age tend to have more disposable income to make donations and, unlike younger people who are busy raising families, seniors

have more time to get involved in things like political causes.

Plus, they are more likely than younger people to vote in elections.

All of this is why elders often make up the core of any political organization’s support base.

Of course, in the recent federal election, the Conservative Party of Canada learned the hard way what happens when seniors turn against you.

Indeed, the numbers seem to suggest that the demographic age group known as “boomers” voted for the Liberals *en masse*, which was what basically gave Prime Minister Mark Carney his near majority victory.

Looking back on the election now, some Conservatives believe their party was so busy communicating their messages through new forms of media—podcasts, streaming, social media—that they failed to reach boomers.

As one anonymous Conservative source recently told *The Toronto Star*, “You have to speak to folks who watch more traditional media outlets.”

Yet, I’m not certain message distribution was the Conservatives’ real problem.

My take is that boomers turned to Carney because they watched him during the election and deemed him to be more competent than Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre.

I’d further argue that boomers came to this conclusion based

not on any rational analysis, but rather on their own wishful expectations.

That’s to say, when they looked at Carney, with his greying hair and his corporate style demeanour, they deemed him to be wise and experienced, whereas Poilievre, who was the embodiment of generation X, came across like an untested young whippersnapper.

With the threat of a sabre-rattling Donald Trump on the southern border, boomers decided to side with sagacity and maturity over youth and hipness.

There was also, I think, a little bit of tribalism going on.

Even though, technically speaking, Carney is technically a generation Xer, he talks and acts like a full-fledged boomer; thus, I suspect boomers were voting for someone they considered to be one of their own.

Mind you, Carney’s alliance with the boomer generation could also pose future challenges for the Liberals.

For one thing, if the Liberals do anything that boomers consider to be an attack on their retirement savings, such as a tax on home equity, it could spur a revolt.

Also, the Liberals will face the same problem I had with the NCC, i.e., their support base will inevitably get older and smaller.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

COMMENT Insider's Guide to Parliament

As the world turns and burns, war is everywhere



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. To Canada's everlasting credit, Carney—in concert with other world leaders from the U.K. and France—injected a little Gandhi conscience into the ascendancy of violence in our world, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade and courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

War without end is also the story in Israel's invasion of Gaza. Everyone knows the genesis of that conflict—the brutal slaughter by Hamas of 1,196 Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded with a full-scale military invasion of Gaza. The death toll from this war of revenge and rage is staggering.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Former United States president John F. Kennedy once famously said that

if we don't get rid of war, war will get rid of us. His dire prediction is coming true.

As the world turns and burns, war is everywhere. After three agonizing years of conflict in Ukraine, there is no end in sight, despite U.S. President Donald Trump's idle boast that he could end the conflict in a single day.

More than 120 days into his second term, the war rages on. Trump says "millions" of soldiers on both sides have died. Statistics from Kyiv, the United Nations, and BBC claim that 158,341 soldiers and civilians have so far lost their lives in the conflict.

Other sources place the actual death and casualty numbers much higher than that—700,000 Russian soldiers dead and another 48,000 missing. For Ukraine, 400,000 killed and 35,000 missing. By any measure, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has turned into a bloody killing field that no one can seem to stop.

War without end is also the story in Israel's invasion of Gaza. Everyone knows the genesis of that conflict: the brutal slaughter by Hamas of 1,196 Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded with a full-scale military invasion of Gaza. The death toll from this war of revenge and rage is staggering. Approximately 1,600 Israeli soldiers and civilians have

lost their lives, and more than 53,000 Palestinians. A further 866 Palestinians have been killed in the occupied West Bank.

In the Sudanese Civil War that began in 2023, an estimated 62,000 people have lost their lives although the numbers may actually be higher. In the previous civil war that began in 1983 and ended in 2005, between one and two million people were killed.

Depending on whose statistics you believe, there are between 26 and 56 armed conflicts going on in the Middle East and Africa alone. When you add the terrifying confrontations between India and Pakistan, and India and China—all nuclear powers—it paints the picture of a world ready to fight rather than talk.

And that raises an intriguing question. With so much war, death and destruction, where are the peace-makers?

There is no shortage of war-makers, but where are the Nelson Mandelas, the Martin Luther King Jr.s, the Mother Theresas, the Dalai Lamas, the Desmond Tutus—the people who in their day negotiated agreements and championed non-violence?

The greatest of them all was Mahatma Gandhi. He was the leader who promoted India's independence from Great Britain, but insisted that the process should be non-violent. It is worth remembering the fountainhead of his peacemaking: "There is

a higher court than the court of justice and that is the court of conscience."

The sad fact is that Gandhi's great humanity is mostly missing in these dread, dirty times. Instead of peace-makers, we have all too many leaders who operate without conscience or compassion. They are fine with being war-makers.

Trump is a prime example. As U.S. president, he has the leverage over both the Ukraine and Gaza wars to bring them to an end.

He could, for example, impose punishing sanctions on Russia for continuing its bloody and illegal invasion of Ukraine. Instead, he holds meaningless phone calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and continues to indulge the man whom the International Criminal Court accuses of being a war criminal. Being a convicted felon himself, I guess there is a bond.

Instead of pressuring Russia to cease and desist, Trump busies himself with soliciting bribes from Middle Eastern countries eager to curry favour with the "leader" of the Western world. In a word, Trump is a man without a conscience. Instead, he's a man with a lust for self-aggrandizement, at the same time as he is slashing services for regular Americans.

Further proof for that proposition is provided by his stance

on the bloodbath going on in Gaza. Despite Trump's crocodile tears over the terrible death toll in that war, he has done nothing to bring the conflict to an end.

And it's not as if he doesn't have the tools. If, for example, he curtailed military aid to Israel, or reduced the billions of dollars in aid he provides to that country, the war would be over the next day. Instead, he gestures his desire for peace, while enabling the war to continue until nothing is left standing in Gaza.

If there were any humanity or conscience in Trump, it would have shown up after the Netanyahu government in Israel blatantly used food as a weapon against the Palestinian people. That is a violation of international law.

Since March, Israel has cut off all food going into Gaza, a move that has put half a million people at risk of malnutrition or starvation. According to UNICEF, a total of 90,000 Palestinian children have already been treated for malnutrition.

Under international pressure, Israel recently allowed a mere hundred trucks of food and medicine into Gaza. Aid workers on the ground say that it takes 500 trucks a day of aid to meet the demand. As a result of the shortfall, aid agencies can't supply what they refer to as "hot meals" to Palestinians. What are these hot meals that are no longer available? Rice.

To Canada's everlasting credit, our new prime minister—in concert with other world leaders from the United Kingdom and France—injected a little Gandhi conscience into the ascendancy of violence in our world. This is what they said about Netanyahu's barbarity in Gaza: "We strongly oppose the expansion of Israel's military operations in Gaza. The level of human suffering in Gaza is intolerable. Yesterday's announcement that Israel will allow a basic quantity of food into Gaza is wholly inadequate. We call on the Israeli government to stop its military operations in Gaza and immediately allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. This must include engaging with the UN to ensure a return to delivery of aid in line with humanitarian principles. We call on Hamas to release immediately the remaining hostages they have so cruelly held since 7 October's 2023."

And Canada, the U.K., and France had one more message for Israel.

"We oppose any attempt to expand settlements in the West Bank. Israel must halt settlements that are illegal and undermine the viability of a Palestinian state and the security of both Israelis and Palestinians. We will not hesitate to take further action, including targeted sanctions."

Last word to American musician Bob Dylan on war versus words: "How many times must the cannon balls fly before they are forever banned? The answer my friend is blowing the wind, the answer is blowing in the world."

The winds of war.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times



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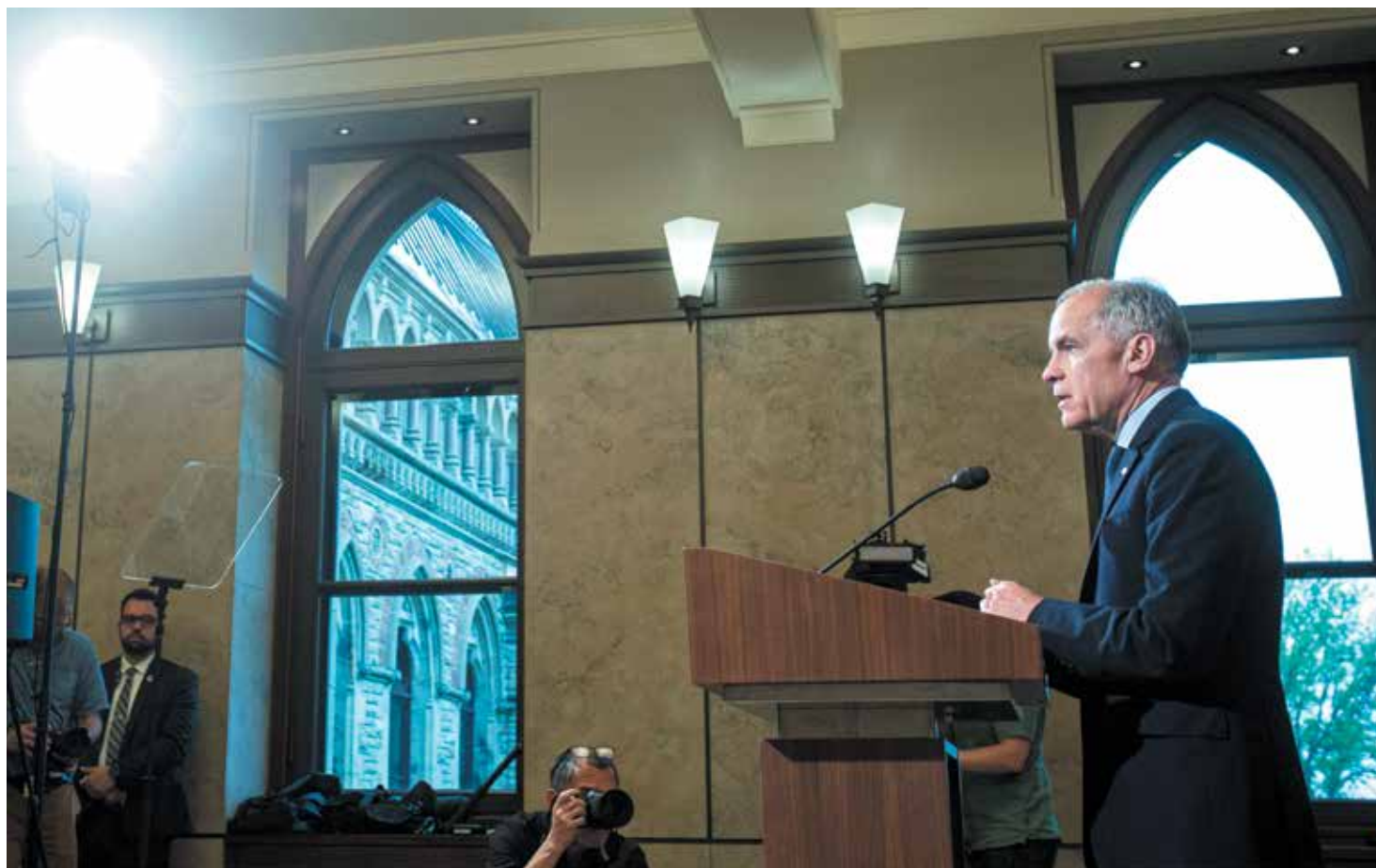
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COMMENT Insider's Guide to Parliament

Carney era begins: will the low-drama prime minister's promise of 'harmony and hard' work prevail?



Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a press conference in West Block on May 21, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

We will soon see how Carney manages in the fiery pit of partisan politics. Unfortunately, that pit is unavoidable. It is part of democracy, for better or for worse.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



This week marks the end of what, in retrospect, may look like a period of enviable calm and progress on the federal political front—a productive couple of weeks, driven by a new prime minister determined not to waste a moment.

Since his election, Prime Minister Mark Carney has appeared in a supporting role in United States President Donald Trump's ongoing melodrama, and has earned respectable reviews; travelled to Rome to meet the new Pope and confer with European leaders on Ukraine; joined Britain and France in threatening sanctions on Israel if it doesn't

stop bombing and blockading Gaza; and, expressed friendly interest in Trump's new Golden Dome missile shield (details to be announced).

On May 27, he welcomes King Charles and Queen Camilla for a royal visit reminiscent of the days of plumed hats, gleaming horses, and creaky ritual. There will even be a tree-planting at Rideau Hall.

Yes, democracy and all, but it is hard to summon much enthusiasm for what follows: the return of the Commons, the inevitable belly-aching, fake outrage, manufactured scandals and sketchy promises. Even without Pierre Poilievre in the opposition benches' front row, even if Conservatives take a hint from a weary electorate and dial back the hyperbole, they will be madly chasing squirrels in no time, like puppies on their first spring walk.

The chase is what really amuses them, of course, but so much of what happens in Question Period, especially, bears little or no relation to Canadians' daily struggles. Who among us, for example, was outraged at the Liberals' decision to delay its first budget—originally scheduled for next year sometime, then, after an authoritative clarification from Carney, moved up to this fall? Anyone?

Apart from Poilievre—who wondered "what the Liberal government is hiding about our finances"—some tut-tutting from old Ottawa hands, and bond

rating agencies who don't like uncertainty, who cares if a few more months elapse until we get a full and more accurate grasp on the numbers? (If that is even possible.)

The Throne Speech will reiterate the government's ambitions (\$130-billion in new programs, already laid out in the campaign), and, other protocols will keep money flowing to departments until the fall. Unlike in the U.S., there is no danger of an imminent government shut-down.

Besides, who can remember the contents of any federal budget three days after it lands? Essentially, budgets are regularly-published spending plans, intended to explain how a government will pay for its promises, and a treasure trove of targets for critics both inside and outside of politics. This routine attempt at public accounting is necessary, of course, if not always reliable. It isn't uncommon for promised programs to get bogged down or quietly abandoned, and external events to throw long-term projections out the window.

That is Carney's main rationale for not producing his first budget in the remaining few weeks before Parliament's summer recess on June 20. With Trump's tariff threats leaping and receding like a heart monitor gone mad, how can anyone prudently assess the damages? And, as Carney persuasively argued at a scrum in Rome, there are other

variables: the G7 conference in Kananaskis next month, a NATO meeting to discuss future contributions to our mutual defence, frequent fluctuations in energy pricing, and how global markets react to Trump's provocations.

"You do these things [budgets] right, and that's what we're going to do," the former bank governor in two countries, former Goldman Sachs executive, and former deputy finance minister said firmly.

That said, the new prime minister isn't above some fun with numbers. His promised middle-class tax break is a prime example of politics over prudence. He will reduce the lowest income tax bracket from 15 to 14 per cent, benefiting, Liberals claim, some 22 million taxpayers—some, as always happens with broad measures, far more than others. Carney projects this move will save "the average two-income family" \$825 a year.

That's the average. The tax cut offers nothing to the nine million poor Canadians who don't pay any federal tax. Nor does it help borderline earners who might forfeit caregiver, age, disability, or other tax credits if their income tax declines. Analysis by the Canada Centre for Policy Alternatives says the richest Canadians (who don't need the extra money) will benefit most from the tax cut, while the middle-income earners will average \$151 savings each.

Then there is the question of what services might be eliminated

to pay for the \$5.6-billion tax cut; we'll probably have to wait for the budget to see.

Another more fundamental question: do these small, universal tax cuts tangibly help individuals, or are they just political ephemera? No one wants taxes to go up, of course. But, come filing time, does anyone clap gleefully at the extra couple of hundred dollars they have saved, and swear eternal fealty to their federal benefactors? How many even notice?

Never mind that any tax savings could be wiped out, for some families, by loss of the quarterly carbon rebate (worth \$110 to \$228, four times a year, depending on province), rising food prices, increased insurance payments, or to cover repairs to properties damaged by extreme climate events. Gasoline prices are bound to creep up again, too, after the removal of the carbon tax last month provided a one-time saving at the pump of up to \$0.15 a litre.

Carney has heard it all before. But the campaigning Conservatives offered a more generous personal income tax cut, so the Liberals had to counter. The same motive prompted him to kill the consumer carbon tax, even though those associated rebates were benefiting some 80 per cent of recipients.

That \$5.6-billion could be spent to better effect, too—and it ways that actually do improve lives—by expanding pharmacare, for instance, increasing health transfers to provinces significantly, directing even more federal funding to mental health, or to tackling the homeless encampments that are a chilling, and expanding, reminder of growing social inequality.

That aside, Carney insists the "middle-class tax cut" will be the first measure passed by his new government, and who is going to vote against it? Just don't order that new sauna, yet.

This bit of pandering aside, Carney has demonstrated a breadth and depth of knowledge on economic matters, a confidence on the world stage, and a self-described "pragmatic" approach to thorny issues—more focussed on results than victories—that sounds both refreshing and reassuring. Chances are he will produce as airtight a budget as events allow, and a persuasive defence.

That doesn't mean there won't be strong opposition to some measures—although perhaps not the \$30-billion, over four years, in new military spending—but budgets are complicated political and economic documents at the best of times. And these are not the best of times. No wonder media and opposition focus so often, and so passionately, on side issues like timing, or the communications skill or any particular finance minister.

We will soon see how Carney manages in the fiery pit of partisan politics. Unfortunately, that pit is unavoidable. It is part of democracy, for better or for worse.

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

The Hill Times

PRIME MINISTER CARNEY:

TRUMP-PROOF CANADA BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE

~~**MAGA Pipeline**~~

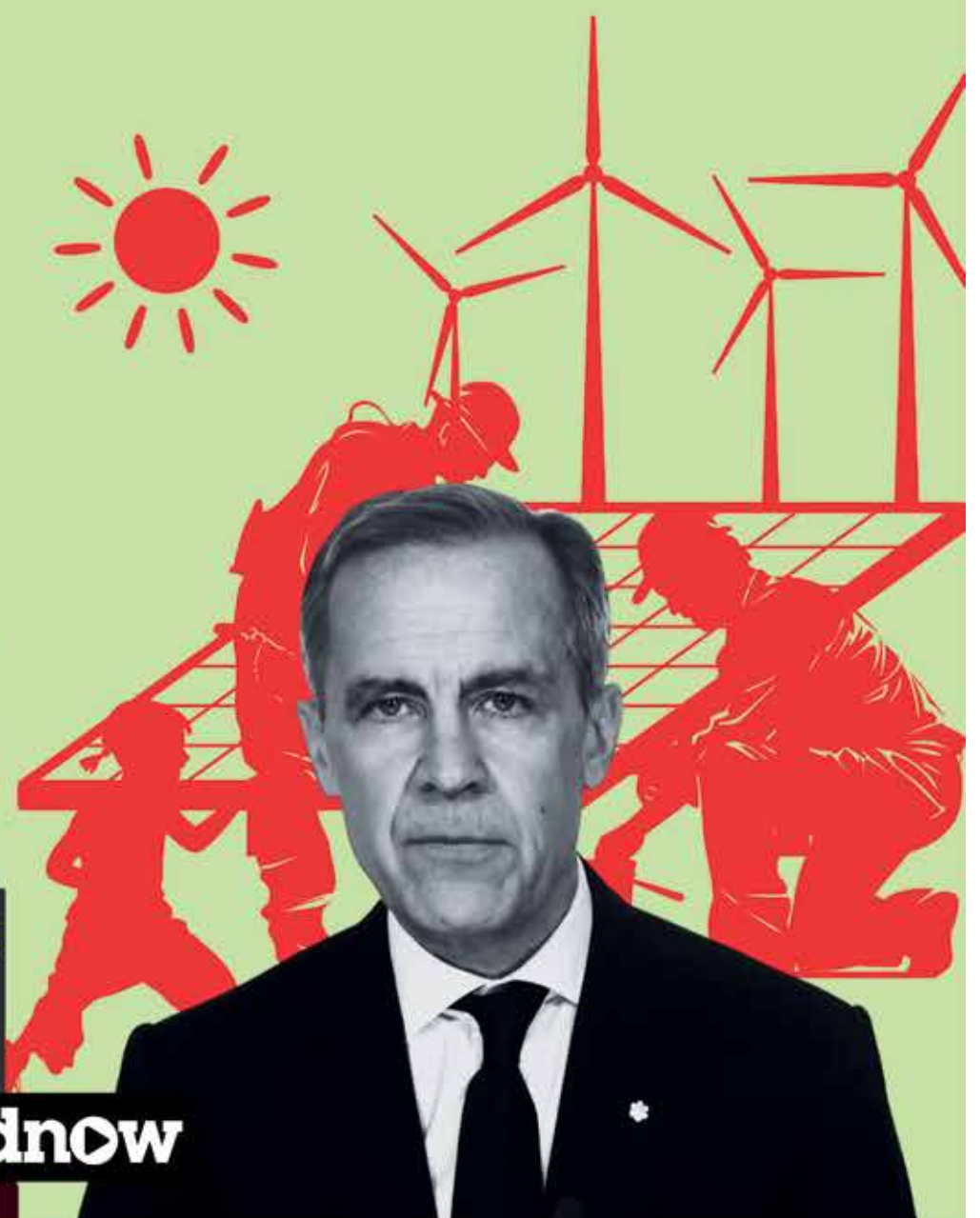
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COMMENT Insider's Guide to Parliament



Gender and Equity Minister Rechie Valdez, left, Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty, Canada-U.S. Relations Minister Dominic LeBlanc, Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister Rebecca Chartrand, and International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu after being sworn into cabinet on May 13, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Keep the focus on the citizens who must benefit from federal governance

If this session of Parliament cannot or will not include Indigenous Peoples across every single department and every single policy, then reconciliation will surely die on your watch. Stand your ground to ensure Indigenous inclusion is the legacy of the 45th session of Parliament.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—As the newly elected parliamentarians start this session of government, they will be swamped with

learning about the processes and procedures—how to do things correctly, how not to do things incorrectly. Isn't it interesting that the moment an election is won on platform and goals, then the system inundates MPs on process, rules, and procedures. Relationships are the key, not procedures.

Cabinet ministers are learning about their ministries. The most pressing learning for new ministers is how fast you can push change on systems that are built to resist change. Bureaucracies and departments are the stable factor through government changes, and that's a very good thing in a democracy. But this also means that bureaucracies are, by their very nature, resistant to change. The work of change is difficult for humans, even if it's called back to basics. Departments need to get back to basics, too.

One of those basics is the full inclusion of Indigenous Peoples as citizens of Canada. A questionable holdover from the Indian Act is the existence of departments mandated to serve Indigenous Peoples, as if only they can serve Indigenous Peoples and everybody else can just shove off. Crown Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous Services Canada have been known to jealously guard their

“
A questionable holdover from the Indian Act is the existence of departments mandated to serve Indigenous Peoples, as if only they can serve Indigenous Peoples and everybody else can just shove off.

mandates by resisting the work of other departments doing the right thing to also serve Indigenous Peoples. Housing initiatives? “No,” they say, “we’re doing it.” Supports on contaminated street drug crises? “Absolutely not,” they say. Health-care reform and support for health human resources? “Never, stay in your lane,” they answer. As if they own Indigenous communities or something. Right.

Don't let these departments continue to try to limit who supports Indigenous Peoples as an Indian Act holdover. It is pure racial segregation. It is one of the clear factors holding back the well-being and success of Indigenous Peoples.

One of the basics of reconciliation is the full inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in all federal programs and policies. Call it an Indigenous lens. It's the quiet thought you take and demand your staff also practise, for every single policy proposal and bill: how will this benefit First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and communities? If not, then send it back.

How will discussions on the demise of Canada Post include an Indigenous lens, and the key role that this corporation plays in Indigenous and rural communities? How will a buildup on

National Defence also benefit Indigenous Peoples? How will economic priorities benefit First Nations, Inuit, and Métis both on and off-reserve? How will a housing priority meet the current needs of the Indigenous individuals and others challenged with lack of housing, the ones you see on the street as you made your way to Parliament? Housing cannot only be about the million-dollar boxes; there must be housing for those who need it now to stay alive.

Why should MPs ensure Indigenous Peoples are included? After a couple of centuries of colonization and exclusion, the work that leaders do for inclusion of Indigenous Peoples will fundamentally shift departments in a good way. Given the strength of the legal exclusion in the past, major change needs to occur now. That significant change to ensure Indigenous inclusion will also be highly beneficial for other groups in Canada at risk of being left out. But the focus on Indigenous Peoples must occur because when the focus is on other groups, Indigenous Peoples are always left out.

If this session of Parliament cannot or will not include Indigenous Peoples across every single department and every single policy, then reconciliation will surely die on your watch. Stand your ground to ensure Indigenous inclusion is the legacy of the 45th session of Parliament.

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

The Hill Times

Insider's Guide to Parliament **COMMENT**

It's back to work for Parliament

The world remains a mess. Wars rage abroad. Canada's economy remains under threat. The U.S. president seems to change his mind on vital issues every few hours. Our domestic situation, especially on the national unity front, is complicated, to say the least. So there's a lot going on, and a lot to be worried about. But hey, we've got Parliament back. And that is a start.

Matt Gurney

Opinion



TORONTO—It's back to work for Parliament. And in the many months since we've last had the House sitting, much has changed. Not just in the world around us, but also inside the House.

It's wild to think that we're actually looking at Mark Carney's first day as a parliamentarian. The Justin Trudeau era already feels like an increasingly distant memory. But no—though Carney has been prime minister for

months, and is now prime minister having won the job himself, he's just beginning his career as a parliamentarian.

I suspect he'll prove a quick study. Certainly, he'll have all the help he needs to learn the ropes. But this is also going to complicate his learning curve on his main job: being the prime minister. Carney settled in reasonably smoothly after winning the Liberal leadership in March. And then we were right off to an election that kept his caucus distracted, focused on their own jobs. That's over now. Carney must now not only deal with national and international issues, but also the wants, hopes, and needs of 170 Liberals.

He'll have some runway. But it will be interesting to see how quickly he can learn how to do this new part of his job. And remember, it's a part of the job that many other prime ministers—including Carney's immediate predecessor—never mastered.

And the NDP. Lord, where do we start with them? We all knew that it was going to be a rough election for the New Democrats. But seeing them reduced to seven seats is still a lot to process. Perhaps about the only thing they have to be grateful for is the fact that Carney came up just shy of a majority. This gives the NDP some automatic relevance their tiny caucus would not otherwise warrant. It will be fascinating to observe how they try to adapt to this new situation. They lack official party status, a full-time leader, money, and a roadmap back to viability.

But they have, right from the start, power and influence. Not as much as they would have had before the election, but some. The Liberals probably don't literally need the NDP to get anything done, but working with the NDP is almost certainly the easiest way for the Liberals to get anything done. Let's see how the New Democrats handle this new reality: do they buy time by

throwing themselves into the part, cooperating with gusto, or do they try to set up a future recovery by keeping some distance?

The Conservatives will probably have the easiest time settling in. For them, not that much has changed. They've got a bigger caucus. And though Andrew Scheer will be leading them from inside the House, at least as of right now, Pierre Poilievre seems to have a firm grasp on the leadership of the party as a whole. For the Conservatives, a return to the House probably doesn't mean all that much. For them, they still need to continue the work of trying to figure out what just happened to them in the last election.

As noted here before, the party is in a situation where it achieved two things simultaneously: its best-ever result, and a bitterly disappointing loss. It is, politically speaking, a glass at precisely 50-per-cent capacity. What you see there, and how you choose to feel about it, is going to be up to the beholder. But in the meantime, while they try to answer the big questions, the Conservatives will simply get down to the business of opposing.

They're good at that. And once Poilievre gets back into the House after some future by-election, they'll probably be better at it. It's



Prime Minister Mark Carney walks down Sparks Street in Ottawa on May 2, 2025. Carney must now not only deal with national and international issues, but also the wants, hopes, and needs of 170 Liberals, writes Matt Gurney. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

important work. But it ain't the work they wanted for themselves. Let's see how they settle in.

So here we are. Day one. The world remains a mess. Wars rage abroad. Canada's economy remains under threat. The American president seems to change his mind on vital issues every few hours. Our domestic situation, especially on the national unity front, is complicated, to say the least.

So there's a lot going on, and a lot to be worried about. But hey, we've got Parliament back. And that is a start.

Matt Gurney is a Toronto-based journalist. He is co-editor of *The Line* (ReadTheLine.ca), an online magazine.

The Hill Times

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SUSTAINS OVER

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PAIR SILVER
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COMMENT Insider's Guide to Parliament

Top 10 mistakes rookie MPs will make



Then-newly elected Bloc Québécois MP Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, pictured centre, Oct. 29, 2019, on his way to an orientation session put on by House of Commons staff in the Wellington Building. Brunelle-Duceppe, who was re-elected on April 28, 2025, has emerged as one of the stars of the Bloc's caucus. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

principle applies to your social media strategy, there are only so many hours in a day and every hour you spend trying to BE something is an hour you can't spend trying to DO something. Always remember that nobody ever got into trouble for something they didn't say!

5. Don't have a time management strategy

MPs work ridiculous hours, but nobody wants to hear about it. Prioritize your time against your personal and professional priorities. A useful filter for the triaging of an event is whether there is anyone from your riding attending, or is the sponsor an employer in your area. Keep in mind that your family are constituents, too, and should be afforded appropriate attention. There are excellent counselling services available, and don't be ashamed to access them!

4. Complain publicly if you don't get promoted

Welcome to life behind the curtain. The "politics of politics" will be new to most of you. Keep in mind that decisions about cabinet, parliamentary secretaries, critics, and standing committees are influenced by luck, skill, and timing. At best, you can control one of those factors. By all means aim high; just don't wear it on your sleeve.

3. Don't have a plan for life after politics

Always think positive, but never let yourself believe that politics owes you anything. The statistics don't support a long career. Don't dwell on this, but don't overlook it, either.

2. Have unrealistic expectations

The system is not as "broken" as it may appear from the outside. Take the time to learn how the machinery works and your role in it. At the end of the day, you owe it to the people that sent you here to become the most effective representative possible. There is a very real difference between motion and action!

1. Hire your campaign volunteers

I can tell you this, your experienced colleagues can tell you this, and the whip can tell you this; but you will probably do it anyway. Your staff have a serious job to do and doing it well requires a specific skill set. Put this document away and pull it out in a year to see if it makes any more sense.

Joe Jordan is a second-generation Member of Parliament who represented the Ontario riding of Leeds-Grenville from 1997 to 2004. He is now a senior associate with the Bluesky Strategy Group, and he writes and speaks extensively on the relationship between business and government. He also broke seven of these rules himself.

The Hill Times

Do not hire your campaign volunteers. Your staff have a serious job to do and doing it well requires a specific skill set. Put this document away and pull it out in a year and see if it makes any more sense.

Joe Jordan

Opinion



As the 20th anniversary of the writing of the original series for newly elected Members of Parliament approaches, I felt it was an appropriate time to revisit and reissue them.

The following was the first one written and is presented for the

reading pleasure of the new MPs of the first session of the 45th Parliament of Canada.

10. Join the gym on the eighth floor of the Confederation Building, but never actually go there

The older I get, the more strongly I believe that you need to commit to some sort of physical exercise from the outset. Make it part of your regular routine, and ensure that your scheduling assistant understands that it is not a "bumpable" activity. Exercise will provide the double benefit of contributing to your physical health and helping relieve the stress of the job. Time is always going to be an issue, and your diet is going to suffer, stay on top of this!

9. Form conclusions too quickly

There are always two sides to every story, so wait until you hear both sides before forming any opinion. The emergence and proliferation of both disinformation and misinformation will

further complicate the process of determining facts and truths. Additionally, if you sit back and watch the "political" decision-making process unfold, you will notice that the emphasis has shifted away from "right or wrong," and now incorporates an analysis of "winners and losers." The political paradox of the "people always being right" in the face of clear evidence that they are wrong highlights the parallel tracks of policy and politics. Welcome to your new universe. These things are complex and rarely solved with three-second solutions. Keep in mind that a NO can always become a YES, but a YES is very difficult to subsequently turn into a NO.

8. Make a public scene if a security guard fails to recognize you

I am not kidding about this! Leave your ego at the door and recognize two important facts: security is a serious business and, over the course of your career, you will come to realize that the security guards will be your best resource in any number of situations.

7. Stay overly partisan

Campaigns are, by definition, adversarial exercises, but the work of parliamentarians is surprisingly co-operative. One thing you will learn is that while you may differ on policy, all MPs are working toward the same overall objectives. Politics is often compared to a drug, and that analogy is all too true. Like a hallucinogenic drug, it tends to intensify what already exists. Keep in mind that there is little correlation between winning an argument and being right. If you feel the need to continue the partisan Question Period exchange in the elevator, you might want to pump the brakes a tad.

6. Run towards every microphone

Like it or not, you now make your living in a profession where your image, and the perception people have of your image, matters. Take some time to reflect on how you want to be viewed and then selectively use media opportunities to reinforce that view. If you are one who feels the need to speak on all issues all the time, the odds are good that you are headed for the rocks. The same

The missed opportunities of public procurement

Ram Mathilakath
& Greg
MacDougall

Opinion



In March, the federal government announced a \$6-billion contract to acquire an Arctic over-the-horizon radar system from a consortium in Australia. Actors in Canada's homegrown defence and tech sectors were left wondering if that decision was grounded in rigorous due diligence.

While the dollar figure is significant, the real issue runs deeper than the price tag.

The real bottom line is about yet another lost opportunity to invest in Canadian innovation.

Since 2011, Canadian firms like D-TA Systems, recognized leaders in radar and electronic defence systems, have received government support to develop world-class, over-the-horizon radar systems. Those investments paid off.

D-TA System's technology is in use in the Canadian Arctic and has been deployed by major global

defence contractors working with the United States Air Force.

Yet, when the time came for full-scale implementation, the Government of Canada chose instead to hand the baton to an offshore consortium.

Not an isolated case

As global investment in domestic manufacturing and reshoring hits record highs, Canada's policy stands in stark contrast.

Billions of dollars in public funding are flowing offshore—subsidizing foreign labour, strengthening non-Canadian intellectual property portfolios and raising questions of value for money.

At a time when economic nationalism and the issue of supply-chain risk have risen to the top of the agenda, this approach risks putting our country at a long-term strategic disadvantage.

Rethinking Canadian procurement

A robust procurement strategy creates domestic capabilities, fosters intellectual property ownership, and supports long-term economic value.

G7 nations have long embedded domestic content requirements in core technology in major procurements, using them as a lever to grow national champions. These countries align funding, procurement, and policy in a coherent strategy.

Canada, meanwhile, continues to assemble fragmented policies that prioritize quick fixes over systemic growth.

Michael Wernick, former clerk of the Privy Council and Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management at the University of Ottawa, has noted: "Government procurement has always been asked to carry a heavy load of policy objectives, including driving sectoral industrial policies, redressing regional economic disparities, encouraging startups, greening government operations and fostering the growth of businesses by a range of equity seeking groups. Trump is forcing us to rethink these priorities with a greater weight to Canadian autonomy and to find a way to procure faster."

This approach has repeatedly produced the same costly snag in the IT sector. It happens when commercial "off-the-shelf" systems

are purchased, and then customized and modified to meet requirements.

The result is ballooning costs and repeated project failures.

New solutions for a chronic issue

What is needed is a principle-based procurement framework that emphasizes life-cycle costs, technical excellence, and domestic intellectual-property development.

As Jack Mintz, one of Canada's leading economists, observed: "Almost a 10th of research spending is spending on defence and aerospace. We do poorly at commercialization of R&D in part because the federal government fails to put some priority on local innovation that could be just as good as foreign supply."

He's right. These aren't new issues. They're just becoming more expensive—and more urgent.

Dipak Roy, founder of D-TA Systems, described the recent \$6-billion procurement for an Arctic radar system being awarded to an Australian consortium as akin to wearing flip-flops in a blizzard.

This is more than a bad deal—it's a systemic failure that contributes to reducing world-class Canadian firms to subcontractors in sectors they helped pioneer. If this continues, this country risks cementing its role as a junior partner in the global high-tech economy.

To be clear, the Government of Canada does have sound due-dil-

igence policies—especially within the Treasury Board.

But as long as critical decisions are made without business or technical expertise at the table, we'll keep spending public money while foregoing the opportunity to fulsomely develop our own domestic industries.

In short, the issue is not the size of our bureaucracy—it's about having the right experts who can perform due diligence, assess value for money, and offer ministers reliable, constructive advice.

The world is transforming as AI continues to transform the landscape, global supply chains remain volatile, and new tariffs and other geopolitical pressures grow.

The new government has a prime opportunity to drive real reform. That means rethinking procurement from the ground up—not as a bureaucratic process but as an engine of national strategy. One that grows jobs, builds intellectual property, strengthens industry, and supports Canada's place in the global economy.

Greg MacDougall is the co-founder of governmentanalytics.ca. Ram Mathilakath is a former executive with the Parliamentary Budget Office and the federal government, and is now an executive consultant and board adviser. He is a strategic adviser to the board of D-TA. This piece has been reprinted with permission from Policy Options.

The Hill Times

CHICKEN FARMERS OF CANADA
LES PRODUCTEURS DE POULET DU CANADA

ChickenFarmers.ca

TWO-THIRDS OF CANADIANS WANT MORE HOMEGROWN FOOD.*

With high standards and the drive to deliver, Canadian chicken farmers are leading the way.

* Survey conducted by Abacus Data with 1,500 adults Canadians over the age of 18 from March 11 to 15, 2025.

PHOTO: Brother and sister chicken farmers Frédéric and Virginie Cloutier at their farm in Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec.

OPINION Insider's Guide to Parliament



Hill staffers and Hill journalists, pictured at D'Arcy McGee's Irish Pub in Ottawa, on Oct. 30, 2008, after then-prime minister Stephen Harper's cabinet was sworn in that day. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

John Delacourt's advice for new Hill staffers

Here are three modest suggestions for potential staffers, which may be equally useful to newcomers to the Hill and seasoned political and policy professionals who have held senior roles in the past. These are not wardrobe tips, or insider intelligence on which cafeteria has the best burritos. Think of them as introductory guidelines for living in a very particular ecosystem.

John Delacourt

Opinion



This opinion piece was first published in *Policy Magazine* on May 8.

With a new federal cabinet announced and a new session of Parliament imminent,

Ottawa is currently seized by the sort of cyclical post-election fervour whereby the conversations about who might land where among staffers are at least as animated as the cabinet-casting speculation.

While this transition is not a change of parties, it is a change of leadership and a new Parliament, which generates a certain amount of churn in ministerial and MPs staffing. Many of those staffers will be veterans, but a good number will be new to Ottawa, arriving from local campaign offices and the previous lives of rookie MPs.

Herewith are three modest suggestions for potential staffers, which may be equally useful to newcomers to the Hill and seasoned political and policy professionals who have held senior roles in the past. These are not wardrobe tips, or insider intelligence on which cafeteria has the best burritos. Think of them as introductory guidelines for living in a very particular ecosystem.

Do not succumb to the cult of gossip

Working amid the hurly burly of the Hill makes it possible for people to feel like they know a little about everyone without actually knowing anyone in any substantive, authentic way. This limited perspective has only been exacerbated by the virtual nature of working relationships, the time constraints imposed by the intensity of the work, and the social and professional hazards of gossip. Aside from following the best advice your mother ever gave you (i.e. try to see the good in people, and if someone speaks

ill of an absent third party to you, rest assured they'll trash talk you to someone else). It is probably helpful to do what good journalists do as second nature and ask some pointed follow-up questions when dealing with gossip: 1. Has that been your experience with this person? 2. If not, from whom did you hear it and what has your experience been, actually? It's amazing how this approach tempers hot takes and received information. The other thing that most journalists are required to do is get as many sources as they can. Admittedly, that's not always possible, so the follow-up questions above remain the best of all express routes to sound judgment.

Avoid the zero-sum school of office politics

In fact, try to avoid office politics altogether and remain focused on the real kind, though that's not always easy. An unfortunate thing about the competitive nature of staffer roles is that the number of second chances for people decreases in direct proportion to how competitive the environment becomes. Org charts in political offices are far more fluid and dynamic than most settings in the private sector, which can create great opportunities for rapid advancement and—with an asterisk—skills development (harsh reality: not all these skills for stakeholder relations, policy development or communications are easily transferrable or translatable to employers off the Hill).

However, owing to a number of factors that may play out in individual offices, some people are just set up to fail from the

very beginning. I have seen it multiple times that, in a different office, with a different role, a person who failed in one job can be amazing. Great leadership helps make that happen. Unfortunately, it is rare to have anyone in a senior role, in political offices, ask you: 'Where do you want to be in a year? What do you want to learn?' Most chiefs of staff are focused on where their minister will be and how to get them there, with everyone on the org chart as interchangeable agents to make that happen. Great leaders know that the two streams of development—individual and team—flow into the same channel, and they make that channel as deep and inclusive as possible. So, if you're not asked those questions about your own aspirations, ask to be asked. Just don't do it during week one—there are restrooms to locate.

See your horizon, and pick the right mentors

This last suggestion/recommendation is more for those who might be starting to look at other options, back in the real world, after their time on the Hill. How do you know when it's time to leave? There are tell-tale signs, but I'd say the most significant is when you find yourself getting cynical: about the government, the media, and—most importantly—about the people you work with. There is nothing more toxic and limiting for development. Per the widely-poached quote from UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, character is more important than reputation. When that equation gets reversed,

it's usually because a working culture is more conducive to people building reputation than building character. Within the hothouse culture of the Hill, it is easy to equate the former with the latter, but you do so at your peril.

By way of an illustration, in my first agency job off the Hill, my account team had another former political staffer join us. This was a person who spent most of their time on the Hill in offices where they focused on issues management/communications. Within a week or two, everyone realized this person espoused a certain approach to power defined by an unfailing radar for advancement at both any cost and any expense to those around them. They were practiced at texting eye roll emojis about other team members' comments and suggestions—only for those in perceived positions of power or influence on the team, of course (and pointedly, not to anyone in senior management at the firm). When a partner got wind of this, he called a meeting, explained that he had heard there was a kind of *Lord-of-the-Flies* culture starting to form, and without naming names stated: "It has to stop. We don't do this. We pick up the ball for each other when it drops. We're a team."

That former staffer ended up leaving the firm and ultimately going back on the Hill. It's the only place where they could thrive, unfortunately. However, it was not really where they could grow and build truly valuable skills for life after politics.

The VP who called out the behaviour? He was a former political staffer who thrived in his post-politics life, including by mentoring others, among them yours truly. Which raises a final bit of advice: whatever your party, follow the good guys.

Policy contributing writer John Delacourt is senior vice president of Counsel Public Affairs in Ottawa and a successful novelist.

The Hill Times

Insider's Guide to Parliament **COMMENT**

Parliament is back: will it be like the last one?

The changes on the front benches provide a window of opportunity to set a more constructive and healthy culture as Parliament reconvenes. Here's hoping.

Lori
Turnbull

Opinion



On May 26, Parliament meets for the first time since being prorogued back in January when then-prime minister Justin Trudeau announced his intent to resign. Prior to that, the House had spent most of the fall of 2024 stuck in limbo. An unresolved motion of privilege prevented most types of business from going through. Partisan rhetoric became more hostile by the day to the point where descriptors like "toxic" were commonplace. Now that Parliament is set to meet again with a new prime minister and a different partisan make up, can we expect a different—and better—atmosphere?

The *Rules of Order and Decorum for the House of Commons* are meant to ensure, or at least encourage, civility. Freedom of speech is of vital importance to the role of an elected representative, but always it must be balanced against the need for Members of Parliament to show respect for one another and maintain order in their conduct and debate. The rules of engagement reflect this desire for balance. For example, Members of Parliament refer to one another as "honourable members" rather than by proper names. Questions in the House and in committees are directed through the Speaker or the committee chair rather so as to prevent the escalation of heated exchanges. And, if things really boil over, the opposition is seated a safe distance of two sword lengths away from the government to prevent the worst from happening.

But even as these rules remain in place, successive House Speakers have struggled to maintain order. Politicians, looking to score points with supporters by ganging up on or embarrassing their opponents, will risk engaging in unparliamentary language because, even if it offends the rules, it makes the papers. The House of Commons is a place to debate legislation, but has also become a studio. It is common for political parties to make videos of particularly heated exchanges or aggressive lines of questioning in committees and then send these clips to supporters and funders in the hopes of ginning up the base. It is anything but civil.

Any meaningful departure from this nonsense would require the support of the party leaders. At the risk of putting too fine a point on it, the toxic tone of the last Parliament was set largely by Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre, the leaders of the Liberal and Conservative parties whose personal contempt for one another was palpable. But Trudeau has been replaced by Mark Carney, and Poilievre failed to secure his own seat in the last election. The changes on the front benches provide a window of opportunity to set a more constructive and healthy culture as Parliament reconvenes.

Prime Minister Carney, himself a first-time parliamentarian, took the initial step in setting a collegial tone when he



Newly elected MPs attend an orientation session put on by House of Commons staff on May 21, 2025. The House will be full this week when MPs return for this Parliament. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

declared that he would not delay the calling of a byelection in the Alberta riding of Battle River-Crowfoot, where Poilievre will run in an attempt to get himself back into the House. Carney has also said that his party will not form another confidence-and-supply agreement with

the New Democrats or any other party. Instead, it is expected that the Liberals will find support with different parties on an ad hoc basis as bills come forward in the House. This point alone marks a significant departure from the practice of the last Parliament in that it makes it

more possible for the Liberal government to work constructively with the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois. This could lead to a more robust culture of co-operation, a greater feeling of efficacy for all parties, and a more authentic form of representation of the population.

King Charles III will read the speech from the throne to open Canada's 45th Parliament. If this is not the most appropriate and meaningful way to set proceedings off on the right foot, it is hard to imagine what would be. The King's participation is both a profound statement of Canada's sovereignty and a resounding link to our history as a parliamentary democracy. As parliamentary proceedings begin again, there is every reason to hope for a more productive atmosphere.

Lori Turnbull is a senior adviser at the Institute on Governance.
The Hill Times



How to Build Resilient Canadian Health Systems?

GOAL 1:

Strengthen Canada's Position as a World-Leader in Life Sciences Research & Commercialization

GOAL 2:

Accelerate and Expand Access to Innovative Therapies, Diagnostics and Vaccines

GOAL 3:

Optimize the Impact and Interoperability of Health Data Across Canada

Find the Joint Mandate Letter to the Ministers of Health and Industry at:

ResilientHealthcare.ca

OPINION Insider's Guide to Parliament

Liberal staffers and ministers in the West Block on March 10, 2025. If you're stepping into this new Parliament as a staffer, either for the first time or with hard-earned experience, know this: accepting the uncertain nature of your job will not only help you stay grounded, it will help you lead, writes former Liberal cabinet and PMO staffer Marci Surkes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Reflections for staff on a new sitting of Parliament

The coming months will test you. But if you lead with integrity, empathy and purpose, you'll not only survive, you'll shape outcomes that make a real difference in the lives of Canadians.

Marci Surkes

Opinion



Canada's most recent federal election has brought us what many now consider the "new normal": another minority government—the third in a row. For those of us who work behind the scenes in Parliament, this result isn't just a political headline; it fundamentally reshapes how we operate, how we negotiate, and how we govern.

Minority Parliaments demand something different, something better, from everyone involved in public life. They require compro-

mise, collaboration, and a deep commitment to the common good. That's not always easy, but it is essential. The message from voters is clear: Canadians want their elected officials and, by extension, their staff to work together to get things done and to focus on results over rhetoric. That means staffers must be ready to reach across the aisle, build consensus, and understand perspectives beyond their own.

While pundits dissect voter intentions and parties jockey for influence, staffers on Parliament Hill are entering a new session defined by uncertainty, just like the one before it. If you're stepping into this new Parliament as a staffer, whether for the first time or with hard-earned experience (and political wounds!), know this: accepting the uncertain nature of your job will not only help you stay grounded, it will also help you lead. Below are some thoughts drawn from my own experience, and those of many colleagues, that I hope can guide you as you find your place and purpose in this new political era.

Remind yourself why you're here

It might have been to serve your home community, to be part of shaping national decisions, or to make sure someone with your lived experience had a voice. In

the churn of committee meetings and crisis communications, that original purpose can get buried. Dig it up again. Your reason for being here will be your anchor in the unpredictable months ahead.

Not everything will get done; don't be disappointed

Even with the supply-and-confidence agreement we saw in the last Parliament, minority governments mean some things will stall, fall apart, or just run out of time. Promising bills might die on the Order Paper. Focus on what's possible. Be strategic. Work with colleagues in your caucus and even across party lines to advance the causes that matter.

Ottawa is small, so be kind

The Hill may seem massive when you're running between the West Block and committee meetings on the other side of the Parliamentary Precinct, but let's be real: it's a small village, and people remember how you treat them. Resist the temptation to treat politics like a zero-sum game. Whether it's your colleague, a stakeholder, or a journalist, you will see them again in another life (maybe as a minister in the next Parliament, or your boss at the association

you make your home after your political days are over). Kindness is currency.

And remember the golden rule of any political office: be especially kind to the scheduler. Their work keeps the entire operation moving, and during busy sittings or legislative crunch time, they are your MVP. If you are that person—thank you. You are the unsung hero.

Network authentically

This can't be understated (see notes above re: Ottawa is small!) Networking is important on the Hill, but don't treat it like a transaction. The most meaningful connections are built on shared interests and mutual respect. Find a mentor who reflects where you'd like to go, whether they're still in politics or have moved on. Ask real questions. Offer real interest. Genuine relationships are what sustain long careers in public life.

Build diverse teams

If you're hiring or in a senior role, be deliberate about creating diverse teams. This means more than checking boxes; it's about cultivating a workplace where different perspectives are heard and valued. A team that reflects Canada, Canadians, and the businesses that grow our economy will make better policy, ask better questions, and see the blind spots others miss.

Say 'no' gracefully

Time is tight in a minority. You'll need to decline meetings, push back on requests, or redirect attention. Do it with professionalism and empathy. You represent not just your MP or minister, but the institution itself. Grace under pressure builds trust in democratic institutions—and we need more of that.

Finally: take it all in

Whether you're pulling a late night on a bill or celebrating a small policy win, it's so important to pause and remember how rare this experience is. You are participating in one of the most direct forms of public service. Not everyone gets to say that. This work is demanding, but it's also deeply meaningful. So make the most of it while you can.

Minority Parliaments are fragile, but they're also full of possibility. They can force us to be better, more collaborative, more focused on the country instead of the party.

The coming months will test you. But if you lead with integrity, empathy and purpose, you'll not only survive, you'll shape outcomes that make a real difference in the lives of Canadians.

And really, what more could you ask for?

Marci Surkes is chief strategy officer and managing director of Compass Rose Group, a government relations and public affairs firm in Ottawa. She spent 15 years on the Hill as a senior staffer, most recently as executive director of policy and cabinet affairs in the Prime Minister's Office from 2019 to 2022.

The Hill Times

Insider's Guide to Parliament **OPINION**

What's happening in Gaza could well be regarded as the graveyard of international law

What is at stake in both the Middle East and Ukraine is the continued survival of the norms of international law, peace, and security that if preserved and respected, will help to prevent the devastation of large parts of the human family now and into the future.

Errol P. Mendes

Opinion



The leaders of Canada, Britain, and France should be applauded for issuing a joint statement on May 19 that they would take actions against Israel if it did not provide sufficient aid to prevent mass starvation in Gaza. The joint statement argued that "The Israeli government's denial of essential humanitarian assistance to the civilian population is unacceptable and risks breaching international humanitarian law." The joint statement by the leaders of these three countries also urged Israel not to expand Jewish settlement in the West Bank and threatened targeted sanctions for these breaches of international law. The United Kingdom has already suspended trade talks with Israel as one of the sanctions. All three leaders also stated they are committed to recognizing a Palestinian State as part of a two-state solution.

What is happening in Gaza could well be regarded as the graveyard of international law. In the absence of equivalent pressure by the Trump administration, such sanctions by one or all of these three countries may not result in convincing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to lift the blockage to allow sufficient aid to prevent what the World Health Organization fears is the starvation of two million people, thousands of whom are children.

However, the protesting of grave infringements of international humanitarian law backed by even limited sanctions is crucial for preventing the slow death of the most critical norms of international peace and security established after the Second World War. Such joint statements are critical for the most respected nations to continually make to oppose the increasingly destructive global norm of might makes right that the leaders of Russia, China, Iran and—sadly—now the present leader of Israel seem to endorse. As a cherished democratic nation, Israeli leaders' actions should be the antithesis of and in stark contrast to the inhuman and genocidal actions of Hamas who carried out the atrocities of Oct. 7, 2023, against innocent Jewish civilians. Those atrocities started the Israeli military action in Gaza which if carried out with proportionate actions

against Hamas are justified under international humanitarian law. Starving a population can't be regarded as proportionate.

It is crucial that democratic nations take every opportunity to state and act against the law of might makes right if they want to avoid their future generations experiencing ever destructive regional wars and perhaps even a future global war.

It is also crucial that such collective protesting and, hopefully, actions led by Canada, the U.K., and France continue

with the G7 summit taking place June 15-17, 2025, in Kananaskis, Alta. Given that Prime Minister Mark Carney will be presiding over the summit, the protesting against "might makes right" must continue especially as Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will be attending.

At the summit, the European Union and its member countries along with the U.K. and Canada must push for a more effective package of sanctions against Russia and support the financial survival of Ukraine

by allowing earning from frozen Russian sovereign assets to be used by the invaded country. Trump, who has sought closer relations with the Kremlin, may object to such actions and stall for more time for Russia to gain more territory on the frontlines of Ukraine. However, the rest of the democratic nations present at the G7 summit must act against allowing Russia to engage in stalling tactics to take more of Ukraine's territory and make Ukraine a vassal state ruled, in effect, by the Kremlin.

What is at stake in both the Middle East and Ukraine is the continued survival of the norms of international law, peace, and security that if preserved and respected, will help to prevent the devastation of large parts of the human family now and into the future.

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

The Hill Times

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COMMENT Insider's Guide to Parliament



Trump puts the squeeze on Canada: Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, meets with U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House's Oval Office on May 6, 2025. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House (Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok)

Carney will need to get a clear agreement on Canada's future relationship with the U.S.

Despite our efforts to build a more independent economy, we are still going to need some kind of agreement with the U.S., a market which accounts for about 75 per cent of our trade.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—The Carney government has set out a huge challenge both for itself and for the country: to reduce Canada's dependence on the United States for economic growth and prosperity, and for security. This has been tried before, with the Nixon shock, and failed, so it won't be easy this time with the Trump shock.

While Canada could end up less an American vassal state,

which is necessary in itself for our future sovereignty, and with deeper ties to the rest of the world, at the end of the day, the odds are we will nonetheless remain heavily tied to the United States and its rich marketplace. We will need a clear agreement on the future relationship between the two countries. But if we do it well, we will be less a supplicant and more a partner based on our own independent capabilities. This is where our innovation policy fits in. We have to make big changes at home.

The Carney government has set itself two goals: first, to expand Canadian ties with the rest of the world, which means major changes in the economy with many more homegrown companies, with their own proprietary technologies, selling more globally; and, second, negotiating a new deal with the U.S. on both economic and security relationships which retains trade and security ties, but on a less trustful and more realistic basis.

This is not the first time Canada has sought to become more independent—or, to put it another way, less dependent on the U.S. In 1972, the Pierre Trudeau government launched its Third Option strategy. A year earlier, the Nixon administration had lashed out at the rest of the world with protectionist measures to address its

own trade and balance of payments problems. With this Nixon shock, Canadians discovered how vulnerable they were to unilateral American trade actions.

The Third Option paper gave three options: business as usual; further integration with the U.S.; or pursue a long-term strategy to make Canada less dependent on America and more integrated into the world economy. This last option, the so-called Third Option, was the Trudeau government's choice. But it lacked serious support from the business community, which preferred closer ties with the U.S., and there was lukewarm interest among many in the federal ranks of senior officials who were likewise inclined to favour closer ties with our southern neighbour.

The Third Option had been largely abandoned by the time Brian Mulroney became prime minister in 1984, with the Trudeau government already talking of sectoral free trade with the U.S. In 1988, Canada signed the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, although opposition leader John Turner warned Mulroney "with the signature of a pen, you've thrown us into the north-south influence of the U.S. and will reduce us to a colony of the United States because when the economic levers go, the political independence is sure to follow."

Yet the Jean Chrétien and Justin Trudeau governments that followed largely embraced North American integration and worked to show the first Trump and follow-on Biden administrations that we were aligned. The Trudeau government's decision to impose 100-per-cent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, in response to pressure from then-U.S. president Joe Biden, was a recent indication—even if it meant sacrificing our own canola farmers.

Now we are faced with an even more aggressive shock from U.S. President Donald Trump who belittles Canada as the 51st state, declaring that he wants to make us squeal so much from U.S. economic warfare that we will beg to join the U.S., and, in the process, breaks trade agreements and creates false narratives about our nation.

Yet even though, as Carney has said, "the old relationship we had with the United States based on deepening integration of our economies and tight security and military cooperation is over," and that, as a sovereign country, we have to create a different future, we still have to have some kind of trade and security relationship with the U.S., one which Carney has described as a new relationship "based on respect, built on common interests, and to the benefit of both nations."

Setting the stage for that was the purpose of Carney's visit to the White House on May 6 and since then Carney has assigned Dominic LeBlanc, a member of his cabinet, responsibility for Canada-U.S. trade while retaining personal responsibility for the nature of that future relationship.

So what should happen next? The best approach is probably the one set out by Steve Verheul, who was Canada's chief negotiator for the revised NAFTA during Trump's first presidency: the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement.

"It's probably in Canada's interest to try to get those negotiations started sooner than later," he said recently. But, he added, "Canada should be cautious in how quickly it moves towards any kind of conclusion because I think with the U.S. in the current position it's in, it feels it has a lot of leverage, a lot of negotiating capital on its side, and it's making very extreme demands."

So while the negotiations should begin, there should be no rush to make concessions. A better approach, Verheul contends, is to wait for "some more pushback from the market, from stock markets, from economic indicators, to try to bring the U.S. down to more reasonable objectives in that kind of negotiation."

Despite our efforts to build a more independent economy, we are still going to need some kind of agreement with America, a market which accounts for about 75 per cent of our trade. But we should be working hard so that when we get down to serious trade-offs we will be in a much better position than we are today. So that working hard on building a new economy is fundamental to our future relationship.

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

The Hill Times

Insider's Guide to Parliament **OPINION**

Canadian voices deserve the protection that Prime Minister Mark Carney made a key plank of the Liberal platform. Creators are a strong shield for our sovereignty, writes Danny Ramadan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Time for the Liberals to protect Canadian voices as promised

Parliament must update the Copyright Act so that Canadian creators are compensated when their works are used for education.

Danny Ramadan

Opinion



“Protecting Canadian Voices” was a key plank in the Liberal platform during the recent election. That document went on to say “a strong culture is forged by the history we share and the stories we tell that are uniquely our own. In a sea of American media and disinformation, we need Canadian voices more than ever.”

This strikes me as very good and positive policy because I have a Canadian voice and many stories uniquely my own, even though “the history we share” is likely somewhat short. I came to this country in 2014, a refugee from Syria’s bloody civil war. I became a Canadian citizen in 2019, and have now proudly voted in three federal elections.

I use my Canadian voice in many contexts. I am an author of fiction, non-fiction, and children’s literature. My books are read widely across Canada, including in classrooms and on university reading lists.

I am an activist who fundraises for LGBTQ+ refugees. I have raised close to half a million dollars in this mission, helping my refugee siblings come to this marvelous country, and to find their own Canadian voices.

And I am an advocate for my fellow Canadian authors. For the last two years, I have served as chair of The Writers’ Union of Canada, a volunteer role of which I am immensely proud. On taking this position, it was my stated goal to help break down barriers for a more diverse group of writers, so they, too, might have their Canadian voices turned into books. I believe I have

moved the union and the professional writing sector forward on that mission.

But, I have also been determined to see all professional Canadian voices, both established and emerging, better protected and encouraged in the marketplace and economy. You see, by the time I arrived in Canada, a key market for authors in this country had already been fatally corroded. The licensing of copies for educational use—once a backbone economic driver for those “stories we tell that are uniquely our own”—was already two years into steep decline. That decline now represents over \$250-million in lost income for Canadian writers and publishers. A loss that size might very well have destroyed our sector, and it certainly held us back at a crucial time when the world would have benefited from stronger Canadian voices on the global scene.

How did this happen?

In 2012, a highly contested amendment was made to Canada’s Copyright Act. This change was supposed to bring clarity to schools, colleges, and universities around their growing habit of copying rather than purchasing published materials. It was expressly *not* permission to stop paying cultural workers, to walk away from copyright licensing, and to start copying massive amounts for free. Yet that’s what happened. Educational cost-cutters jumped at what they decided was a free-for-all. And they defied both Parliament and the courts to do so.

Meanwhile, struggling Canadian authors who might reasonably expect crucial licensing royalties to improve their meagre incomes get nothing. Our uniquely Canadian voices are still valued by teachers, professors, and students. Our writing is still taught, our stories still told in classrooms. But we are no longer paid for that work.

At a time when American tech companies devalue and disrespect our work by stealing it for their AI profit machines, one might reasonably expect Canadian institutions to stand as frontline protectors of Canadian stories. But that’s not going to happen without direction from Parliament and strengthened law.

Today, several authors occupy key positions in cabinet, including Prime Minister Mark Carney, Industry Minister Mélanie Joly, Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault, and former journalist and new Artificial

Intelligence Minister Evan Solomon. Given their background, I have faith we can work together to ensure the stability and prosperity of Canada’s book sector.

Canadian voices deserve the protection promised by Carney. They are a strong

shield for our sovereignty, and a stunning representation of our culture. Let’s make a real change, and repair the market for Canadian cultural work.

Danny Ramadan is a Syrian-Canadian author, LGBTQ+ refugees advocate, and chair of The Writers’ Union of Canada. He is the author of *Crooked Teeth*, *The Foghorn Echoes*, *The Clothesline Swing*, and the award-winning *Salma* children’s series. His work has won the *Lambda Literary Award*, the *Publishing Triangle Award*, the *Independent Publisher Book Award*, and was longlisted for *Canada Reads*.

The Hill Times

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First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders lay out major asks for re-elected Liberal government

Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and Métis National Council leaders urge the new Liberal government to address clean drinking water, community policing, Arctic security, and housing among many priorities for this Parliament.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

With the historic inclusion of three Indigenous ministers in cabinet, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak says the governing Liberals can approach the upcoming parliamentary session as an unprecedented opportunity to address unresolved issues facing Indigenous Peoples.

Two of the top issues facing First Nations communities are the absence of clean drinking water and proper policing on reserves, said Woodhouse Nepinak. She said Mandy Gull-Masty (Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, Que.)—the first Indigenous minister overseeing Indigenous services—Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister Rebecca Chartrand (Churchill-Kee-watinook Aski, Man.), and Buckley Belanger (Desnethé-Missinipi-Churchill River, Sask.), secretary of state for rural development, can help advance those files in cabinet.

Woodhouse Nepinak is on the lookout for the return of a bill that died on the Order Paper in last Parliament: the First Nations Clean Water Act, which would have set drinking-water standards in First Nations communities and established a First Nations Water Commission.

Woodhouse Nepinak said Bill C-61 was “a missed opportunity to address” a crisis in which 38 drinking-water advisories in 36

First Nations remained in effect as of May 8, according to Indigenous Services Canada. In 2015, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau vowed to end all long-term drinking water advisories on reserves by 2021.

Now she said it’s time for Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) government to make the legislation’s return a priority.

During the election campaign in April, Carney told an AFN forum that his government would reintroduce C-61 and take First Nations guidance on creating a water commission to ensure they have the capacity for developing and maintaining the required infrastructure.

Beyond seeking relief from Parliament, First Nations have gone to the courts to gain access to clean drinking water. In 2021, First Nations and Ottawa agreed to an \$8-billion settlement related to communities that were subject to drinking-water advisories between 1995 and 2021.

In 2022, the Federal Court also approved a class action brought forward by the Shamattawa First Nation in northern Manitoba, related to drinking-water advisories that lasted one year since 2020.

In its statement of defence, the federal government argued that “Canada does not owe the plaintiffs a general fiduciary duty as asserted to provide or fund water infrastructure on reserve. ... Canada does not owe any legal obligations or duties to operate and maintain the plaintiffs’ water systems.”

Problems with public safety on reserves have also ended up in court.

Last November, in an 8-1 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the Quebec government needs to provide further funding for the Pekuakamiulnuatsh First Nation’s police force in the province after being ordered to do so by the Quebec Court of Appeal in 2022.

Woodhouse Nepinak said the federal government needs to allow First Nations to “take control of their own public safety because the models we now have are not working.”

“What other town or city in the country would put up with not having policing services within their communities? But unfor-

tunately, First Nations have to tolerate that every day,” said the national chief, who is the great-great-granddaughter of Richard Woodhouse, who signed Treaty 2 in 1871—the second Aboriginal treaty with the Crown since Confederation.

During the election, the AFN called on the next government to commit to legislation that affirms First Nations’ jurisdiction over on-reserve policing, recognizes it as an essential service, and includes provides long-term funding.

At the AFN’s election forum, Carney said “we want to move to self-administered First Nation policing services.”

The assembly was also involved in a class action that in 2023 resulted in a Federal Court-approved, \$23-billion settlement for about 300,000 First Nations children and their families regarding Canada’s chronic under-funding of on-reserve child welfare services between 1991 and 2022.

“We don’t always want to be in court,” said Woodhouse Nepinak. “Why don’t we just get to the table and work out things so we’re not always fighting each other in court?”

Leaders want to be at premiers’ table

Carney is meeting with premiers in Saskatoon, Sask., on June 2, and Indigenous leaders should be at the same table to discuss issues affecting their communities, she said, and not, “at the little kiddies’ table the day before a meeting of the first ministers” as her predecessors faced.

“Those days have to be gone,” she said. “We have colonialism at our doorstep from people like [United States] President [Donald] Trump pushing it towards Canada—and Canada should not continue to do that against First Peoples.”

“We’re stronger together.”

Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), echoed those frustrations. His group represents Canada’s 70,000 Inuit who live on 40 per cent of this country’s land mass and along 72 per cent of its coastline



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, pictured in her office in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister Rebecca Chartrand, left, with ITK President Natan Obed at Tapiriit on May 13. *Photograph courtesy of ITK*

“We are partners in Confederation, whether provincial or territorial premiers like it or not,” said Obed, noting that he has already had discussions with ministers Gull-Masty and Chartrand.

“It’s not been the Government of Canada that has been actively excluding us from these conversations. It has been provinces and territories.”

When asked about the provincial-territorial pushback, Obed said he believes the premiers view first ministers’ meetings as “privileged space with the prime minister, and often see First Nations, Inuit, and Métis issues as being separate in governance.”

“We share the governance of this country, and Inuit very explicitly have modern treaties and constitutionally-protected space,” said Obed, who has headed the ITK since 2015. “We have self-governments, we have administration of public funds that we provide to citizens just like provinces and territories do. But there is a lack of interest in treating national



Indigenous leaders as if we play a significant role within the confederation of this country,” which he described as “a vestige of a more colonial and less-inclusive time in the country.”

Obed, who also serves as acting president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, is determined to change that.

He recently sent Carney a letter calling for a first ministers’ meeting on the Arctic with ITK participation.

The Fredericton-born, 49-year-old Inuk, who was raised in Nain, Nunatsiavut (an Inuit autonomous region in northern Labrador), said the people of the Inuit Nunangat (homeland) want to be partners in conversations involving Northern defence, sovereignty, infrastructure investments, and the militarization of the Arctic and matters involving it with other countries.

He hopes the Carney government will focus on those issues through the lens of the Inuit Nunangat Policy, which was created in 2023 during the Trudeau government, and through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee in which the prime minister and the ITK president are meant to co-chair an annual meeting.

Arctic defence on ITK’s radar

The national Inuit organization, formed in 1971, has several asks of the federal government during the upcoming parliamentary session. Chief among them is that any economic initiatives intended “to ease the worst outcomes of the tariff war” with the U.S. don’t add to the already high costs residents in the 51 Inuit communities face.

Obed explained that only two communities in the Northwest Territories—Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk—have all-weather access roads. The rest are “fly-in, fly-out” communities, “which makes things much more expensive.”

During the election campaign, the Liberals pledged to “work closely with Arctic and Northern Indigenous leadership as partners, in defence and security investments that respect their rights, incorporate traditional knowledge, and ensure community priorities are reflected.”

Obed said that during the 1940s and 1950s, the Inuit Nunangat “became a key and vital part” of the American and Canadian security apparatus at the end of the Second World War.

“But the first time that happened, we weren’t a part of it at all.”

Through treaties in place, Obed said the ITK would like to collaborate with the federal government on “defending our borders and ensuring that the infrastructure that we need to do that is not only helpful for Canada and its allies, but also essential for Inuit and our communities.”

He said that the Inuit need extends to housing infrastructure. In March and before the federal election, Carney announced during a trip to Iqaluit that his government would invest nearly \$66-million to build, renovate, and repair homes across Nunavut.

Obed also said he hopes the Liberals will honour their campaign commitments to increase investments for Indigenous men-

tal health and “partner with Inuit to eliminate tuberculosis in Inuit Nunangat by 2030.”

Métis National Council urges greater investment

Victoria Pruden, president of the 42-year-old Métis National Council, said the MNC has several priorities for the new Parliament.

“We call for targeted investments in distinctions-based tools to support capital access, procurement readiness, and skills development for Métis businesses,” which Pruden said includes a dedicated Métis stream within the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program.

She said that in light of growing demand from a young and expanding Métis population, the MNC also seeks “a renewed commitment and increased investment” in the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy that is run through Indigenous Services Canada and which received \$362-million over 10 years in the 2019 federal budget.

Pruden, who was elected MNC president last December, also wants increased federal investment “to support sustainable energy and infrastructure, low-carbon economic develop-

ment, and prosperity and emergency management and climate resilience” across the Métis homeland in Canada, which includes the Prairie provinces, and extends into contiguous parts of Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

Those goals are identified in the Métis Nation Climate Leadership Agenda that was co-developed by the MNC, the five Métis governments (in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario), Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Pruden said the MNC wants the Carney government to convene a Crown-Métis Nation Summit (the last one was held with Trudeau in 2023) to “reset priorities and implement outstanding commitments in areas such as justice, health and emergency management” under the Canada-Métis Nation Accord signed in 2017.

The national council is also calling for continued negotiation and implementation of self-government and treaties with Métis governments, said Pruden.

“Building a more inclusive and prosperous Canada requires working in full partnership with Indigenous governments.”

The Hill Times



Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty, left, Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister Rebecca Chartrand, and Secretary of State for Rural Development Buckley Belanger are all Indigenous Peoples. *Photographs courtesy of Liberal Party*

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NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Indigenous Services Minister Gull-Masty says she's eager to 'succeed' under 'huge pressure,' as Indigenous leaders welcome 'progress' in cabinet picks

Indigenous Services Canada is being headed by an Indigenous person for the first time ever—something Mandy Gull-Masty says adds to the 'pressure' to succeed, as she feels out her new role under the weight of 'a lot of eyes watching.'

BY ELEANOR WAND

Having three Indigenous ministers in cabinet is cause for "cautious optimism," say Indigenous leaders, some of whom welcome the "lived experience" on Prime Minister Mark Carney's senior team, but warn that blame for government inaction should not fall at their feet.

Among the files handed to this trio of ministers is the oversight of Indigenous Services Canada, a move that makes first-time MP and former grand chief Mandy Gull-Masty (Abitibi-Baie-James-Nunavik-Eeyou, Que.) the first Indigenous person to helm the ministry.

Gull-Masty said she's in for a "pretty steep" learning curve, pointing to the need to familiarize herself with her duties as an MP, but also her duties as a minister, saying that she's already feeling the pressure to succeed as the first Indigenous person in the role.

"There is not only going to be ... a lot of eyes watching what I do—what I chose to do, how I chose to do it—but there's a huge pressure from myself as well," she said in an interview with *The Hill Times* on May 19. "I want to succeed."

Prior to unseating two-time Bloc Québécois incumbent Sylvie Bérubé in northern Quebec, Gull-Masty served as the grand chief for the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) in Quebec for four years, and was the first woman to hold the position.

Gull-Masty was among two other Indigenous cabinet members sworn in on May 13 at Rideau Hall. Rookie MP Rebecca



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty, and Governor General Mary Simon at the May 13 cabinet ceremony. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Chartrand (Churchill-Keewatinook Aski, Man.) was given the file for northern and arctic affairs, and Buckley Belanger (Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River, Sask.) is responsible for rural development as a secretary of state—a junior position Carney revived after almost a decade without secretaries of state under his predecessor Justin Trudeau.

Chartrand, who is Anishinaabe from Treaty Four territory in Manitoba, also flipped a seat red this election, ousting long-time former NDP MP Niki Ashton with a decisive 45.5 per cent of the vote. As minister, Chartrand will also be responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. Before being elected, Chartrand was the CEO and president of the organization Indigenous Strategy, aimed at improving Indigenous inclusion at the community, policy, and education level.

Belanger, who was the sole Liberal MP elected in Saskatchewan and who is of Métis descent, is also a first-time MP, having run and lost in 2021 against then-Conservative MP Gary Vidal, who opted against running for re-election this year. But Belanger is no stranger to politics. Before running as a Liberal candidate at the federal level, he served as an MLA in Saskatchewan under the NDP for 26 years, switching to federal politics in 2021.

Gull-Masty is the first Indigenous minister to oversee Indigenous services—but she's not the first to have been offered the post. Trudeau offered the role to Jody Wilson-Raybould in 2019—one of

two Indigenous cabinet members at the time—but Wilson-Raybould refused, citing her opposition to the Indian Act, which has been used to force colonial and harmful policies on Indigenous communities. The amended act remains in effect today, and requires administration as part of the minister of Indigenous services' file.

When asked if she had hesitations about accepting the post for similar reasons, Gull-Masty said that Wilson-Raybould "had her own decision-making process," but that she "immediately said yes" when offered the job.

"Immediately I saw [it] as one of the most important tasks, one of the most challenging tasks," she said. "This is why I confirmed instantly because I knew the significance of what was being asked."

Gull-Masty also said that, having been on the other end of the process as grand chief representing one of the few Indigenous communities in Canada to enjoy a form of regional self-governance, she brings a different level of understanding to the post.

"I want people to understand that I have received services from this ministry as a former grand chief," she said. "I know what it means when you make a decision at the desk in Ottawa, and what that translates to in community ... My first priority and objective within the ministry is to close that gap."

Cabinet picks equal 'huge progress,' says NWAC

Josie Nepinak, president of the Native Women's Association

of Canada, said that the appointment of three Indigenous cabinet members makes her "very optimistic" that things will improve from the previous Trudeau government, which often saw non-Indigenous ministers leading Indigenous files.

"I'm optimistic that we are moving towards a better direction," she told *The Hill Times*. "Three [cabinet members] is progress, in my opinion—huge progress."

"I think it takes away the paternalism," she continued. "The paternalistic, you know, 'we will do it for you because we know better than you.' It removes that piece, that barrier, that we've ... felt."

Prior to Gull-Masty's appointment, Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.) held the Indigenous services file. Hajdu was first appointed to the position in 2021 under Trudeau, and initially retained the portfolio as part of Carney's first cabinet picks, before being reshuffled to minister of jobs and families on May 13.

Former Yellowknife mayor and first-time MP Rebecca Altj has been tapped to head Crown-Indigenous relations in Carney's cabinet. Altj is not Indigenous, but is the elected MP for the Northwest Territories, which is home to a large Indigenous population—an appointment that suggests a focus on the North.

Brendan Moore, the national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, expressed a similar sentiment to Nepinak, saying he was feeling a sense of "cautious

optimism" about the cabinet appointments. But Moore said he hopes that his organization—which represents Indigenous people living off of reserves, including those without status—will be brought to the table more in the future, saying he was not granted a meeting with any of Trudeau's former ministers, despite his attempts.

"I think it's really important that Indigenous Peoples are leading portfolios when it comes to Indigenous interests," he said. "I hope for [the new ministers] to be inclusive to all Indigenous Peoples, regardless of distinction, residence or status, and that they consider all Indigenous peoples equitably."

Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, said it is "wonderful that Prime Minister Carney ... has elevated Indigenous considerations in the areas that affect us most," with his cabinet picks, but emphasized that there is still difficult work ahead for the ministers.

"These are incredibly difficult files. ... I can't imagine going into government and being a minister—and also being a minister for these contentious areas on day one," he said.

"There are still really difficult challenges within these portfolios that tie into historic inequity, ongoing racism, and a still-evolving governance piece between the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the running of a nation state like Canada."

Still, Obed said he was glad to see Indigenous women "stepping up and accepting" the roles, also pointing to Carney's "northern experience"—citing his birth in the Northwest Territories—as a hopeful sign.

"There's sometimes a fear that those who lead this country have no experience with Indigenous Peoples, or the Arctic, or the North," he said. "So, I'm quite thankful that Prime Minister Carney had that lived experience."

Mitch Case, president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, said that while he sees the appointment of more Indigenous ministers as a "potential step forward," he worries that Gull-Masty could fall prey to being unfairly blamed should she run into struggles in her role.

"I don't want to see her become the face of the government's inaction," Case said. "It isn't just ... the minister, it's also the cabinet and then the bureaucracy's ability to actually deliver on things."

"If the Government of Canada can't get its act together ... I don't want to see that become hurtful," he continued. "We don't blame the last 150 years of white ministers, so let's not line up ... to blame her if something doesn't work."

For Gull-Masty, the upcoming weeks may be challenging. To prepare, the new minister said she would be spending time at her camp over the long weekend connecting with "the land," where she said her "identity comes from."

"There's a lot of good energy, there's a lot of healing, there's a lot of reflection, when you're in your traditional territories."

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NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Now-eliminated mental health and addictions cabinet post 'shone a brighter light' on issues, but also caused some confusion, stakeholders say

The new Liberal cabinet no longer includes a seat for a mental health and addictions minister after former prime minister Justin Trudeau created the role in 2021.

BY TESSIE SANCI

Prime Minister Mark Carney's decision to eliminate the role of a full-fledged mental health and addictions minister from his cabinet is "a huge step back" for the file, but the former portfolio also created some confusion, say stakeholders.

"Having a designated minister for mental health and addiction certainly created way more attention on the need that was evident," said NDP MP Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, B.C.), his party's previous critic for the file.

"This is just a huge step back on a file that [the Liberals] still haven't paid enough attention to," said the recently re-elected MP during an interview with *The Hill Times* on May 20.

Glenn Brimacombe, a board director with the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, said he'd hoped that the role would return to cabinet after the April 28 election. The group used its social media channels to advocate for the inclusion of a specialized minister.

"We were hoping that the prime minister would have recognized the importance of the issue, and perhaps shone a brighter light around the cabinet table on this issue," said Brimacombe in an interview with *The Hill Times* on May 20.

Carney (Nepean, Ont.) has formed two cabinets within the last three months. The first one, on March 14, was considered a "caretaker" group to hold the government over until the inevitable election call. The second, sworn in on May 13, is meant to have more staying power as it follows the Liberal Party's April 28 election win.

In both cabinets, Carney returned to the traditional model



Health Minister Marjorie Michel, left, is sworn in as a cabinet minister by PCO Clerk John Hannaford, right, on May 13, 2025, at Rideau Hall as Governor General Mary Simon and Prime Minister Mark Carney look on. *The Hill Times* Photograph by Sam Garcia

of a single person leading the health file. This follows four years where the front bench included a health minister and a minister dedicated to mental health and addictions who also held the title of associate minister of health.

Now leading the health file is Marjorie Michel (Papineau, Que.), a first-time MP and former deputy chief of staff to then-prime minister Justin Trudeau. Michel now represents Trudeau's old riding.

The Hill Times asked Michel's office for an interview, but was told she was not available. The office agreed to answer questions by email, including a question asking the minister for her immediate priorities on the mental health and addictions file.

The emailed response on May 21 referred to two programs, both of which were launched under the Trudeau government.

"It is essential that Canadians have access to the health-care supports and services they need, when they need them, no matter where they live. More than one-third of the funding through the health-care bilateral agreements has gone to mental health and substance use services," the statement said, referring to the Working Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians Plan, which was introduced in 2023 and includes a \$25-billion bilateral transfer package for provinces and territories.

"We will continue building on the work of the previous government on the Youth Mental Health Fund, a generational investment in expanding and enhancing

comprehensive services for youth right in their communities," the statement continues.

The Youth Mental Health Fund—initially a temporary \$500-million program—was announced in last year's federal budget. Carney promised to make the fund permanent during the spring campaign.

Pandemic motivated mental health and addictions role

Trudeau introduced the role of mental health and addictions minister in October 2021. Then-MP Carolyn Bennett, now Canada's ambassador to Denmark, held the role between then and July 2023. Ya'ara Saks took on the file in July 2023, and held the job until Carney eliminated the position in his March 2025 cabinet. (Saks was not re-elected in her Ontario riding of York Centre following this year's federal election.)

Sarah Kennell, national director of public policy at the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), said on May 20 that the role's creation in 2021 was "the right move at the right moment in time." She noted that Bennett first took on the job during the COVID-19 pandemic as the government acknowledged the toll the global health crisis was having on Canadians' mental health.

But although the current absence of a minister for mental health and addictions is "disappointing," Kennell also said it's

important to have a minister with decision-making authority, which was not always the case for that role. She recounted the difficulty of being shuffled between the two offices depending on the issue being discussed.

For example, the CMHA's long-time goal has been to convince policymakers that mental health and addictions services should be funded as a part of Canada's public health care system just as physician and hospital services are. The latter services are included in the Canada Health Act, which means they must be paid for by provinces and territories in order for the jurisdictions to receive federal health transfers. CMHA has been advocating that the Canada Health Act be amended to include mental health and addictions services.

Kennell said that when she approached former mental health and addictions minister Saks about the issue, Kennell was told to speak with Mark Holland, who was then the health minister and specifically in charge of the Canada Health Act. Holland's office then told Kennell to speak with Saks' office as the issue was related to mental health and addictions. (Holland chose not to run for re-election.)

"From a stakeholder perspective, that can get frustrating—getting passed between ministers—and ultimately not being able to advance really important advocacy priorities facing Canadians," Kennell said, adding that going back and forth between offices "isn't a productive use of time for anyone."

Brimacombe also said that Holland told him "on a couple of occasions" to direct his advocacy requests to Saks though the then-health minister also made it clear that he would be "happy to hear [their] case."

Saks "was seen as the lead" on the subject of mental health parity, said Brimacombe, whose group also advocates for full public funding for mental health and addictions services.

The NDP's Johns was named his party's mental health and addictions critic soon after Bennett was named minister for the file in 2021. He told *The Hill Times* that the specific focus in Parliament impacted the way he was able to hold the government to account.

"We could target our focus in opposition, and it was effective," he said.

Johns said he and Saks met monthly to discuss policies. That was due to the importance the two parliamentarians put on the issues, and also a result of their parties' supply-and-confidence agreement that was then in effect, according to Johns.

The NDP—whose post-election standing in the House has been reduced to seven seats from the previous session's 25—was still working on critic assignments when Johns spoke to *The Hill Times* on May 20. But the MP said there's "no question" that the NDP could name a mental health and addictions critic even with the absence of a corresponding minister. He also said his party's view is that any one of their MPs can be an advocate for the issues.

Both Brimacombe and Kennell said they would like to see opposition parties appoint critics for mental health and addictions.

Kennell said that where the "most traction" has been seen on mental health and addictions is when MPs across party lines work together. She pointed to the creation of the Youth Mental Health Fund as an example.

"Arguably, the Youth Mental Health Fund would not have been created had it not been for cross-party support from those key players really pushing that agenda forward. I'm confident we can achieve a similar change under a minister-of-health approach," Kennell said.

Johns attributed the creation of the Youth Mental Health Fund to his party's push for the initiative, adding that it helped to have a specific minister available for the file.

The Hill Times asked for comment from the Conservative Party on May 21 about whether the party planned to appoint a mental health and addictions critic and the party's perspective about the elimination of the role from the cabinet. While a response was not provided, the party released its list of critics later that same day. The party appointed former mental health critic Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, B.C.) to the role of addictions critic. Mike Lake (Leduc—Wetaskiwin, Alta.), who was mental health critic in 2021 and 2022, returns to the role. Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, Man.) is the official opposition's health critic.

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Beyond promises: Canada's duty to fund Indigenous education

Marsha Josephs

Opinion



Education is considered the great equalizer, a pathway to opportunity and prosperity. Yet for many Indigenous learners in Canada, the pathway remains obstructed by systemic underfunding.

While governments speak passionately about reconciliation, their actions tell a different story. The federal government's underfunding of Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions is not merely a policy oversight—it is a fundamental failure to meet a constitutional obligation.

The Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC), representing seven Indigenous-led post-secondary institutions in Ontario, serves more than 3,300 students annually, offering programs grounded in Indigenous culture, language, and knowledge. Despite achieving higher graduation rates than mainstream institutions, Indigenous

institutes operate with significantly less funding, perpetuating barriers for learners and First Nations communities. This disparity undermines not only Canada's commitment to reconciliation, but also its economic and social future.

The Government of Canada's responsibility is enshrined in historical precedence and moral imperative. From its role in shaping post-secondary education in the 1960s to its commitment under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Canada has recognized the vital connection between education and national growth. This recognition must extend to Indigenous institutes, educators who fill a critical gap in Canada's educational landscape. If properly supported, these institutions will help fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, particularly the mandate for Indigenous control of Indigenous education.

Neglecting Indigenous post-secondary education perpetuates intergenerational inequities. The 2016 Census revealed stark disparities: while 66.4 per cent of non-Indigenous Ontarians aged

25–29 hold a college or university credential, only 43.3 per cent of Indigenous People in the same cohort do. The funding inequities compound these gaps. In 2021–22, Ontario's Indigenous institutes received roughly \$6,700 per student in government funding, compared to \$9,600 per student received by the First Nations University of Canada. This gap reflects the systemic disparities of Indigenous-led education in Canada. In Ontario, the effects are tangible: students face barriers to access, housing shortages, and inadequate mental health supports, while institutions struggle to recruit staff and maintain infrastructure. Such deficiencies not only hinder Indigenous learners, but also deprive Canada of a vital, skilled workforce.

Indigenous youth represent this country's fastest-growing demographic. Between 2016 and 2026, an estimated 350,000 Indigenous youth will reach workforce age. Ensuring their access to quality, culturally relevant education could inject \$27.7-billion annually into the Canadian economy. Moreover, graduates of Indigenous institutes

are highly employable, with more than 90 per cent transitioning into meaningful jobs, filling labour shortages in essential sectors like health care, skilled trades, and education. This success is not hypothetical—it is measurable. Indigenous institutes report graduation rates up to 10 per cent higher than mainstream institutions.

One of the many factors to help explain such success: Indigenous institutions' culturally grounded programs address gaps that mainstream systems cannot, offering wrap-around supports that acknowledge the legacy of intergenerational trauma. Graduates are well-positioned to meet labour market demands, yet Indigenous institutes in Ontario are hampered by woeful underfunding.

To honour its constitutional obligations, the federal government must commit to equitable, predictable funding for Indigenous institutes. The IIC's 2025 federal budget request outlines urgent needs: \$93.6-million for core operational funding, \$78-million for infrastructure and deferred maintenance, and

targeted investments in student housing, skilled trades, and mental health programming. These funds will enable Indigenous institutes to double enrolment, expand programming, and provide essential services to learners. Such investments align with the government's stated priorities. From former prime minister Justin Trudeau's acknowledgment that "no relationship is more important to Canada than the relationship with Indigenous Peoples" to then-minister of Indigenous Services Patty Hajdu's commitment to respecting Indigenous control over First Nations education, the rhetoric is clear. Now, actions must match the words.

Canada's Constitution provides an unambiguous mandate: Indigenous education is not charity—it is a right. By financially supporting Indigenous institutes, the federal government can fulfill its legal obligations, advance reconciliation, and harness the untapped potential of Indigenous learners to drive national prosperity.

The choice is clear: continue the cycle of underfunding and inequity or invest in a future where Indigenous learners thrive, communities prosper, and Canada grows stronger. The federal government has a constitutional duty to act, and the time is now.

Marsha Josephs is executive director of the Indigenous Institutes Consortium.

The Hill Times

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Insider's Guide to Parliament



Insider’s Guide to Parliament **THE BIG PHOTO**

A work of art: If you’re new to the Hill, check out the mosaic on the ceiling of the entry into the Wellington Building in Ottawa, pictured in all its glory on May 21, 2025. The Wellington Building was originally built as the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1927. The mosaic, created by American muralist Barry Faulkner, consists of thousands of coloured glass tiles. The overall art symbolizes health and well-being.



The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Senators prepare for busy session with a dozen rookies and two new leaders in the mix



New Senate Conservative Leader Leo Housakos, left, returning Independent Senators Group Facilitator Raymond Saint-Germain, returning Canadian Senator Group Leader Scott Tannas, and newly elected Progressive Senate Group Leader, Brian Francis. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and courtesy of Senator Brian Francis

Independent Senators Group Facilitator Raymond Saint-Germain says Senators understand ‘now more than ever’ the need ‘to scrutinize bills without delaying the government agenda.’

BY ELEANOR WAND

With Parliament’s return, Senate leaders are preparing for a “busy” new session, with two groups saying they plan to work collaboratively and without using “delay tactics” to help Parliament effectively pass legislation under Prime Minister Mark Carney’s new government.

The 45th session of Parliament will bring at least two changes to Senate leadership and 12 new Senators, eight of whom are set to be sworn in on May 26 after Parliament is opened ahead of the May 27 Throne Speech, with the other four in the following days. This year, the speech will be delivered by King Charles III, not the governor general—making it the first time in almost 50 years that a Canadian Parliament has been opened by Canada’s monarch, with the last such speech being delivered by Queen Elizabeth II in 1977.

The Senate’s current makeup has the opposition Conservatives sitting at 11, with the fewest members compared to the three other recognized groups in the Red Chamber. The Independent Senators Group (ISG) is the largest at 45, followed by the Canadian Senators Group (CSG) at 20, and the Progressive Senate Group (PSG) at 18. The 10 remaining Senators are unaffiliated, one of whom was only

recently named to the Chamber in early March, and another three who act as the government representatives in the Red Chamber.

Senator Marc Gold (Stadacona, Que.) is set to remain as the government representative—a role he has held since 2020. He will be supported by Patti LaBoucane-Benson (Alberta), his legislative deputy, and Government Liaison in the Senate Iris Petten (Newfoundland and Labrador), a Government Representative Office spokesperson told *The Hill Times*. But Gold will reach the mandatory retirement age of 75 on June 30, just days after the Chamber’s last sitting day on the calendar. Appointing Gold’s replacement is a decision that rests with the Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) office.

One face that will be missing from the Senate is long-serving senator and former leader of the opposition Don Plett, who retired from the Senate on May 14. Plett, who held the position from 2019 and is the founding president of the Conservative Party, was succeeded by Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.), one of only 16 Senators left in the Senate

appointed by then-prime minister Stephen Harper.

Housakos is also a long-time parliamentarian: he first became a Senator in 2008, serving a short stint as for the Senate Speaker in 2015, before then-prime minister Justin Trudeau appointed George Furey to the position soon after the Liberals swept to a majority government that fall.

In an email statement to *The Hill Times*, Housakos said his group’s focus “remains on diligently fulfilling our responsibilities as the official opposition in the Senate,” saying they are “committed to doing so in a collegial and constructive manner.”

The PSG has also has a fresh face at the top. Following last week’s internal group elections, Prince Edward Island’s Brian Francis was voted in as its new leader, taking over from Pierre Dalphond (De Lorimier, Que.), who was elected last year.

This makes Francis the first Indigenous Senator to lead a group in the Upper Chamber. Prior to being appointed to the Senate in 2018 by Trudeau, Francis served as the chief of Abegweit First Nation in P.E.I.—an experi-

ence that he said will inform how he approaches his new job.

“I don’t walk in front of them, I walk beside them,” he said of his colleagues in an interview with *The Hill Times*. “When I was a chief in my community ... I empowered my people to do the best they could. And I will do my best to guide this group in a similar way, [with] humility, honesty, transparency, and so on.”

Francis also said he was feeling “a deep source of pride” to be the first Indigenous Senator in his new role.

“I carry this responsibility with humility,” Francis said. “My hope is that it opens doors for future generations, so that having Indigenous voices at the table where decisions are made becomes the norm, and not the exception.”

The addition of 12 new Senators could shake up the Senate’s current alignment, though it’s unknown at this time which groups will see increased membership among the new appointees—and the ISG still more than doubles the membership of the next closest group. Senator Scott Tannas (Alberta) remains leader of the CSG, and was not available for an interview.

Senator Raymond Saint-Germain (De la Vallière, Que.), who has led the ISG since December 2021, said she expects her group will see more members from among the new Senators.

“I expect that others will be joining us,” Saint-Germain told *The Hill Times*. “We are a welcoming group ... [with] great multidisciplinary expertise, and it’s always ... important to offer the opportunity to the newcomers to join us.”

Similarly, Francis said he was pleased that the PSG’s membership had grown in recent years, and that the group is “always looking to add new members.” The group had nine members in 2020—enough to secure official party status—and grew to 14 in April last year, and has since added four more members.

“We feel that we will be very attractive to new Senators who come to the Senate, and we’ll certainly be reaching out to anyone who wants to take a look at our group,” he said.

But Saint-Germain said her group’s focus going into the new session will be on passing government legislation as “the main priority” and “duty,” adding that the legislative agenda will be clearer in the coming days.

“We are waiting for the Speech from the Throne,” she said. “That will give us great indications on the government’s legislative agenda.”

Saint-Germain also highlighted the importance of the Senate functioning in conjunction with the House without the use of “delay tactics.”

“What we see now in Canada and in the world—the challenges that we are facing—I have no doubt that each and every Senator is aware [and] is concerned about this situation,” she said. “[They] understand the importance for the Senate, now more than ever, to be able to scrutinize bills without delaying the government agenda.”

“I don’t believe in a Senate that would be a delaying institution and going against the plans of an elected government,” she continued. “We are a democracy. We are still a democracy. And we need to protect our democracy.”

Francis, who has been meeting with his group to prepare for the opening of Parliament, said he thinks the upcoming session is “going to be a busy session,” but said that the PSG is “looking forward to ... getting through it,” with “collaboration” with other groups playing a “key” role.

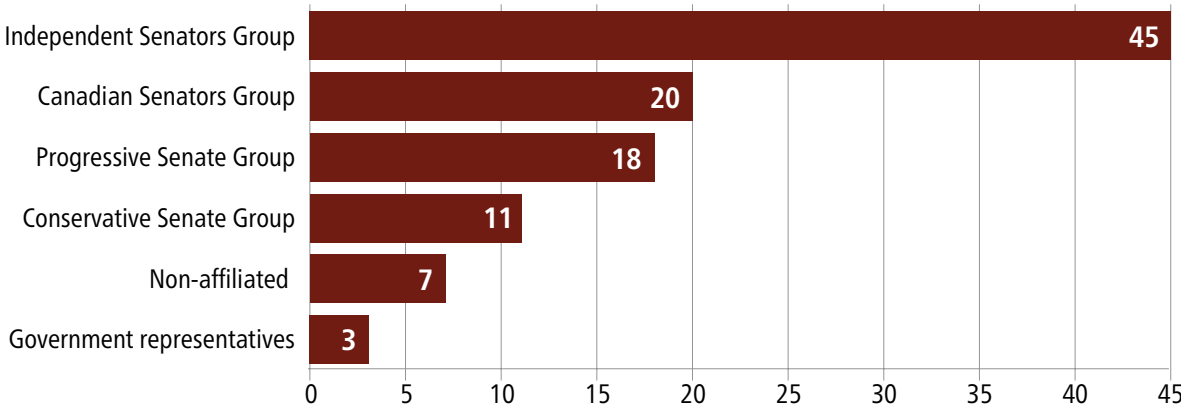
“We all have to work together,” he said. “We’re like one big family, we all know each other, and we know we have to work together for the benefit of Canadians, and that’s what we do.”

When Parliament’s previous session was cut short when Trudeau called for prorogation on Jan. 6 for three months—announcing his resignation at the same time—a number of Senators’ personal bills, called public bills, were killed. Senators’ public bills, which are similar to private members’ bills introduced in the House, will need to restart their legislative process in a new Parliament, if Senators decide to reintroduce them this session.

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Senate Groups

There are 104 Senators in the Red Chamber, divided into four recognized groups, as well as three Senators who act as the government's representatives.



Source: Senate of Canada as of May 21

At least seven Liberal and Conservative MPs running for coveted House Speaker's post

The new Speaker of the House will receive a salary of \$309,700, manage an office budget of \$1.4-million, receive extra perks, and oversees annual expenditures totalling \$656.5-million, according to the House.

BY ABBAS RANA

When Parliament returns this week, the first order of business will be electing a new House Speaker, and at least seven MPs have entered the race for the coveted position that comes with a total salary of \$309,700, and an office budget of \$1.4-million.

Among them are incumbent House Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.), Liberal MPs Rob Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.), Sean Casey (Charlotte-town, P.E.I.), Sherry Romanado (Longueuil-Charles-LeMoine, Que.), Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.), and Conservative MPs Chris d'Entremont (Acadie-Annapolis, N.S.) and Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, Alta.). All candidates have been actively reaching out to their colleagues through emails and phone calls to secure support.

"I was first elected in 2008 and served over 12 years in the House," wrote Oliphant in his email to colleagues seeking their support, highlighting his past experience as committee chair, parliamentary secretary, and serving in majority and minority governments. "I have been in opposition and in government. I have served in both minority and majority Parliaments. I love the House of Commons and the cut and thrust of debate. I have a strong understanding of the standing orders and the rules of procedure that govern our work in the Chamber and in committee."

The House Speaker is also the chair of the powerful House Board of Internal Economy Committee, and oversees the Commons' annual budget of approximately \$656.5-million. The House administration, procedure, legal services, security, and maintenance divisions all report to the House Speaker.



Liberal MPs Greg Fergus, top left, Rob Oliphant, Sean Casey, Sherry Romanado, Francis Scarpaleggia, above left, and Conservative MPs Chris d'Entremont, above centre, and Tom Kmiec are seeking the House Speaker's position that comes with a total salary of \$309,000, a chauffeur driven car, an official residence, and a private apartment in the West Block. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade, Sam Garcia, Stuart Benson and photographs courtesy of House of Commons, Liberal Party of Canada and Tom Kmiec

In the House, the Speaker leads the team of deputy and assistant speakers, chairs the parliamentary proceedings including the daily 45-minute Question Period when the Parliament is in session, interprets rules and traditions, manages procedure, and maintains decorum, and is the steward of MPs' rights and privileges. The Speaker does not participate in the House debates, and votes only if there's a tie. House Speakers do not attend weekly national caucus meetings that take place on the Hill every Wednesday morning when the House is sitting.

In last month's federal election, the Liberals won 170 seats, the Conservatives 143, the Bloc Québécois 22, the NDP seven, and the Greens one. In the 343-seat House of Commons, a party needs 172 seats to form a majority government. The governing Liberals are currently in a minority, and are just two MPs short of a majority. If a Liberal is elected Speaker, they would only be able to vote in the event of a tie—potentially weakening the government's position. It's not uncommon for opposition parties to test whether the government still holds the confidence of the House in such situations—sometimes ambushing the government either in an attempt to bring it down, or simply to cause mischief.

It was unclear last week if the Liberal leadership would allow their caucus members to enter the race for this reason.

Casey told *The Hill Times* that as of May 21 there had been no discussion on this subject, and if the caucus collectively decided not to put forward a candidate, he would respect that decision and refrain from running.

"If there was to be a collective decision made to not put up a Liberal to run, I would abide by the will of the caucus in that regard," said Casey, who in the past has chaired two House committees and has served as parliamentary secretary to three cabinet ministers.

"I have heard some people who hold that opinion. I expect that some of them will probably rank the Conservative candidates higher than the Liberal candidates on the ballot, and if that happens, that's their right. But if there was to be a co-ordinated approach that required me to stand down, I would respect the will of the caucus."

Meanwhile, in his pitch to caucus colleagues to be re-elected for this role, Fergus, who served as the House Speaker from October 2023 until now, wrote: "One does not instantly become Speaker upon donning the robes and taking the chair," he wrote in his email to all MPs on May 18. "One becomes Speaker through experience. I now have this experience. I seek your support to continue what I started with greater depth and discipline so that Parliament gets to the business that each of our electors sent us to Ottawa to do."

In his letter to MPs, Scarpaleggia underscored his experience

of serving in both minority and majority Parliaments, noting that six of the eight Parliaments he has been part of were minority governments.

"My experience over two decades as a Member of Parliament has provided me with a unique perspective on the dynamics of the House of Commons and its potential for informative, constructive and orderly debate that benefits us both as parliamentarians and the Canadians we serve," Scarpaleggia wrote in his email to MPs.

Scarpaleggia also served as the national Liberal caucus chair for two terms. "I am particularly well-versed in the dynamics of minority Parliaments: of the eight mandates I have earned owing to the support of the good people of Lac-Saint-Louis six have been minority mandates."

In her pitch to MPs, Romanado emphasized that her roles as deputy leader of the House, a member of the Procedure and House Affairs Committee, and chair of the House Industry Committee have equipped her well to serve as the next Speaker.

"Our Parliament is the heart of Canadian democracy—a place where ideas are tested, voices are heard, and decisions are made on behalf of the people we serve," wrote Romanado. "The role of Speaker is not only to preside over debate and ensure the rules are upheld, but also to safeguard the dignity of the institution and foster an environment where respectful, effective discourse can thrive."

All candidates vying for the Speaker's role pledged to restore decorum in the House, vowing to make it a key priority if elected.

"During my time in Parliament and prior to my time in elected office, Speakers have repeatedly tried to enforce decorum by interrupting the debate or questions and chastising MPs for bringing disorder to the House," wrote Kmiec in his letter to MPs.

"This has not worked. Decorum has not improved. It has brought the Speaker into sharp conflict with MPs instead of their role as facilitator. I will enforce the rules known as our standing orders as they exist and are written. Words should be weighed, not counted. Your constituents should judge your behaviour, not the Speaker."

D'Entremont, who was the first to enter the House Speaker's election race, told *The Hill Times* earlier this month that he has received positive feedback from his colleagues. In his pitch, the Nova Scotia MP emphasized the need for a strong Speaker in a minority Parliament and said his previous experience as deputy Speaker, along with his service in the House, makes him well-suited for the role. He cited former House Speaker Peter Milliken—who served during three minority Parliaments in 2004, 2006, and 2008—as his inspiration.

The House Speaker election takes place through a secret ranked ballot, and voting will take place in person in the Commons Chamber. Under the ranked-ballot system, MPs will vote for all candidates in order of preference. If no one wins 50 per cent plus one of the votes after the first ballot, the ballots belonging to the candidate who ranked last are eliminated, and their votes will go to the remaining candidates. This process continues until one of the candidates receives the majority of the vote. MPs cast their votes only once, but ballots continue to be redistributed by dropping the last-place finisher until a clear winner emerges.

As the longest-serving MP in the Commons, Bloc Québécois MP Louis Plamondon (Bécancour-Nicolet-Saurel, Que.), who was first elected in 1984 as a Progressive Conservative under Brian Mulroney's massive majority win, will oversee the House Speaker's election. All MPs are automatically considered candidates in the Speaker's election unless they formally withdraw their names, which they can do up until the start of the first sitting of the House and after a federal election.

The Speaker is like the mayor of the House. In addition to the \$99,900 top-up on the base MP salary of \$209,800, the position comes with several perks, including an official residence in the Gatineau Hills known as The Farm or Kingsmere, a private apartment in the West Block, a chauffeur, and an office budget. The Speaker also travels abroad on inter-parliamentary missions, hosts receptions for diplomats and visiting heads of state, and regularly represents Canada on the international stage.

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NEWS

New Parliament likely more cordial, but not much time for House committee work, say strategists



Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canadians have honoured him with 'a mandate to bring about big changes quickly,' and he 'will work relentlessly to fulfill that trust,' during a news conference on May 2 where he outlined his government's priorities. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

'This is cyclical phenomenon. After an election, there's always a bit of a sense of a reset. The voters grab the Etch A Sketch. They shake it. Everything's gone, and let's start drawing again,' says Yaroslav Baran.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Lobbyists and strategists say they expect the high tension and filibustering that held back productivity in the House last fall is likely to give way to a more cordial atmosphere as MPs get back to work in post-election Ottawa, but also that a more adversarial tone may return by the fall.

"This is a cyclical phenomenon. After an election, there's always a bit of a sense of a reset. The voters grab the Etch A Sketch. They shake it. Everything's gone, and let's start drawing again," said Yaroslav Baran, co-founder of Pendulum Group, a former Conservative Hill staffer and a former Conservative Party campaign communications

director during Pierre Poilievre's leadership campaign.

"There's always a bit of a calming of past tensions, and everybody—at least at the early stages of the new Parliament—is always in a more cooperative mood, more friendly mood. They also recognize that the public isn't in much of a mood for aggressive behaviour."

The first session of the 45th Parliament opens on May 26 with the election of a new House Speaker. Baran argued that the spring sitting is likely to be "fairly cordial and reasonably co-operative," but added that it's too early to prognosticate about the entire session.

In contrast, the fall 2024 sitting was described as a "powder keg" by pollster Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research, with David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data,

adding that calling that session tense would be an understatement, as reported by *The Hill Times* back in December. The House was trapped in gridlock throughout most of the fall sitting due to a privilege motion debate that started after House Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.) ruled on Sept. 26 that the government violated parliamentary privilege by not fulfilling a House order to hand over all documents related to the now-defunct Sustainable Development Technology Canada. A Conservative filibuster hamstrung the House for more than two months leading up to the Christmas break.

Baran said he expects MPs to return to being "more traditionally adversarial" by the fall, but adding that isn't a negative.



Yaroslav Baran, co-founder of Pendulum Group, says, 'Our system is designed inherently to be adversarial, with the idea that there's a constructive tension that emerges from that.' Photograph courtesy of Yaroslav Baran

"Our system is designed inherently to be adversarial with the idea that there's a constructive tension that emerges from that. I think it'll get back to normal probably around the time that the fall budget is introduced, and the ensuing debate following the budget," he said.

Parliament is also facing a short amount of time in which to be productive, with the spring break scheduled for June 20. Because of that timeline, Baran argued that Canadians shouldn't expect much action from House committees this spring.

"After an election, it normally takes about 30 days for committees to get up and running. If you do the math, that's basically this entire spring sitting without House of Commons committees," he said.

"I suspect that maybe towards the end of this sitting they might advance the normal timetable and at least table the memberships of the committees before the House adjourns for the summer because that way the committees can technically, at least, be considered to be constituted."

When it comes to the government communicating its agenda, Baran said the first big opportunity will be the Throne Speech, to be delivered in the Senate Chamber by King Charles III on May 27.

"Beyond that ... I'm not sure I've seen any reason to suspect we'll see anything other than what we normally see—big communication blitzes surrounding tabling of legislation or any major new policy initiative, usually fronted by the minister and then often echoed ... by other regional ministers," said Baran.

Tom Parkin, a principal at Impact Strategies and an NDP strategist, told *The Hill Times* that the filibustering in the fall left the House unproductive, but said he doesn't expect the current session to suffer from the same problems.

"The NDP is on mute and Mr. Poilievre's attack dog-style has been chastised, I think ... [and] seen as being overly aggressive," he said. "[Poilievre's] going to want to tone that down, and he might be wise to take the idea that—whether it's Mr. Carney or anybody—they're allowed to get the first bite of the apple."

Parkin said that since Carney is still just getting started as prime minister, that Poilievre may "throttle back" in terms of criticism.

When asked if he expects a more adversarial tone to return to Parliament by the fall, Parkin said that could be the case, but it also depends.

"If Mr. Carney's going to do things that, basically, investors love, then investors are not going to be too pleased about the Conservative Party making it a problem, and he's got the NDP on mute, who might be raising opposition to things that only make investors happy if they're not making incomes go up and wages improve," said Parkin.

In terms of how the government will communicate its agenda, Parkin said he expects the Liberals will want to go with "a low-volume approach," but also argued Carney could have more

of an "imperial-style" than former prime minister Justin Trudeau.

"[Carney] is a guy who has been shooting basketballs and getting nothing but net for most of his life, and he walked into the prime minister's job without even being elected to Parliament," said Parkin. "This guy is batting 1,000 in life, so I don't know why he would think that he can't do whatever he wants."

Kait LaForce, a senior consultant at Summa Strategies and a Liberal strategist who previously worked with the party's research bureau, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on May 21 that when it comes to communications, the federal Liberals are likely to rely on "focused, consistent messaging anchored in policy delivery."

"It's less about grand vision statements and more about concrete outcomes," said LaForce. "How the government works with the opposition will depend on how inclusive the legislative agenda is. However, I think it's clear that Carney has already shown an openness to be collaborative. If he can find common ground to get results on the policy that he wants the government to push forward, he will."

Leah Young, a Bluesky Strategy Group consultant, said that when it comes to how productive the House will be this sitting, "it depends."

"The prime minister talks about collaboration, but he'll need to show openness to other viewpoints. He's leading a minority government with no formal coalition, so every major piece of legislation will require deal-making. That creates instability and political gamesmanship," she said.

Young's background with the Conservatives includes serving as a senior adviser for parliamentary affairs and communications on the parliamentary affairs team under veteran Conservative Hill staffer David Prest, and as a former assistant to Conservative MP Brad Vis (Mission-Matsqui-Abbotsford, B.C.).

She said the Conservatives won't give the Liberals a free ride "just because they changed the messenger."

"If anything, the House may be more adversarial. Conservatives are energized, especially after over eight million Canadians voted for a Poilievre government," she said.

Young said that the Bloc Québécois has signalled an openness to working with the Carney government on an issue-by-issue basis, but has ruled out any formal coalition, which means support will depend on whether Liberal policies reflect Quebec's interests, such as health-care funding, and immigration.

"I think what I would say to the federal government is ... to maintain their openness when it comes to working with other parties, and specifically when it comes to committees. A lot of amendments can be made in committee. It would be good for them to just hear all sides of different parties, as well as all sides of the country, from coast to coast to coast," she said.

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A Conservative postmortem: Tory MPs should conduct a rigorous, fact-based review of what worked, what didn't, and determine their future

Pierre Poilievre, pictured April 27, 2025, campaigning in Edwards, Ont., has a fascinating life story, but his aggressive personal style has prevented Canadians warming to him and turned off many voters. He needs to present a more multi-dimensional, friendlier, and approachable personality to voters, writes Geoff Norquay. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Now that Justin Trudeau is gone, are the Conservatives prepared to leave fighting the culture wars to Donald Trump because their current approach scares many Canadian voters away. Geoff Norquay digs in.

Geoff Norquay

Opinion



This piece was originally published in Policy Magazine.

The unprecedented events leading to Canada's 45th federal election defined two different ballot questions for the principal parties. In the first three months of 2025, the political landscape of the country transformed in ways no one could have predicted. The resignation of Justin Trudeau as prime minister and the subsequent election of Mark Carney as Liberal leader were the first changes.

Even before he was sworn in as president of the United States on Jan. 20, Donald Trump began trolling Canada as America's 51st state, which touched off a groundswell of anger, fear, and national pride among Canadians. As Carney called the election on March 23, he bluntly outlined the challenge: "President Trump claims that Canada isn't a real country. He wants to break us so

America can own us. We will not let that happen." This established his ballot question: "Which leader is best equipped to protect Canada from Donald Trump?"

And Carney was making a credible claim to be that leader—amid an economic crisis driven by a trade war—based on his expertise as an economist and his experience governing two G7 central banks, Canada's and Britain's.

In his two-and-a-half years as leader of the Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre had developed his own ballot question—"Time for a change"—by relentlessly picking apart and ridiculing the Liberal record on the cost of living, including housing; on immigration and crime; and on the pace of economic development. Poilievre had also built and successfully prosecuted a case against the Liberals' consumer price on carbon using the tagline "Axe the

Tax" that ultimately destroyed its credibility as a public policy. He and the Conservatives rode that critique, plus widespread voter antipathy towards Trudeau, to a 25 per cent lead in the polls by the start of 2025.

By mid-February, Poilievre was facing calls to pivot his approach to acknowledge Trump's questioning of Canadian sovereignty more directly and more substantively. In a Feb. 15 Ottawa speech, he called Trump's tariff threats unjustified, laid out a compelling case directly to Americans about why a Canada-U.S. trade war should be avoided, and strongly rejected Trump's suggestion that Canada should become part of the U.S.: "We will never be the 51st state. We will bear any burden and pay any price to protect the sovereignty and independence of our country," he said. But he then blamed the governing Liberals for allowing Canada to become

vulnerable to Trump and doubled down on his existing "Canada is broken" mantra.

It was a start at a pivot, but it wasn't enough. The departure of Trudeau combined with Carney's ability to cast himself as an agent of change by axing the carbon tax, plus his management of the Trump threats as the serving prime minister, weakened Poilievre's narrative. As Canadians got to see more of Carney and absorb the value of his experience in action, he increasingly came to be seen as the "adult in the room" and Poilievre's experience and demeanor suffered in comparison. They wanted change, but they preferred the change Carney was offering.

Having lost his two principal targets, Trudeau and the carbon tax, Poilievre was never able to shake Carney's more existential ballot question, a problem made

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FEATURE Insider's Guide to Parliament

A Conservative postmortem: Tory MPs should conduct a rigorous, fact-based review of what worked, what didn't, and determine their future

Continued from **page 35**

worse by the Conservative leader's embrace of the style of right-wing populism associated with Trump before Trump had become Public Enemy Number One to many of the same Canadians whose votes he was now courting. As Abacus CEO David Coletto wrote in *The Hub* recently, the Trump tariff and sovereignty threats caused a seismic shift in the mindset of Canadian voters, changing their concerns from "scarcity to precarity." As a result, "Canadians were no longer only asking, 'Can I afford rent and groceries today?' They were asking, 'Will Canada still be Canada tomorrow?'"

At a certain point, the critical mass in Carney's favour among the country's political and policy professionals seemed to hop the partisan fence based on the existential nature of this election. It was as if many of the people who had defended Poilievre for two years, based on reflexive party loyalty, suddenly felt their bigger loyalty was to Canada, and they knew Carney was the better choice on that front for reasons that Poilievre simply couldn't compete with.

Poilievre faced calls to address Trump's annexation threats back in February

So, did Pierre Poilievre "blow" a 25-per-cent lead in the polls to snatch defeat from victory? It's not quite that simple. The Conservatives lost the 2025 election at least partly because the Canadian political system suddenly changed. For generations, that system was predictably multi-party, with two dominant parties and one or two third parties that could be counted to impact the ultimate results by taking votes and winning seats. Election after election, the NDP split the progressive vote with the Liberals, enabling the Conservatives to come up the middle and win seats.

In recent elections, with the Bloc Québécois weakening the Liberals' natural advantage in Quebec and the NDP using its average of 17-per-cent support in general elections, combined with pockets of voter efficiency in the

rest of Canada, the threshold for the number of seats the Liberals or Conservatives needed to form government steadily lowered. Trudeau's Liberals won a majority with 39.5 per cent of the votes in 2015, but their pluralities lowered in 2019 and 2021 respectively, to 33.1 per cent and 32.6 per cent.

Every political party has its "hard" partisans, the voters they can count on through thick and thin, but many other voters remain "gettable" between elections. The parties create their policy platforms to target different demographic groups by age, region, income, and other categories, attempting to build an electoral coalition that will put them into office. Over the past 20 years, in response to the smaller pluralities needed to win seats and governments, all parties adjusted their electoral strategies to narrow the pool of target voters they needed to attract.

Tom Flanagan, the University of Calgary political scientist who advised Stephen Harper in his early Reform-Alliance days on the national scene and managed the Conservative Party's national election campaign in 2004, argued for the party to target fewer potential voters, but more precisely. Essentially his question was, "Why are you knocking yourselves out trying to gain 50 per cent of the vote, when you actually need much less to form a government?"

Following that advice in 2025 earned Poilievre and the Conservatives the following reasonably positive results:

- three million additional votes nationally and 41.3 per cent of the popular vote, the highest they have won since the 1988 election.
- A million more votes in Ontario than Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives won in their February election.
- Much-needed breakthroughs in cities and suburban areas such as Windsor, London, the Toronto 905-region and Vancouver.
- Solid gains in support among ethno-diverse cultural groups, among young men, and in areas dominated by trades and working-class people.
- Overall, a net gain of 23 seats to the Liberals' 17 seats.

All that said, the collapse of the NDP vote to six per cent nationally on April 28, combined

with the Carney/Trump nexus, created a hurdle that Poilievre and the Conservatives were ill-equipped to clear.

But the Conservatives also left an awful lot on the table with their approach and style in the election campaign. For example, at times, it appeared that they were spending more time and energy fighting with provincial Progressive Conservatives and scoring "own goals" than taking the battle to Carney and the Liberals.

First up was Ford's campaign manager, Kory Teneycke, who early in the campaign accused the Conservatives of "campaign malpractice" for giving off Trump-like vibes: "One of the things that is clearly holding (voters) back with Poilievre, is all the Trumpy stuff," Teneycke said. "He's looking and sounding a lot like Trump, arguing with a reporter about the size of the crowd at a rally, a campaign slogan that's 'Canada First' when Trump's was 'America First.' So, I think there's a disconnect there."

Towards the end of the campaign, Ford himself weighed in through a Politico interview, saying he and Poilievre had never really met in person. Asked how this was possible, Ford replied, "You're going to have to ask him. I think seven years ago; I met him once in Ottawa. A breakfast right after one of my events. But we never really talked there."

Similar blasts came from Nova Scotia. After Premier Tim Houston said last fall that he didn't want federal Conservative involvement in his provincial election, Poilievre's senior adviser Jenni Byrne told Houston's team that if Poilievre went on to become prime minister, they would remember the slight and not lift a finger to help the provincial party. With the relationship soured, Houston did not appear at the single rally Poilievre held in Nova Scotia during the federal campaign. After Poilievre lost two key Nova Scotia MPs on April 28, Houston observed, "I think the Conservative Party of Canada was very good at pushing people away, not so good at pulling people in, and I think they probably saw that in some of the results they had across the country."

That both Ford and Houston are potential contenders for Poilievre's job cannot be discounted

as an element in this dynamic, but "keeping your enemies closer" as the shorthand for managing relationships with potential rivals has been an ironclad priority of the most successful politicians from Abraham Lincoln to Brian Mulroney. Anyone who fails to grasp that raises a more serious doubt about political competence and leadership.

Since the election, Poilievre has reached out to Ford, and they are expected to meet soon. That's good, because this edgy and self-defeating bickering between the federal and provincial wings of the party must stop. Voters perceive these outbursts as an indication of how the official opposition will govern the country if given the chance, and they are not impressed.

Other party management issues emerged during the recent election, centering on campaign readiness and candidate selection. Despite having called loudly and repeatedly for an early election for the previous 18 months, the Conservatives inexplicably entered the writ period with vacant candidacies in scores of ridings. In addition, reports poured in about lack of transparency in the nomination processes and nominations stalled until the writ period when the party could appoint candidates.

While it is not uncommon for parties to handpick the candidates they want, the Conservatives' approach of waiting until the writ period to appoint candidates deprived those candidates of the lead time they needed to prepare campaigns and become known to voters in their local communities. The result was that many putative candidates gave up in frustration and some ran for the Liberals or contested seats as Independents.

The tight central control exerted by the national campaign was reflected in the decision to bar Conservative candidates' participation in riding-level public meetings and debates, and from speaking to the media. This is a risk-management technique that has been repeatedly used by the Conservatives in recent campaigns. It's designed to prevent uninformed or untoward comments made by local candidates that embarrass the leader and the national campaign.

Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre and his wife Anaïda Poilievre arrive for the leaders' debate at the Maison de Radio-Canada in Montreal on April 17, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Unfortunately, this policy sent the clear message that the party didn't care about local voters, and it prevented those voters from learning about their candidates' views through public events and mainstream media. Given that electoral politics is all about human interaction, selling policy alternatives and persuasion, it's long past the time for the party to give local Conservative candidates back their voices. If they aren't allowed to speak in public to voters and the media, how the hell can they get themselves elected?

Many of the campaign's faults have already been laid at the door of Jenni Byrne

Next, why was the Conservative campaign so unrelentingly leader-centric? At the beginning of the campaign's final week, IPSOS reported: "Carney consistently outpaces Poilievre across crucial areas, such as managing tough economic times (+15 points versus Poilievre), having the right temperament and maturity for leadership (+14 points), representing Canada on the world stage (+13 points), and standing up to U.S. President Donald Trump (+12 points). Furthermore, Carney is seen as someone who can help make us proud to be Canadians, with a seven-point lead over Poilievre in this domain."

These numbers cried out for a campaign that featured experienced and recognized spokespeople conducting secondary regional tours to take the pressure off Poilievre and demonstrate the party's depth. Other than a campaign

Insider's Guide to Parliament **FEATURE**



Ontario Premier Doug Ford, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney in Ottawa on March 21, 2025. Towards the end of the campaign, Ford weighed in through a Politico interview, saying he and Poilievre had never really met in person. Asked how this was possible, Ford replied, 'You're going to have to ask him. I think seven years ago; I met him once in Ottawa. A breakfast right after one of my events. But we never really talked there.' *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



appearance and an endorsement ad by Stephen Harper, they were nowhere to be seen. Where were the respected party elders and former colleagues to endorse Poilievre and the party, people such as James Moore, John Baird, Rona Ambrose, and Candice Bergen? Obviously, they were not invited to participate in the campaign. Why not?

Many of these lapses in campaign direction and management

have already been laid at the door of Jenni Byrne, Poilievre's senior advisor and chair of the 2025 campaign. Byrne has many superior organizational skills and was the principal architect of the strategy and tactics pursued by Poilievre and the Conservatives since he became leader. She is also the hardest of partisans, and a practitioner of take-no-prisoners, tactical politics.

In January this year, when Liberal MP and cabinet minister Anita Anand announced that she would not run in the next federal election, former Conservative leader Erin O'Toole paid tribute to her. On X he wrote: "I saw the dedication [Anand] brought to National Defence at a time it was desperately needed. She cared deeply about the CAF, their families and the need for Canada to do more. I wish her fair winds

and following seas." Two hours later, Byrne responded to O'Toole: "For anyone unsure why Erin is no longer leader of the Conservative Party.... [Anand] supported DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] policies like name, rank and pronouns. Tampons in men's rooms, etc." Many Conservatives across Canada could simply shake their heads at the graceless and unnecessary vitriol of these comments.

Despite the many Conservative successes of election night, Poilievre was defeated in his long-held riding of Carleton, Ont., and later this year he will contest a bye-election in the safe Alberta riding of Battle River-Crowfoot. There are early signs that he is learning lessons from this stinging electoral rebuke; in his first post-campaign video, he said, "I need to learn and grow, and our team needs to expand." That's a great start, but more will be needed.

Poilievre has a fascinating life story and a politically sophisticated and inspirational life partner. He is also a multi-talented political racehorse and an intuitive communicator. But his aggressive personal style has prevented Canadians warming to him and turned off many voters. He needs to present a more multi-dimensional, friendlier, and approachable personality to voters.

At this point, no one knows whether the shift of Canada's electoral system towards its new two-party configuration on April 28 is permanent or transitory, and whether the NDP will soon be back to splitting the progressive vote with the Liberals and steering votes and seats to the Conservatives. It would likely be best for the Conservatives to prepare for either eventuality, because the call of the next election will be too late to prepare for a new political environment.

So, as Conservative MPs survey the accomplishments and failures of the recent campaign, they should start with a rigorous and fact-based review of what worked and what didn't in terms of strategy, tactics, communications, candidate recruitment and appointment. This review needs to include the following kinds of questions:

- Why did they lose the support of many older Canadians who traditionally skewed Conservative, and why are so many female voters simply unprepared to support them? What steps are needed to address these challenges?

- Given that the existential nature of the Trump threats signals the need for a "Team Canada" approach to Canada-U.S. relations in the House of Commons, are they prepared to dial back the toxic partisanship while holding the Carney government to account?

- What changes in style, approach, and policy do they contemplate to build bridges to new supporters and make more voters accessible? Now that Trudeau is gone, are they prepared to leave fighting the culture wars to Trump, because their current approach scares many Canadian voters away.

How both the Conservative Party's leader and its MPs answer these questions will determine their collective future.

Geoff Norquay is a principal with Earncliffe Strategies in Ottawa. He was a senior social policy adviser in the Prime Minister's Office from 1984 to 1988, and director of communications to Stephen Harper when he was leader of the Official Opposition. This piece was originally published May 10 in Policy Magazine. The Hill Times

OPINION



U.S. President Donald Trump, left, greets Prime Minister Mark Carney on May 6, 2025, at the West Wing entrance of the White House. Official White House photograph courtesy of Gabriel B. Kotico

Carney should reject Trump's Star Wars production

Canada's possible participation in the U.S.'s Golden Dome would overturn decades of resistance to southern neighbour's often extraordinary missile plans.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—Two former Canadian prime ministers, Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin, rejected Canadian participation in “Star Wars,” the United States’ Ballistic Missile Defence program decades ago, but the newly arrived Mark Carney appears ready to embrace the updated U.S. missile defence system now known as Golden Dome.

“We are conscious that we have an ability, if we so choose, to complete the Golden Dome with investments and partnership,

and it’s something that we are looking at,” the prime minister said during a press conference in West Block on May 21. He added that these are “military decisions” the government will evaluate accordingly.

With that statement, Carney overturned decades of Canadian resistance to “Star Wars,” a 40-year-old fantasy pushed forward by then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan that incoming missiles could be blown out of the sky before they landed. At that time, Canada upheld the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, based on the principle that defence systems against missiles only stimulate new offensive nuclear arms developments, thus setting off an unending nuclear arms race. In short, uncurbed technology makes peace impossible.

In the American quest for never-ending technological superiority, then-U.S. president George Bush in 2002 abrogated the ABM, and “Star Wars” was given new life. It has morphed into the Golden Dome, a next-generation missile defence shield costing hundreds of billions of dollars, and trumpeted by the erratic U.S. President Donald Trump. Canada’s share of this payment is unknown, but it will certainly be in the billions of dollars—money

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that will be diverted from needed economic and social development programs at home and abroad.

Why is Carney heading down this road?

Does he really believe that Canada is threatened by Russia, North Korea, and China, as he said in his May 21 press conference, and that the government must “create protection for our cities”? Where is the evidence that the threat is real and the Golden Dome will work in protecting cities that are scattered 7,700 kilometres apart? Canada is already involved in NORAD, the binational military command established by Canada and the U.S. in 1958 to provide aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning for North America. Moving from NORAD to the Golden Dome is a quantum leap that anticipates space wars and ever more armaments to fight future wars.

For Carney to blandly assert that Canada joining the Golden Dome would make our country safer is—to put it gently—a perplexity. The statement demeans the vaunted high intelligence he has shown so far in the economic arena. The very man who advanced UN principles of human security in his book, *Value(s)*, has abruptly blown past the integrated agenda for peace that the UN (for which he was an adviser) has advocated for many years.

I ask again: What is Carney really doing here? Can he really be caving in to military thinking—which Brian Mulroney and Paul Martin bravely refused to do? Or has he found a way to reach two per cent of GDP for Canada’s military spending and thus satisfy his critics? Has he decided to appease Trump by further integrating North American defence so that he will be freer to juggle Canada’s economic relationships? Who knows. And what are we to make of his inscrutable

description of our new relationship with the U.S.: “Co-operation if necessary, but not necessarily co-operation.” This is leadership?

By giving credence to missile defence instead of coming out strongly for arms control measures, Carney is clearly heading down the path already carved out by the military-industrial complex. Canadians have a right to expect their prime minister to work to solve the problems of war, not join in them.

It is deeply disturbing that political thinking at the highest level in this country takes for granted that a Golden Dome is a technological development that must inevitably be seized. The mantra is: stronger defences. The voice of those saying that missile defence systems (under whatever name) are inherently wrong because they provoke the development of new offensive nuclear arms systems can scarcely be heard.

There has been a detrimental mentality shift in the world. Far from receding as we thought would happen with the end of the Cold War, the prospect of war in its different guises has been normalized. It is as though humanity cannot make the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. International law is crippled, the UN belittled. World leaders are giving in to the frustrations which they themselves have created.

In the election of the Carney government, Canada has entered a new moment. But will the government rise to the challenge of proclaiming international law as the basis for policies in arms control and disarmament or will we sink into geographical expediency? I, for one, thought Carney would choose wisely.

Former Senator Douglas Roche’s latest book is *Keep Hope Alive: Essays for a War-free World* (Amazon).

The Hill Times

Insider's Guide to Parliament **COMMENT**

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, right, pictured on stage with Brian Lilley, at the Canada Strong and Free Network conference in Ottawa on April 10, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The backstory on equalization

Danielle Smith perpetuates the fiction of Albertans' exploitation, arguing that her government should receive the same per capita equalization transfers as Ontario and Quebec. Slamming equalization is good politics for Alberta premiers because it feeds Albertans' false sense of injustice.

Nelson Wiseman

Opinion



TORONTO—Much political hay is made about the

Equalization Program. Alberta primarily, but some other provinces as well, have repeatedly pointed to its alleged inequities. Sec. 36 of the Constitution Act, 1982, entrenches the equalization principle: "to ensure that provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation." The intent of the program is to reduce the differences in the ability of provinces to generate revenue.

The backstory to the program predates the launch of the equalization program in 1957; it begins during the Second World War. The war's unprecedented financial requirements brought about a state of emergency federalism: Parliament yielded its authority to the cabinet and provincial governments acceded to Ottawa's requests. The federal Conservatives recognized the war's threat to the conduct of political business as usual by renaming themselves the National Government party in the 1940 election. They hoped to form or be invited to join a wartime coalition government.

In 1942, to harness Canada's fiscal capacity, Ottawa and the individual provinces signed on to five-year tax-rental agreements.

The agreements entailed the provinces ceding to Ottawa their personal and corporate income taxes and succession duties (inheritance taxes) in exchange for annual grants tied to a formula based on a province's population and its gross domestic product.

Although the program was scheduled to end after the war, all the provinces except Quebec and Ontario, opted in 1947 for new five-year agreements. Queen's Park, having calculated how much it would gain with a rental agreement, signed on to a new one in 1952, leaving Quebec as the sole outlier of the tax-rental regime.

Quebec argued that such agreements undermine provincial jurisdiction and independence in fields beyond taxation, such as universities which Ottawa had begun funding with wartime research grants. Pierre Trudeau and Leon Dion—Quebec's leading political scientist and Stéphane Dion's father—condemned Quebec's aloofness. They argued that it damaged their province's fiscal interests as well as higher education in Quebec.

By the late 1950s Ottawa, flush with cash, as the economy boomed and defence expenditures shrank, launched five-year equalization payments, initially

described as unconditional "grants." The provinces were not required to agree to any conditions, and Ottawa guaranteed to all the provinces revenues higher than those afforded by the old tax-rental agreements.

Although then-Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis denounced the equalization payments as inadequate, he said, he would accept the amount assigned to Quebec City as a form of restitution for previous federal encroachments on provincial taxation rights. Quebec was accepting the payments, he said, because unlike the tax-rental agreements, its consent was no longer required. The payments put an end to Quebec's fiscal isolation and its forfeiture of millions in federal transfers between 1947 and 1957. Then-Ontario premier Leslie Frost described Ottawa's new payments as a "tax pact," but no actual pact was involved: Ottawa alone funded and administered the equalization program out of general tax revenues.

Initially, the payments, based on the same taxes as in the tax-rental agreements, went to all but the two wealthiest provinces at the time: Ontario and British Columbia. Alberta received equalization payments until the mid-1960s. Over the years, the formula has been repeatedly revised. As Alberta's oil wealth and the incomes of Albertans and Alberta corporations increased, the provincial government no longer qualified to receive payments.

Alberta's government has protested the constantly evolving formula for decades. Edmonton makes it sound as if the Alberta government is unfairly subsidizing other provincial governments but, of course, no such interprovincial transfers occur. If Alber-

tans and Alberta-based corporations were not as wealthy as they are, their provincial government would receive equalization payments.

The formula has changed over the years, in part because the federal government has consulted with the provinces, but it is under no obligation to do so. It didn't when the program was launched in 1957. Ottawa can unilaterally decide on the amounts to be transferred and on the criteria used to calculate them.

Jason Kenney was a senior minister in the Stephen Harper Conservative government that adopted the current formula in 2007 and tweaked it in 2009, but once he became premier of Alberta, his tune changed. He perpetuated the canard peddled by previous Alberta premiers that Ottawa was defrauding Albertans. Kenney launched an unnecessary referendum asking Albertans whether the equalization clause ought to be deleted from the Constitution. Predictably, they voted yes. Predictably as well, the turnout was low: 39 per cent. The referendum was a ridiculous exercise because Kenney's government had no power to act on the outcome. Wisely, Ottawa ignored him and the vote.

Danielle Smith perpetuates the fiction of Albertans' exploitation, arguing that her government should receive the same per capita equalization transfers as Ontario and Quebec. Slamming equalization is good politics for Alberta premiers because it feeds Albertans' false sense of injustice.

Nelson Wiseman is professor emeritus of political science at the University of Toronto.
The Hill Times

OPINION

What can we expect from Canada’s new environment minister?

Action on toxic chemicals, industrial polluter-pay rules and global plastics treaty negotiations should be on the new environment minister’s to-do list.

Tim Gray

Opinion



TORONTO—Danforth Liberal MP Julie Dabrusin has been appointed Canada’s new environment and climate change minister. What are some of the challenges she will face in her new role and what can we expect as she faces them?

Although these issues had a low profile in an election campaign that was all about U.S. threats to Canada, the fact is that climate change, biodiversity loss, and the toxics and plastics crisis have not gone away. On top of that, the Trump administration has added Canadian water security to the list of challenges that our new minister must face.

On climate change, Prime Minister Mark Carney has rightly signalled that he wants to make up for the loss of the consumer carbon tax and the emissions it cut by beefing up the effectiveness of industrial polluter-pay rules. If done right, these fees will deliver greater incentives for industry to reduce pollution while also generating revenue for the much-needed consumer-facing energy retrofit affordability programs, EV adoption and public transportation commitments as outlined in the Liberal Party platform.

Improving industrial polluter-pay rules makes sense and would work well with promised project finance reforms and the requirement of accurate assessment of climate risk in business decisions. More robust industrial carbon pricing also would help set the trade table to reward Canadian industries that are reducing

their emissions by applying border tariffs on products coming from countries that are not.

There was a welcome commitment in the platform to proactively address the protection of sensitive species and ecosystems before major new projects go ahead. This will be key in the case of both pristine northern ecosystems where the government would like to move major critical mineral projects forward, and in more southern areas where reckless projects like Ontario’s proposed Highway 413 and 401 tunnel are being advanced in parallel with the gutting of species protection laws.

Toxic chemicals will be a priority in the form of quickly finalizing the listing of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as toxic and setting the regulatory timeline to get them out of consumer products.

Perhaps the only environmental issue that broke through during the election was plastics, with the Conservatives promising to bring back banned disposable packaging and plastic cutlery. Now, the new elected government can take action on more of these harmful products by focusing on increasing packaging re-usability, expediting the assessment of their impacts on health and through regulatory action on harmful plastic additives.

The items above are of course a subset of the key issues the new minister will face as she steps up from her former role as Environment and Climate Change Parliamentary Secretary. She has a great track record and experience from that position, including the leadership role she played during the UN global plastics treaty negotiations that will still need to be concluded this year.

As a new Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Dabrusin will face attacks from premiers and industries that oppose environmental protection. We will have to step up and make clear to the prime minister and his government that we want action on these issues and that our environment minister must be enabled and supported. If they do, we can build an economy and society that delivers prosperity, sustainability and security for all Canadians.

Tim Gray is executive director of Environmental Defence.
The Hill Times

FEATURE Insider’s Guide to Parliament

The 58 Closest Contests in the 2025 Election						
Of the 343 ridings, 17 per cent posted results where the margin of victory was below five percentage points between the first-and second-place candidates.						
Riding	MP	Party	Vote (%)	Second-place Party	Winning Margin	Margin (votes)
Terrebonne, Que. *	Tatiana Auguste	Liberal	38.74%	Bloc Québécois	0	1
Terra Nova–The Peninsulas, N.L. *	Anthony Germain	Liberal	47.97%	Conservative	0.03	12
Milton East–Halton Hills South, Ont. *	Kristina Tesser Derksen	Liberal	48.25%	Conservative	0.03	21
Windsor–Tecumseh–Lakeshore, Ont. *	Kathy Borrelli	Conservative	45.80%	Liberal	0.11	77
Nunavut	Lori Idlout	NDP	37.26%	Liberal	0.54	41
Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.	Don Davies	NDP	37.24%	Liberal	0.6	303
Kitchener Centre, Ont.	Kelly DeRidder	Conservative	34.25%	Green Party	0.63	375
Kitchener–Conestoga, Ont.	Tim Louis	Liberal	48.32%	Conservative	0.84	522
Shefford, Que.	Andréanne Larouche	Bloc Québécois	40.11%	Liberal	0.86	571
Montmorency–Charlevoix, Que.	Gabriel Hardy	Conservative	34.50%	Bloc Québécois	0.88	524
Miramichi–Grand Lake, N.B.	Mike Dawson	Conservative	48.15%	Liberal	1	384
Acadie–Annapolis, N.S.	Chris d'Entremont	Conservative	47.67%	Liberal	1.1	533
Longueuil–Saint Hubert, Que.	Natilien Joseph	Liberal	40.98%	Bloc Québécois	1.3	769
Cloverdale–Langley City, B.C.	Tamara Jansen	Conservative	47.80%	Liberal	1.45	778
Eglinton–Lawrence, Ont.	Vince Gasparro	Liberal	49.29%	Conservative	1.46	888
Brampton Centre, Ont.	Amandeep Sodhi	Liberal	48.37%	Conservative	1.5	611
Brampton North–Caledon, Ont.	Ruby Sahota	Liberal	49.03%	Conservative	1.59	742
Kitchener South–Hespeler, Ont.	Matt Strauss	Conservative	47.94%	Liberal	1.7	1,028
Pitt Meadows–Maple Ridge, B.C.	Marc Dalton	Conservative	47.41%	Liberal	1.78	1,196
Brampton South, Ont.	Sonia Sidhu	Liberal	49.33%	Conservative	1.81	808
Kelowna, B.C.	Stephen Fuhr	Liberal	48.78%	Conservative	1.84	1,082
Calgary Confederation, Alta.	Corey Hogan	Liberal	48.10%	Conservative	1.85	1,273
Richmond East–Steveston, B.C.	Parm Bains	Liberal	48.45%	Conservative	2.07	1,100
Brampton West, Ont.	Amarjeet Gill	Conservative	49.81%	Liberal	2.17	918
Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Ont.	Ned Kuruc	Conservative	48.70%	Liberal	2.19	1,479
Cambridge, Ont.	Connie Cody	Conservative	48.56%	Liberal	2.23	1,457
Cumberland–Colchester, N.S.	Alana Hirtle	Liberal	48.31%	Conservative	2.48	1,228
Richmond–Arthabaska, Que.	Eric Lefebvre	Conservative	35.50%	Liberal	2.52	1,577
Nipissing–Timiskaming, Ont.	Pauline Rochefort	Liberal	47.24%	Conservative	2.65	1,553
Sault Ste. Marie–Algoma, Ont.	Terry Sheehan	Liberal	47.36%	Conservative	2.65	1,728
Kildonan–St. Paul, Man.	Raquel Dancho	Conservative	47.48%	Liberal	2.8	1,556
Chicoutimi–Le Fjord, Que.	Richard Martel	Conservative	34.14%	Bloc Québécois	2.95	1,499
Calgary McKnight, Alta.	Dalwinder Gill	Conservative	49.11%	Liberal	3.1	1,317
Northumberland–Clarke, Ont.	Philip Lawrence	Conservative	48.97%	Liberal	3.11	2,214
Port Moody–Coquitlam, B.C.	Zoe Royer	Liberal	43.53%	Conservative	3.13	1,948
Repentigny, Que.	Patrick Bonin	Bloc Québécois	42.20%	Liberal	3.45	2,174
New Westminster–Burnaby–Maillardville, B.C.	Jake Sawatzky	Liberal	35.09%	NDP	3.54	1,973
Burnaby Central, B.C.	Wade Chang	Liberal	42.23%	Conservative	3.6	1,856
Markham–Unionville, Ont.	Michael Ma	Conservative	50.65%	Liberal	3.6	1,922
Newmarket–Aurora, Ont.	Sandra Cobena	Conservative	50.62%	Liberal	3.6	2,241
Simcoe North, Ont.	Adam Chambers	Conservative	48.41%	Liberal	3.71	2,474
Fleetwood–Port Kells, B.C.	Gurbux Saini	Liberal	47.91%	Conservative	3.73	1,811
Brampton East, Ont.	Maninder Sidhu	Liberal	48.59%	Conservative	3.88	1,885
Niagara South, Ont.	Fred Davies	Conservative	47.81%	Liberal	3.9	2,994
Winnipeg Centre, Man.	Leah Gazan	NDP	39.44%	Liberal	4.04	1,386
Hamilton Mountain, Ont.	Lisa Hepfner	Liberal	45.58%	Conservative	4.08	2,445
Niagara Falls–Niagara on the Lake, Ont.	Tony Baldinelli	Conservative	49.14%	Liberal	4.25	2,575
Bowmanville–Oshawa North, Ont.	Jamil Jivani	Conservative	49.77%	Liberal	4.26	3,018
Coquitlam–Port Coquitlam, B.C.	Ron McKinnon	Liberal	47.37%	Conservative	4.38	2,520
Brampton–Chinguacousy Park, Ont.	Shafqat Ali	Liberal	48.85%	Conservative	4.4	1,941
Calgary Centre, Alta.	Greg McLean	Conservative	50.21%	Liberal	4.42	2,780
Courtenay–Alberni, B.C.	Gord Johns	NDP	39.64%	Conservative	4.5	3,589
Cowichan–Malaha–Langford, B.C.	Jeff Kibble	Conservative	37.24%	NDP	4.65	3,544
Surrey Centre, B.C.	Randeep Sarai	Liberal	48.01%	Conservative	4.78	1,980
Richmond Centre–Marpole, B.C.	Chak Au	Conservative	49.56%	Liberal	4.84	2,300
South Surrey–White Rock, B.C.	Ernie Klassen	Liberal	50.50%	Conservative	4.84	3,170
Lanark–Frontenac, Que.	Scott Reid	Conservative	50.41%	Liberal	4.85	3,286
Les Pays d'en Haut, Que.	Tim Watchorn	Liberal	41.04%	Bloc Québécois	4.9	3,217

*Four races faced judicial recounts
Source: Elections Canada preliminary results as of May 21, 2025

Insider's Guide to Parliament **FEATURE**

Carney's new cabinet

**Mark Carney**
Prime Minister

Portfolio: Prime Minister
Riding: Nepean, Ont.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 51.14%
2025 Win Margin: 6.29
Salary: \$419,600

**Anita Anand**
Minister

Portfolio: Foreign Affairs
Riding: Oakville East, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 21, 2019
2025 Vote Share: 51.14%
2025 Win Margin: 6.29
Salary: \$309,700

**Chrystia Freeland**
Minister

Portfolio: Transport and Internal Trade
Riding: University-Rosedale, Ont.
First elected: Nov. 25, 2013
2025 Vote Share: 64.00%
2025 Win Margin: 40.51
Salary: \$309,700

**David McGuinty**
Minister

Portfolio: National Defence
Riding: Ottawa South, Ont.
First elected: June 28, 2004
2025 Vote Share: 65.18%
2025 Win Margin: 38.13
Salary: \$309,700

**Dominic LeBlanc**
Minister

Portfolio: President of the King's Privy Council, responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Intergovernmental Affairs, and One Canadian Economy
Riding: Beauséjour, N.B.
First elected: Nov. 27, 2000
2025 Vote Share: 60.60%
2025 Win Margin: 27.3
Salary: \$309,700

**Eleanor Olshewski**
Minister

Portfolio: Emergency Management and Community Resilience, minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada
Riding: Edmonton Centre, Alta.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 44.35%
2025 Win Margin: 6.45
Salary: \$309,700

**Evan Solomon**
Minister

Portfolio: Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, and minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
Riding: Toronto Centre, Ont.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 64.33%
2025 Win Margin: 43.42
Salary: \$309,700

**François-Philippe Champagne**
Minister

Portfolio: Finance and National Revenue
Riding: Saint Maurice-Champplain, Que.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 49.96%
2025 Win Margin: 25.34
Salary: \$309,700

**Gary Anandasangaree**
Minister

Portfolio: Public Safety
Riding: Scarborough-Guildwood-Rouge Park, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 63.96%
2025 Win Margin: 32.27
Salary: \$309,700

**Gregor Robertson**
Minister

Portfolio: Housing and Infrastructure, minister responsible for Pacific Economic Development Canada
Riding: Vancouver Fraserview—South Burnaby, B.C.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 52.30%
2025 Win Margin: 16.62
Salary: \$309,700

**Heath MacDonald**
Minister

Portfolio: Agriculture and Agri-Food and Rural Economic Development
Riding: Malpeque, P.E.I.
First elected: Sept. 20, 2021
2025 Vote Share: 57.60%
2025 Win Margin: 20.98
Salary: \$309,700

**Jill McKnight**
Minister

Portfolio: Veterans Affairs, associate minister of defence
Riding: Delta, B.C.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 51.83%
2025 Win Margin: 8.67
Salary: \$309,700

**Joanne Thompson**
Minister

Portfolio: Fisheries
Riding: St. John's East, N.L.
First elected: Sept. 20, 2021
2025 Vote Share: 62.28%
2025 Win Margin: 36.35
Salary: \$309,700

**Joël Lightbound**
Minister

Portfolio: Government Transformation, Public Works, and Procurement
Riding: Louis-Hébert, Que.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 55.44%
2025 Win Margin: 34.11
Salary: \$309,700

**Julie Dabrusin**
Minister

Portfolio: Environment and Climate Change
Riding: Toronto—Danforth, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 66.56%
2025 Win Margin: 47.56
Salary: \$309,700

**Lena Metlege Diab**
Minister

Portfolio: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship
Riding: Halifax West, N.S.
First elected: Sept. 20, 2021
2025 Vote Share: 65.60%
2025 Win Margin: 38.38
Salary: \$309,700

**Mandy Gull-Masty**
Minister

Portfolio: Indigenous Services
Riding: Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, Que.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 41.16%
2025 Win Margin: 7.19
Salary: \$309,700

**Maninder Sidhu**
Minister

Portfolio: International Trade
Riding: Brampton East, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 21, 2019
2025 Vote Share: 48.59%
2025 Win Margin: 3.88
Salary: \$309,700

**Marjorie Michel**
Minister

Portfolio: Health
Riding: Papineau, Que.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 52.98%
2025 Win Margin: 36.41
Salary: \$309,700

**Mélanie Joly**
Minister

Portfolio: Industry, responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions
Riding: Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 60.96%
2025 Win Margin: 44.08
Salary: \$309,700

**Patty Hajdu**
Minister

Portfolio: Jobs and Families, minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario
Riding: Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 55.22%
2025 Win Margin: 19.48
Salary: \$309,700

**Rebecca Alty**
Minister

Portfolio: Crown-Indigenous Relations
Riding: Northwest Territories
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 53.51%
2025 Win Margin: 20.19
Salary: \$309,700

**Rebecca Chartrand**
Minister

Portfolio: Northern and Arctic Affairs, minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency
Riding: Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, Man.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 45.50%
2025 Win Margin: 16.77
Salary: \$309,700

**Rechie Valdez**
Minister

Portfolio: Women and Gender Equality, secretary of state for Small Business and Tourism
Riding: Mississauga-Streetsville, Ont.
First elected: Sept. 20, 2021
2025 Vote Share: 51.53%
2025 Win Margin: 6.68
Salary: \$309,700

**Sean Fraser**
Minister

Portfolio: Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Riding: Central Nova, N.S.
First elected: October 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 51.93%
2025 Win Margin: 9.19
Salary: \$309,700

**Shafqat Ali**
Minister

Portfolio: President of the Treasury Board
Riding: Brampton—Chinguacousy Park, Ont.
First elected: Sept. 20, 2021
2025 Vote Share: 48.85%
2025 Win Margin: 4.4
Salary: \$309,700

**Steven Guilbeault**
Minister

Portfolio: Canadian Identity and Culture, responsible for Official Languages
Riding: Laurier-Sainte-Marie, Que.
First elected: Oct. 21, 2019
2025 Vote Share: 52.07%
2025 Win Margin: 33.26
Salary: \$309,700

**Steven Mackinnon**
Minister

Portfolio: House Leader
Riding: Gatineau, Que.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 60.54%
2025 Win Margin: 41.41
Salary: \$309,700

**Tim Hodgson**
Minister

Portfolio: Natural Resources and Energy
Riding: Markham—Thornhill, Ont.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 54.54%
2025 Win Margin: 12.89
Salary: \$309,700

**Adam van Koeverden**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Sport
Riding: Burlington North—Milton West, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 21, 2019
2025 Vote Share: 52.75%
2025 Win Margin: 8.49
Salary: \$284,500

**Anna Gainey**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Children and Youth
Riding: Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Que.
First elected: June 19, 2023
2025 Vote Share: 63.99%
2025 Win Margin: 44.32
Salary: \$284,500

**Buckley Belanger**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Rural Development
Riding: Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, Man.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 65.09%
2025 Win Margin: 39.6
Salary: \$284,500

**John Zerucelli**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Labour
Riding: Etobicoke North, Ont.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 52.58%
2025 Win Margin: 11.59
Salary: \$284,500

**Nathalie Provost**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Nature
Riding: Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville, Que.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 45.16%
2025 Win Margin: 16.1
Salary: \$284,500

**Randeep Sarai**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: International Development
Riding: Surrey Centre, B.C.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 48.01%
2025 Win Margin: 4.78
Salary: \$284,500

**Ruby Sahota**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Combatting Crime
Riding: Brampton North—Caledon, Ont.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 49.03%
2025 Win Margin: 1.59
Salary: \$284,500

**Stephanie McLean**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Seniors
Riding: Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, B.C.
First elected: April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 49.34%
2025 Win Margin: 20.59
Salary: \$284,500

**Stephen Fuhr**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Defence Procurement
Riding: Kelowna—Lake Country, B.C.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015- Oct. 20, 2019, April 28, 2025
2025 Vote Share: 48.78%
2025 Win Margin: 1.84
Salary: \$284,500

**Wayne Long**
Secretary of State

Portfolio: Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions
Riding: Saint John—Kennebecasis, N.B.
First elected: Oct. 19, 2015
2025 Vote Share: 58.11%
2025 Win Margin: 20.78
Salary: \$284,500

Compiled by The Hill Times' digital editor Samantha Wright Allen

Photographs courtesy of the Liberal Party of Canada, The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade

Source: Elections Canada preliminary results as of May 15, 2025

NEWS Insider's Guide to Parliament

Federal public service cut by nearly 10,000 jobs, new data shows

The 2.7 per cent dip as of March 2025 represents the first time the public service hasn't grown since 2015, which experts say isn't surprising given the Liberal government's 2024 budget forecast the population to shrink by attrition.

BY MARLO GLASS

The size of the federal public service shrank by nearly 10,000 jobs between the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years, marking the first time the civil service population hasn't grown since 2015, according to newly published data by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

The drop in 9,807 jobs marks a 2.7 per cent dip in number of civil servants, with cuts nearly doubling the 5,000 projected to come over four years, as outlined in last year's budget. The decrease brings the size of the population to approximately where it was by March 2023, when it employed 357,427 people.

The data, last updated on May 16, says the federal government employed 357,965 people at departments and agencies at the end of the 2024 fiscal year, compared to 367,772 the year prior.

About 68 per cent of the 9,807 jobs lost were at the Canada Revenue Agency, which reported 6,656 fewer employees between 2024 and 2025. Etienne Biram, a CRA media spokesperson, said the agency's budget has been impacted by the end of pandemic-era program funding, "which has required the CRA to re-examine the size of its workforce," resulting in up to 280 employees leaving the agency.

The CRA stopped converting term employees to permanent in April 2024 as a measure "to ensure we continue to operate efficiently while adapting to our financial realities," Biram said by email.

Additionally, some term contracts ended early due to financial constraints, he said. On Jan. 29, CRA Commissioner Bob Hamilton announced the early end of term contracts for 312 employees.

"For the vast majority of our term employees that have ceased working at the CRA in the last fiscal year, it has been as a result

of their terms ending and not be renewed, which is a standard practice," Biram said.

Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) was next in line, reporting 1,944 fewer personnel, which represents just under 20 per cent of the overall reduction. Earlier this year, the IRCC announced plans to cut 3,300 jobs over three years.

An IRCC spokesperson said 80 per cent of the staffing reduction would come through its temporary workforce, with the remaining 20 per cent affecting permanent employees via the workforce adjustment process. The IRCC did not provide a breakdown as it related to the cuts tied to the last fiscal year.

"IRCC aligns its funding with the targets in the Immigration Levels Plan, including adjusting staffing levels and processing capacity accordingly," spokesperson Isabelle Dubois said in an emailed statement. "Resources are prioritized based on operational needs, with staff redeployed to high-need areas to ensure the continued delivery of essential services, support family reunification, and advance Canada's economic objectives."

Dubois said when an employee's job falls under a "workforce adjustment" where their work is no longer required, indeterminate employees are offered "a variety of options" to transition to another public service job, and can be offered financial incentives for those transitioning out of the public service.

The Hill Times asked the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat if these job losses were for permanent, temporary, or term positions, or based on attrition.

Martin Potvin, a media spokesperson for the Treasury Board, said in a statement that the government is "committed to responsibly managing the size and composition of the public service, which can shift over time to align with changing priorities."

The department is now led by new Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali (Brampton-Chinguacousy Park, Ont.). Potvin said officials at the department level are responsible for adjusting their workforce based on their needs. He noted staffing levels increased in some departments during the COVID-19 pandemic to support emergency response and recovery programs.

"As those needs have declined, staffing levels have been adjusted accordingly."

Michael Wernick, a former clerk of Privy Council, cautioned that the numbers only show "a snapshot in time," and are likely a result of the targets laid out in the 2024 budget.

"The way targets are implemented is at the level of individual organizations," said Wernick, who is the current Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management at the University of Ottawa. "They flow through to work units and then to middle managers."

Of those employed in the federal public service last year, 279,296 held roles in the core public administration, while 78,569 were employed by separate agencies. That makes for a decrease of 2,756 jobs in 88 departments under the "core" category, and more than 7,000 from 26 separate agencies.

Between 2015 and 2025, the federal public service grew by 100,000 jobs. During that same period, Canada's population increased by more than five million.

At its height, that translated to a 43 per cent growth during then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's tenure, according to fiscal-year tracking just before the Liberals took power in 2015 up to 2024, while the Canadian population grew by 15 per cent. But Trudeau's last year in power saw that growth dip to 39 per cent as of March 2025, compared to a 16.6 per cent population growth. Trudeau officially stepped down that month and Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) took the reins following his landslide Liberal leadership victory on March 9.

Ram Mathilakath, a former executive with the Parliamentary Budget Office and Treasury Board, echoed Wernick's assessment. He said the numbers don't show the churn that occurs in any given year and added that attrition itself accounts for anywhere between 12,000 to 15,000 retirements a year, or about eight to 12 per cent of the federal public service.

Last year's budget forecast 5,000 job cuts

The 2024 budget pledged to shrink the size of the federal public service by 5,000 jobs over four years via attrition as part of an ongoing effort to "refocus" government spending first announced in 2023 and projected to save \$15.8-billion.

At the time, then-finance minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) highlighted the forecasted decline in the public service as a part of a "thoughtful" approach to spending.

"That is really significant. And it was important, particularly right now, to say that to Canadians," Freeland said of the cuts during the April 2024 press conference at the spring budget lockup. Freeland now handles transport and internal trade in Carney's cabinet.

"That's why it was really important for me, in this budget,



Prime Minister Mark Carney has emphasized the need for government efficiency and a spending review, with his election platform saying programs aren't working as well as they should. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

to announce that over four years, you're going to see a decline in the public service by 5,000 people," she said. "That is really significant. And it was important, particularly right now, to say that to Canadians."

At the time, then-Treasury Board president Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) said the cuts would be government-wide.

"We have seen a significant growth in the public service over the past number of years, specifically following the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was natural for us to have additional public servants in order to dispense with massive programs that we were putting in place," said Anand, who is now foreign affairs minister, in April 2024.

"We are simply looking at ways in which we can save money, cut red tape, and ensure that our taxpayer dollars... are allocated towards our government's priorities."

Wernick added the new data is "not that surprising, given the Freeland budget," and the bulk of job losses were likely among term or casual workers.

Unions not surprised by cuts

Ryan Campbell, an economist with the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), said the union's younger members have been impacted by the cuts.

"New public service employees come in on term or temporary contracts, and are often the first to let go," he said, calling it "a troubling trends" that the next generation of public service staff are first on the chopping block.

PIPSC represents 65,000 employees in the federal public service, including scientists, engineers, auditors, nurses, and IT professionals.

"We've seen the negative impacts of what this does to individuals just getting started in their career," Campbell said.

Nathan Prier, president of the Canadian Association of Professional Employees, also echoed that the job losses weren't surprising, but said they are ideologically driven.

"They have a long track record on making decisions about the public service based on nothing but pure ideology, not on evidence," he said, pointing to the

Trudeau government spending more than \$20-billion on outsourcing contracts last fiscal year, despite calls to cut back on spending.

"I'm not surprised at all that the last government lied to workers and Canadians. It's more or less the same government that's in power right now, with the big exception of Mark Carney," Prier said.

"Firing all these employees just to hand potential taxpayer savings to [consulting firms] McKinsey and Deloitte and other private sector consultants. That's a shell game we can't afford in a national crisis."

Carney pitches public service cap

Carney's election platform promised a comprehensive review of government spending, saying federal programs aren't working as well as they should.

"This review will focus on clear targets by departments and Crown corporations with an iterative process that deploys best approaches across the public sector," the Liberal fiscal and costing plan says. "A portion of these savings will be redeployed to invest in technology and people in order to improve the quality of what the federal government does."

In his first post-election press conference on May 2, Carney vowed to curb a bloated operating budget by "cutting waste, capping the public service, ending duplicative programs, and deploying technology to boost public sector productivity."

The Montreal Economic Institute recently argued in a paper that the Carney government should "take a page from the Chrétien government's 1994 program review" and cut tens of thousands of public service jobs. That would return the federal government's per capita size to the pre-Trudeau era, and would reduce public spending by nearly \$10-billion per year, according to the paper, published on May 15.

"The size of the Canadian public service once again requires attention. Despite the government belatedly acknowledging the need to restrain the growth of the federal bureaucracy, more decisive action is required," said Conrad Eder, an associate researcher and the paper's author.

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Insider's Guide to Parliament **NEWS**

Top 10 most influential Conservatives in federal politics

Jenni Byrne, the former Conservative campaign director and a close confidante of Pierre Poilievre, is facing criticism for the party's failure to win the April 28 election. It remains unclear whether Poilievre will choose to part ways with her.

BY ABBAS RANA

Although the Pierre Poilievre Conservatives did not form government in the April 28 election, they came close—holding the Mark Carney Liberals to a minority, and defying the expectations of many seasoned political observers. Citing the surge in support during the final two weeks of the campaign, some Conservative insiders claim that if the election had lasted just one more week, they could have secured a victory.

In the lead-up to last month's election, most political insiders expected the Liberals to win a majority government. This outcome suggests that if Carney fails to make progress on key issues such as United States trade tariffs and affordability—top-of-mind concerns for many Canadians—another election could be on the horizon in about two years, depending on how events unfold. The most recent minority Parliament was one of the longest in Canadian history, lasting nearly three-and-a-half years. Prior to that, minority governments typically lasted between 18 and 24 months.

This means that several senior Conservative figures are expected to play influential roles in holding the minority Liberal government to account, and to prove themselves to be a government in waiting. *The Hill Times* spoke with multiple senior Conservatives, both inside and outside of the caucus, to identify who the key players will be in the current Parliament. There was broad consensus that Pierre Poilievre's inner circle is composed primarily of two people: the leader himself and his former campaign director and senior adviser, Jenni Byrne. However, sources also said that several other influential figures—both within and beyond the caucus—are instrumental in supporting the work of these top two people.

Pierre Poilievre Conservative Leader

Even though Poilievre failed to win the last election and lost his own riding, he still appears to



Even though the Conservatives lost the April 28 federal election, Pierre Poilievre, pictured right with his wife Anaïda Poilievre, still appears to maintain strong control over his party. Leading up to the election, most political observers anticipated a Liberal majority, yet the Conservatives managed to hold them to a minority. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

have a strong control of his party. Under his leadership, the Conservatives won 144 seats—25 more compared to the 2021 election when they won 119. In terms of the popular vote, the Conservatives lost by a margin of only 2.4 percentage points. Poilievre now will run in a yet-to-be-called byelection in the riding of Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.—one of the safest Conservative ridings in the country—that has been vacated by Damien Kurek for the leader. Poilievre is expected to return to the House in the fall.

Andrew Scheer Interim Opposition and House Leader

After Poilievre's election loss, the Conservative caucus chose Andrew Scheer as the interim leader in the House. He will serve as opposition leader until Poilievre wins a seat and returns to the House. Scheer has previously served as the House Speaker from 2011 to 2015, and as party leader from 2017 to the 2019 federal election. Known as a Poilievre loyalist, Scheer is bilingual and will lead his caucus in holding the newly elected government to account in the few weeks before the House adjourns for the summer recess on June 20. After Poilievre returns to the House after the byelection, Scheer will serve as the House leader.

Jenni Byrne Former Campaign Director



A close confidante of Poilievre, Jenni Byrne served as the campaign director in the April 28 election. Byrne has played a

key role in Poilievre's political career starting with his nomination as a Conservative candidate in 2004 to his time as a cabinet minister under Stephen Harper, then his leadership election, and now as party leader. The two had a long-term romantic relationship and were once expected to marry, but ultimately did not. Despite that, they remain close friends and strong political allies.

Even though Byrne has been on the receiving end of criticism from parliamentarians and unsuccessful candidates, her role will continue to be crucial going forward. Several individuals, both inside and outside the House, are urging Poilievre to let his top adviser go—but whether he will do so remains to be seen.

Anaïda Poilievre Wife and Informal Adviser

Anaïda Poilievre, a former House and Senate staffer, is known as an important informal adviser to her husband Pierre on political issues and strategy. Often described as "assertive," she accompanied her husband throughout the last federal election and leadership campaign. Born in Venezuela and raised in Quebec, Anaïda is fluently bilingual and a compelling speaker, earning praise across the country for her oratorical talent.

At major party events, Anaïda Poilievre frequently introduces her husband, which has contributed to softening his image—particularly among multicultural communities and women voters—by portraying him as a family man married to an immigrant woman from Quebec.

Melissa Lantsman Deputy Leader

Melissa Lantsman, a former senior cabinet and MP staffer,

has served as deputy leader of the Conservative Party since 2022, following Poilievre's leadership election win.

Known for her impassioned speeches and questioning in the House, she has quickly become a prominent figure within the party.

Frequently entrusted with communicating party policies and political positions, Lantsman plays a pivotal role in shaping Conservative messaging. A staunch ally of Poilievre, she is also a vocal supporter of Israel and a well-recognized member of the Jewish community—a demographic that holds significant importance within the Conservative Party's electoral base.

Tim Uppal Deputy Leader

As deputy leader, Tim Uppal holds significant influence within the party. He plays a key role in its outreach to the Sikh community and the broader Indo-Canadian population—both of which are key voter groups in federal elections. During the Stephen Harper government, Uppal served as minister of state for democratic reform and multiculturalism.

Leo Housakos Conservative Senate Leader

Appointed to the Senate in 2008 by then-prime minister Stephen Harper, Quebec Conservative Senator Leo

Housakos is a staunch ally of Poilievre. A former Speaker of the Senate, he plays a key role in shaping opposition strategy in the Red Chamber. Housakos is also actively involved in party efforts in Quebec, helping to recruit candidates, raise funds and supporting nominated candidates by attending events across the country.

Ian Todd OLO Chief of Staff

A veteran Conservative insider who has served as a senior aide to several right-of-centre leaders—including Preston Manning, Stockwell Day, and Stephen Harper—Ian Todd is the most senior political staffer in Poilievre's office. In this influential role, Todd manages access to the leader and oversees his schedule, with final authority over which files reach the leader's desk. He is also responsible for recruiting staff, managing the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, and overseeing its budget. From 2018 to 2021, he served as the Ontario government's representative in Washington, D.C., under Premier Doug Ford.



Robert Staley Chair, Conservative Fund Canada

As chair of the Conservative Fund Canada, Robert Staley holds one of the most powerful roles within the Conservative

Party. During the most recent federal election, he spent considerable time in the party's Ottawa war room, offering input on political strategy and legal matters. In his role, Staley oversees all party fundraising and expenditures. Under his leadership, the fund raised record-breaking amounts, driven largely by the widespread belief that Poilievre was poised to form government after the election. Whether the party can sustain that fundraising momentum going forward remains to be seen.

Mike Crase Executive Director

As the executive director of the Conservative Party—the most senior role at headquarters—Mike Crase serves as Pierre Poilievre's right-hand man. He holds ultimate authority over party operations, including organization, nominations, fundraising, data management, polling, and election readiness. Prior to moving to Ottawa in 2022 following Poilievre's leadership election win, Crase held the same position with the Ontario PC Party, where he played a key role in helping Ontario Premier Ford secure two consecutive majority governments.

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Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

A look at Treasury Board rules as Carney and cabinet start to staff up



Prime Minister Mark Carney walks down Sparks Street after of his first post-election press conference in the Wellington Building on May 2. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

With 28 ministers and 10 secretaries of state, hundreds of staffing hires will take place in the coming days and weeks.

As elected officials and staff prepare to return to Ottawa for the start of the new Parliament, ministerial staffing remained firmly in a state of transition, with little known of confirmed permanent hires in either the Prime Minister's Office or the offices of Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** cabinet.

Marco Mendicino continues to act as chief of staff to Carney, as he's done since Carney was first sworn in as prime minister on March 14. Mendicino, whose appointment prompted criticism in some Liberal caucus corners and was described as temporary, stayed behind during the election as part of the skeleton team that continued to work in the PMO. On May 22, he was among those in attendance for Carney's swearing-in as the MP for Nepean, Ont., according to a pool report. Later that same day, it was announced that Mendicino would be staying on as chief of staff through the summer.

"As we prepare for the Throne Speech, I have asked Mr. Mendicino to stay into the summer in order to support the launch of the government's mandate in Parliament and to lead the transition of the PMO on my behalf," wrote Carney on X. "I am grateful that he has agreed to do so."



The Prime Minister's Office at 80 Wellington Street in downtown Ottawa, as seen on July 26, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Carney's new cabinet—made up of 28 ministers and 10 secretaries of state—was sworn in at Rideau Hall on May 13, just 13 days prior to the official first day of the 45th Parliament.

With the swearing-in of a new cabinet, all ministers—including returning ones, all of whom have been given new portfolios—will have to hire their teams.

At the end of the last Parliament, there were roughly 750 cabinet staff working between 38 cabinet offices and the Prime Minister's Office, with around 90 staff in the PMO, specifically.

The staffing-up process typically begins with the hiring of a chief of staff, which, as noted in Treasury Board rules, is a decision "subject to prior written and ongoing agreement of the Prime Minister's Office."

Under the Trudeau government, office sizes ranged between ministers, with then-deputy PM

and finance minister **Chrystia Freeland**, for example, employing around 30 staff. Other senior ministers had slightly smaller teams, with then-defence minister **Bill Blair**, for example, having closer to 20 staff. While styled as full ministers, those with more junior portfolios during the last Parliament, like then-Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario minister **Filomena Tassi** and then-small business minister **Rechie Valdez**, had on average closer to 10 staff in their respective offices. (Valdez is now both minister of women and gender equality, and secretary of state for small business.)

Secretaries of state are essentially ministers of state by another name under Treasury Board rules, which set out certain limits for the setting up of offices.

Staff working for secretaries of state are generally eligible for lower maximum salary ranges

based on Treasury Board classifications. Directors working for a minister, for example, fall under an "executive" group—or "EX"—salary classification, whereas directors working for a secretary of state fall under a lower "AS," or "administrative services," classification.

There are technically no minimum salaries for exempt staff under Treasury Board rules, which instead set out maximum salary ranges for the various classification groups.

Chiefs of staff to ministers are classified as either EX-02, EX-03, or EX-04, which, taken together, establish a maximum annual salary range of between \$154,178 (the low end set out for EX-02 chiefs) and \$232,676 (the high limit for EX-04 chiefs), as of April 1, 2025.

By comparison, chiefs of staff to ministers of state are classified as EX-01 or EX-02, making them eligible for maximum salary ranges of between \$137,524 and \$181,365.

Directors in ministers' offices are classified at the EX-02 level, whereas directors to secretaries of state would fall under the AS-08 group—the same group that policy advisers for secretaries of state, and that press secretaries and policy advisers to ministers fall under—which is currently eligible for a maximum annual salary range of between \$116,509 and \$137,135.

Press secretaries to secretaries of state are part of the AS-07 group, under which senior special assistants to both ministers and secretaries of state also fall. That classification currently comes with a maximum salary range of \$112,834 to \$129,017.

The pay groups for special assistants and support staff are the same regardless of whether they're employed by a minister or secretary of state—either way, they're part of the AS-05 group, whose maximum annual rates of pay range from \$84,637 to \$105,558. Private secretaries—or executive assistants—to secretaries of state are also part of that AS-05 group, whereas private secretaries to ministers fall under the AS-06 classification, whose salaries are currently capped at between \$96,998 and \$117,853.

As noted in the Treasury Board's Policies for Ministers' Offices, "All salaries for exempt staff will be deemed to include compensation for overtime."

While ministers have the power to authorize staff increases up to the allowable maximums, Treasury Board rules do state that staff "should not be paid the maximum salary unless it can be fully justified by his or her experience and qualifications."

"As a general rule, the maximum salary range is reserved for employees with relevant professional qualification, 10 or more years' relevant prior employment experience, or extraordinary skills and qualifications," reads the rule book.

During the 2023-24 fiscal year—the most recent account of annual federal spending currently available—then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** office spent almost \$10.7-million on personnel overall, with another \$101,146 spent on "professional and special services." Altogether, the PMO spent a total of almost \$11.9-million last year.

Tallied together, total spending by Trudeau's office and the offices of the 38 members of his cabinet amounted to roughly \$89-million overall in 2023-24, of which \$81.3-million was spent on personnel. Reported expenditures overall include spending on personnel; transportation and communications; information; professional and special services; rentals; repair and maintenance; utilities, materials, and supplies; acquisition of machinery and equipment; and other subsidies and payments. Another category listed in the books is "acquisition of land, buildings, and works," though no ministers reported any expenditures under this category.

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Party Central



By Stuart Benson

A little rain never hurt a Riverkeeper

Annual gala fundraiser supporting Ottawa's watershed swaps banks for wet and wild shindig, rakes in \$330K under the clouds on May 21 at Jacques Cartier Park.

The 12th annual Riverkeeper fundraising gala proved once again to be one of the hottest parties in the capital, rain or shine, on May 21, as more than 400 politicians, politicians, philanthropists, and ecologically minded entrepreneurs proved that protecting the watershed means not being afraid of getting a little wet.

Held for the past two years in the recently rejuvenated National Capital Commission's Ottawa River House in Rockcliffe Park, the decision was taken this year to return to the events' *plein air* roots across the river on the grounds of Jacques Cartier Park in Gatineau. Unfortunately, regarding the weather forecast, this year's event was held more under water than over it. However, a light, chilly drizzle wasn't enough to deter attendees who updated their planned "river chic" attire with some extra layers and opened their wallets to raise well over \$330,000 at one of the National Capital Region's hottest social events.

Arriving just before 5:30 p.m., **Party Central** caught one of the fancy Mercedes-Benz shuttle cars, courtesy of Star Motors, from the National Research Council's research facility on Sussex Drive and headed across the river with the other VIPs for the pre-gala chair's reception.

Upon arrival, guests made their way up to the exclusive reception along the banks of the Ottawa River across from the Rideau Falls, but not before stopping for selfies with one of several mermaids who had come ashore for the occasion. There was also the siren call of several shelves stacked with pre-made cocktails near the entrance, but guests were shepherded onward with the promise of even more exclusive cocktails once inside.

While the gin and prosecco River 75, or the Lemon Lights tequila lemonade were poured strong enough to smell the alcohol halfway to your lips, the highest spirit was the champagne poured from above by aerialist **Rebecca "Aerial Becca" Ng**.

Milling about the reception, **Party Central** spotted Sports Secretary of State **Adam Van Koeverden**, incumbent House Speaker **Greg Fergus**, Gatineau City Councillor **Anik Des Marais**, Ottawa City councillors **Rawlson King** and **Jeff Leiper**; Ontario MPP **Lucille Collard**; Standards Council of Canada's **Dominique Dallaire**; **Melissa Hammell**, Riverkeeper board of directors; **Geoff Green**, former Riverkeeper board chair; former parliamentary budget officer **Sahir Khan**; and **Denise Pregent Drouin**, alongside her husband, **Michel Drouin**, president of Groupe InterNotions, who had the night off from his usual auctioneering duties. Later on at the main gala, Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe**, RBC's **George Wamala**, **Amanda Bell**, **Glenn Sheen** and **Brooklyn Mattinson**; Maple Leaf Strategies' **Alik Angaladian**, Crest-

view Strategies' **Muhammad Ali** and **Ashton Arsenault**; McMillan Vantage's **Stevie O'Brien**, former Liberal MP **Will Amos**, and Abacus Data chair and CEO **David Coletto** also joined the festivities.

The reception also featured speeches from Fergus; Des Marais; **Jason Clark**, national director for climate change advocacy at the Insurance Bureau of Canada; **Colleen Westeinde**, co-chair of the Riverkeeper's 'Big River Give' fundraising campaign; and **Laura Reinsborough**, the official Ottawa Riverkeeper. Reinsborough was also presented with the annual novelty cheque from event sponsor RBC—which this year was a whopping \$480,000, bringing their grand total to over \$1.9-million to support river shed protection.

As the guests for the main event began to trickle in and make their way toward the larger outdoor tent, **Party Central** also spotted the event's previous emcee, the newly minted Minister for AI **Evan Solomon**, and Canadian Identity and Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault** make their arrival fresh off their first "Cabinet Planning Forum" at Meech Lake's Willson House. Unfortunately, their boss, Prime Minister **Mark Carney**, another event regular, did not make an appearance following his Hill press conference.

Unfortunately, due to an untimely illness, this year's honorary riverkeeper, **Roy MacGregor**, the prolific author of non-fiction and fiction, and passionate explorer of Canada's waterways, was unable to bring his paddle ashore for the event.

Alongside a large open bar serving specialty cocktails in addition to the more traditional mixed drinks, beer, and wine, there was also a smorgasbord of delicacies, both vegan and otherwise, courtesy of Thyme and Again. These included braised beef cheek, Fogo Island cod cakes, kimchi dumplings, and potato gnocchi duck poutine. There was also a covered oyster bar just outside, courtesy of The Whalesbone, but those were consumed faster than they could be shucked and ran dry within an hour.

To entertain the guests, there were also drum and hoop dance performances, and a second live auction helmed by Raising the Bid's **Ryan Watson**, which raised tens of thousands of dollars from the guests, including a \$2,800-bid from Westeinde on a yoga/paddle board, and nearly \$30,000 between the vacation package to the Fogo Islands Inn, and the 16-person adventure package at the Ciel et Bois retreat.

Once the sun had set, guests took to the dance floor alongside an energetic performance from the Big Smoke Brass Band, or cozied up near one of several fire pits with a strong drink while **Party Central** got dragged around to take group photos.

As the night wore down, not every group shot turned out as flattering as this one: Brooklyn Mattinson, left, Solomon, and Samantha Lobb. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*

After warming up with one last rye and coke, **Party Central** hopped into the warm embrace of the Mercedes-Benz's leather seats and headed home. Stay tuned for next week's episode for Earncliffe Strategy Group and *Politico's* House—of Commons—warming at The Métropolitain Brasserie, with special guest, The King of England, **Charles III**.

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The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. Mermaids Joelle Brumeau, left, Amber Roots, Marie Eve, and Edith Chartier 2. Colleen Westeinde, co-chair of the Riverkeeper's 'Big River Give' fundraising campaign, speaks at the VIP Chair's reception at the annual Riverkeeper Gala on May 21. 3. Riverkeeper Laura Reinsborough, left, accepts a \$480,000 donation from RBC Regional President Devinder Gill. 4. Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe demonstrates proper bidding form. 5. Meredith Brown, left, Laura Van Loon, Catherine McKenna, and Ottawa Riverkeeper and CEO Laura Reinsborough. 6. The Big Smoke Brass Band got attendees up on their feet and dancing late into the night. 7. Geoff Green, left, former Riverkeeper board chair, Denise Pregent Drouin, and her husband, Michel Drouin, president of Groupe InterNotions. 8. Ottawa Riverkeeper Laura Reinsborough, left, and Canadian Identity and Culture Minister Steven Guilbeault. 9. Ottawa City Councillor Rawlson King, left, and Liberal MP Greg Fergus. 10. Brooklyn Mattinson, left, AI Minister Evan Solomon, and Samantha Lobb.



Party Central



By Stuart Benson

The 20th Century Boys rocked the Rainbow, and raised \$4,500 for PAL Ottawa



The 20th Century Boys returned to the Rainbow Bistro for their annual spring fundraiser, and they rocked it.

The 20th Century Boys brought the heat to their sold-out crowd of friends, family, politicians, and **Party Central** at the Rainbow Bistro for their annual spring concert to support Ottawa's performing arts' elder community.

With life returning to Parliament and as the dust settles after the election, so too has **Party Central's** social life, and what better way to get into the swing of things than the biannual concert from the precinct's greatest greying musicians.

Party Central's dance card was double-booked on May 15, starting with a ceremonial tree-planting and post-potting reception with the **Matthew Perry** Foundation of Canada at The Social on Sussex Drive before heading over to the Rainbow on Murray Street in the ByWard Market to cut a rug with *the Boys* for their biannual concert.

Featuring a semi-regular roster, The 20th Century Boys are a band of seasoned political professionals, including journalists, politicians and lobbyists, as well as both amateur and professional musicians, who since forming in late 2003, have raised thousands of dollars for local Ottawa charities like the Ottawa Cancer Foundation, the Ottawa Food Bank, the Snowsuit Fund, and the Shine Community Music Program, co-run by the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club.

For the last few concerts, the band has raised money for PAL Ottawa, which connects the National Capital Region's senior artists with affordable housing and personal support services. Last week's ticket sales raised \$4,500, bringing the organization's total to well over \$10,000 in the last two years.

Last Thursday, McMillan LLP's **Richard Mahoney** and the now-retired **Peter "the face of CPAC" Van Dusen** were once again helping the band on lead vocals and guitar, as well as the occasional cowbell or tambourine; **Dave Fraser** on backup guitar and backup vocals; **Jonathan Cook** on the keyboard; and even a mini-brass section featuring **Chris Gerdei** on trumpet, **Paul Adjelaian** on trombone, and **Mike Martin** on baritone sax. Unfortunately, the band's usual backup vocals and bassist, Shine Group's **Kelly Craig**, suffered a minor biking accident ahead of the concert and could not attend. Luckily, the Boys have a pretty deep roster of alternates, and Van Dusen's former CPAC colleague, **Glen McInnis**, was on hand to sub in.

As per usual, the Boys ran through their catalogue of covers, including classics from The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, The Band, **Van Morrison**, and a cover of **Tom Jones' It's Not Unusual** with McInnis taking over on lead vocals, as well as more contemporary hits from **Amy Winehouse**, **Tim McGraw**, **Toby Keith**, and **Nathaniel Rateliff** and the Night Sweats.

However, just because the bandmates have a little more salt than pepper in their hair nowadays—that does not mean—they're slowing down, as even after the intermission more than an hour into the show, the 20th Century Boys were back for another hour to kick the energy up another notch—presumably after rehydrating at the bar—with covers of **Eddie Floyd's Knock on Wood**; **Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline**, and **Elvis Presley's Suspicious Minds**, with both Van Dusen and Mahoney taking their performances off stage, with the latter doing several laps around the bar before making his return. However, the band slowed things down while the crowd paired up with a cover of **Chris Stapleton's Tennessee Whiskey**.

The 20th Century Boys will return to the Rainbow Bistro in December for their winter concert. You can learn more about PAL or support them by visiting their website, palottawa.org.

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The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. The 20th Century Boys: Peter Van Dusen, left, Dave Fraser, Richard Mahoney, Jonathan Cook, Glen McInnis, Paul Adjelaian, Donovan Allen, Mike Martin, and Chris Gerdei. **2.** The 20th Century Boys' Dave Fraser, left, Richard Mahoney, centre, and Peter Van Dusen, right, rocked the Rainbow Bistro with their annual spring concert on May 16 and raised \$4,500 for PAL Ottawa. **3.** Richard Mahoney. **4.** Dan Mader, left, and Mahoney. **5.** Ryan Hardy, left, Olivia Cannings, and her mother, Julie Van Dusen. **6.** Laura Kurkimaki, left, Lynn Kreviazuk, and Marisa Maslink. **7.** The Van Dusens: Peter, left, his wife Ana, and their kids Madison and Alexander. **8.** Paul Adjelaian, left, Glenn McInnis, and Mike Martin. McInnis takes over lead vocals for a cover of Tom Jones' *It's Not Unusual*. **9.** The 20th Century Boys perform a sold-out spring concert at the Rainbow Bistro. **10.** No stage is big enough for the likes of Van Dusen and Mahoney, who needed the whole bar to strut their stuff during the band's two encore finales.





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.

Ailish Campbell to talk about Canada and the EU in a shifting world order on May 26 at the C.D. Howe Institute

Ailish Campbell, Canada's ambassador to the European Union, will deliver remarks on 'Navigating Global Change: Canada and the EU in a Shifting World Order,' hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute in Toronto, on May 26 at 10 a.m. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



MONDAY, MAY 26

Parliament Returns—Parliamentarians are set to return to the Hill today.

Launch of OECD Economic Survey of Canada—OECD Chief Economist Alvaro Pereira will present the findings of the group's Economic Survey of Canada, exploring the macroeconomic outlook and policy challenges, balancing short-term support with further improvements in medium-term resilience. Monday, May 26, at 8 a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th Floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register: cabe.ca.

Webinar: 'Canada and the EU in a Shifting World Order'—Ailish Campbell, Canada's ambassador to the European Union, will deliver remarks on "Navigating Global Change: Canada and the EU in a Shifting World Order," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Monday, May 26, at 10 a.m. ET happening online: cdhowe.org.

MONDAY, MAY 26—TUESDAY, MAY 27

King Charles to Visit Canada—King Charles and his wife Camilla will undertake a visit to Canada from Monday, May 26, to Tuesday, May 27.

TUESDAY, MAY 27

Speech from the Throne—King Charles will deliver the Throne Speech to officially open the 45th Parliament.

GRIC Annual General Meeting—The Government Relations Institute of Canada hosts its members-only annual general meeting. Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger will also take part in a Q&A. Tuesday, May 27, at the National Arts Centre, 8:30 a.m., at 1 Elgin St. Details: gric-irgc.ca.

Lunch: 'Investing in Canada's Defence Industrial Base'—The Canadian Club of Toronto hosts a lunch event, "Security and Prosperity: A Business Case for Investing in Canada's Defence Industrial Base." Participants include Unifor national president Lana Payne, Business Council of Canada president and CEO Goldy Hyder, former Canadian ambassador Louise Blais, OMERS president and CEO

Blake Hutcheson, Bombardier Inc.'s president and CEP Éric Martel, and ATCO Ltd.'s president and CEO Nancy Southern. Tuesday, May 27, at 11:30 a.m. ET at a location to be announced. Details: canadianclub.org.

House-warming at the Met—Earncliffe Strategies, *Politico*, and Métropolitain Brasserie co-host the "House-warming" bash to ring in the new session of Parliament following the pomp and circumstance of the Throne Speech delivered by King Charles III. Tuesday, May 27, at Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28

Panel: 'The Arctic'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion, "The Arctic: Four Leaders, Four Perspectives," featuring Yukon Premier Ranj Pillai; Natan Obed, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Lt.-Gen. Steve Boivin, Commander Canadian Joint Operations Command; and Sean Boyd, board chair, Agnico Eagle Mines. Wednesday, May 28, at 12 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details online.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28—THURSDAY, MAY 29

CANSEC Conference—The Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries host the annual CANSEC conference, the country's largest defence, security, and emerging tech event featuring exhibitors, a networking reception, and an opening day keynote presentation from Mike Pompeo, former U.S. secretary of State, and former director of the CIA. Wednesday, May 28, to Thursday, May 29, at the EY Centre, 4899 Uplands Dr., Ottawa. Details: defenceandsecurity.ca/CANSEC.

THURSDAY, MAY 29—SUNDAY, JUNE 1

FCM Annual Conference—The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' annual conference and trade show will take place at Rogers Centre in Ottawa from Thursday, May 29, to Sunday, June 1. Details: fcm.ca.

MONDAY, JUNE 2

Prime Minister Carney to Meet with Premiers—Prime Minister Mark Carney is expected to hold a meeting with the Council of the Federation in Saskatoon, Sask. Monday, June 2. Details to follow.

TUESDAY, JUNE 3

Ambassador of the Year Awards—The Deanship of the Diplomatic Corps in Ottawa, the University of Ottawa and the International Public Diplomacy Council host the seventh Ambassador of the Year Awards. Twelve winning ambassadors will receive their public diplomacy prizes by geographical regions. Tuesday, June 3, at 3 p.m. ET at uOttawa's Professional Development Institute, 55 Laurier Ave. E., 12th floor.

Ottawa Centre June Trivia Night—The Ontario Liberal Party hosts an evening of trivia and fun downtown with fellow Liberals. Each ticket includes snacks and a drink cover, and new Future Fund sign-ups will be accepted at the door. Tuesday, June 3, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: ontarioliberal.ca.

TUESDAY, JUNE 3—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

AFN's Annual Indigenous Laws Gathering—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its third annual Indigenous Laws Gathering. This year's theme is "Legal Pluralism: Braiding Distinct Legal Traditions and Sources of Power." Tuesday, June 3, to Wednesday, June 4, at the Casino Rama Resort, Rama First Nation, Ont. Details: afn.ca/events.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

Bank of Canada Interest Rate Announcement—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision for the overnight rate. Wednesday, June 4, at 9:45 a.m. ET. Details: bankofcanada.ca.

Panel: 'European Responses to Trump Challenges'—The Canadian International Council's National Capital branch hosts "European Responses

to Trump Challenges: Ukraine, NATO, G7, Trade Wars," a panel discussion featuring German Ambassador to Canada Matthias Lüttenberg; Canadian diplomat Kerry Buck; and Wolfgang Alschner, international trade law professor, University of Ottawa. Wednesday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800, Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Cutest Pets on Parliament Hill Gala—The Canadian Animal Health Institute will announce the winners of this year's Cutest Pets on Parliament Hill photo contest at this pet-friendly reception featuring signature cocktails, snacks and a few surprises. Wednesday, June 4, at 5:30 p.m. ET at Métropolitain Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. RSVP: cahi@cahi-icsa.ca.

THURSDAY, JUNE 5

New Professionals Forum 2025—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada's National Capital Region hosts the 2025 New Professionals Forum exploring key themes in public administration such as supporting the career management of new professionals; the use of AI, values and ethics; and implementing government policies in a rapidly changing environment. Speakers include Privy Council Clerk John Hannaford, deputy secretary to the cabinet Mark Schaen, and assistant secretary of the cabinet Gaven Cadotte, among others. Thursday, June 5, at 8 a.m. ET at the Ottawa Art Gallery, 50 Mackenzie King Bridge. Contact ncr-rcn@ipac.ca.

An Evening with Charlie Angus and Gwynne Dyer—The City of Timmins hosts a conversation between *The Hill Times'* columnist Gwynne Dyer and former NDP MP Charlie Angus focused on today's ever-changing political world.

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Thursday, June 5, at 7 p.m. ET at the Porcupine Dante Club, 162 Cedar St. S., Timmins, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10

Panel: 'From Ambition to Action'—Canada 2020 hosts a one-day summit, "From Ambition to Action: Getting Big Things Done", dedicated to the practical realities of delivering transformational projects in Canada featuring top-level doers—developers, policymakers, Indigenous leaders, and industry builders—from housing and infrastructure to energy, Indigenous economic partnerships, and trade. Tuesday, June 10, at the Fairmont Château Laurier, Ottawa. Details: canada2020.ca.

Canada's Fentanyl Czar and CBSA President to Deliver Remarks—Canada's fentanyl czar Kevin Brosseau, and Erin O'Gorman, president of the Canada Border Services Agency, will deliver remarks on "Fortifying Canada's Borders: Strategy, Security, and Sovereignty," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, June 10, at 12 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11

U.S. Ambassador Hoeskstra to Deliver Remarks—United States Ambassador to Canada Peter Hoeskstra will take part in an exclusive lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Webinar: 'Government's Internal Trade Data Strategy'—The Canadian Association of Business Economics hosts a webinar: "Government of Canada's Internal Trade Data Strategy." Officials with the Privy Council Office and Statistics Canada will present their Internal Trade Data Strategy and key outcomes, such as the Canadian Internal Trade Data and Information Hub and recent Canadian Survey on Interprovincial Trade, which are already helping policy makers, academics and Canadian businesses better understand our internal market. Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: cabe.ca.

Pearson Centre Laureate Dinner—The Pearson Centre Presents its 2025 Laureates Dinner honouring former Liberal cabinet minister Irwin Cotler, now international chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. Wednesday, June 11, at 5:45 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: rsvp@thepearsoncentre.ca.

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