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THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2227

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Carney's success hinges on effective caucus management, but he has struggled so far, say some Liberal MPs

BY ABBAS RANA

The current 169-member Liberal caucus is largely made up of seasoned MPs who have recently experienced political upheaval in ousting Justin Trudeau, and for Mark Carney to succeed as prime minister, he must ensure his MPs have direct and consistent

access to him and are treated fairly in cabinet promotions, say Liberal MPs.

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Liberal MPs, who did not want to be identified, pointed out that in 2015, Trudeau inherited an almost brand new caucus, with most members newly elected and grateful to be in the House. Almost no one raised any concerns about not

getting promotions to cabinet, and Trudeau effectively shaped their understanding of parliamentary conduct. Having spent more than a decade in Parliament, members from the class of 2015 and earlier now see themselves as potential cabinet ministers—a dynamic

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NEWS

Trudeau era's 'activist' health policy moves likely in the rear-view mirror, say consultants

BY TESSIE SANCI

A single mandate letter—with no explicit reference to health policy—and a Throne Speech that was light on the subject likely signifies the Liberals' plan to return to basics and use action on health as a way to fulfill other more well-known policy aims, say consultants.

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HURRICANE CARNEY BLOWS INTO TOWN

Mark Carney is also, at this early stage, a conundrum: a man who speaks in giant steps, but promises pragmatism. **Read Susan Riley's column on p. 12**



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured in Ottawa, is a shock to our entire political ecosystem, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

International trade, the economy top-lobbied issues in April, and Ford, GM led the way

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

International trade concerns emerged as the most popular overall subject in federal lobbying in April, which included an organization urging the federal government to set a new course for Canada's innovation ecosystem to help weather what they call "the biggest economic and security crisis in our country's postwar history," in a recent report.

"Officials are increasingly looking for practical ways to strengthen Canada's innovation ecosystem, especially amid a shifting global landscape shaped by trade tensions and renewed

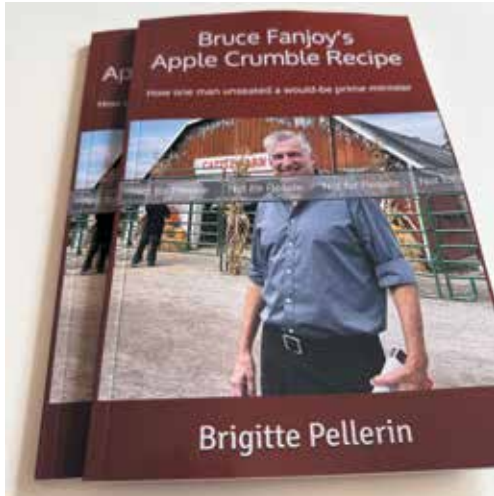
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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Brigitte Pellerin pens book on Bruce Fanjoy's recipe for victory



Ottawa Citizen columnist Brigitte Pellerin, right, is self-publishing her new book, *Bruce Fanjoy's Apple Crumble Recipe: How One Man Unseated a Would-Be Prime Minister*. It's expected to be out next week. Photograph courtesy of X and photograph courtesy of Brigitte Pellerin

It's been just over a month since the federal election when—in one of the night's top three shockers—rookie Liberal candidate **Bruce Fanjoy** defeated Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** in the Carleton, Ont., riding the long-time MP had held for 20 years.

And next week there's a book coming out about how it all unfolded.

Penned by Ottawa Citizen columnist **Brigitte Pellerin**, *Bruce Fanjoy's Apple Crumble Recipe: How One Man Unseated a Would-Be Prime Minister*, is a mere 100 pages long, but "it's a good story" the author told **Heard on the Hill** last week by email.

"I wrote it in three weeks, so it's short," Pellerin explained. "I have worked with Bruce Fanjoy on his campaign to defeat Pierre Poilievre in Carleton since early 2023 and I wanted to share his story. Who he is, why he did what he did, and how."

The title refers to a viral video from last year of Poilievre eating an apple during an interview with British Columbia journalist **Don Urquhart**. After Fanjoy's April 28 win, the MP-elect received many apple-related products, like pies, according to social media photos.

The book is based on several interviews Pellerin did with Fanjoy over the last two years, and

with his wife **Donna**, his brother **Stephen**, and members of the Fanjoy campaign's small team.

Pellerin said her big takeaway from writing this book is something Fanjoy himself likes to repeat: "Together, we can do hard things."

"After the Convoy and occupation of Ottawa, and the overwhelming unpopularity of **Justin Trudeau**, it looked like we were headed for a Maple MAGA government in Ottawa. Bruce decided to stand in the way of that. I am honoured to have played a role in helping him unseat Pierre Poilievre."

A Royal touch in the Senate Chamber

While physical touching is generally considered off-limits when it comes to Canada's monarch, two notable people were spotted being familiar with **King Charles III** in the lead-up to his giving the Throne Speech in the Senate chamber last week.

Margaret Trudeau and His Majesty greeted each other with a hug and kiss on both cheeks as the dignitaries who'd gathered for the speech relaxed for a few minutes of chatting and greetings. "It was a warm embrace from a former prime minister's wife and the mother of another—who would have met the King when he was young and still the Prince of Wales," the CBC's **Verity Stevenson** posted as it happened on May 27. Indeed, as future king and as then-wife of prime minister **Pierre Trudeau**, Charles and Margaret had met on numerous previous occasions in Ottawa in 1975 and Montreal in 1976. Margaret was accompanied last week by her eldest son, former prime minister **Justin Trudeau**.

Moments later, ex-governor general **Michaëlle Jean** was seen



In the Senate Chamber on May 27, Margaret Trudeau, left, and Michaëlle Jean, above, were two notable people who breached the protocol of not touching the King. Photograph courtesy of X and screenshot courtesy of Global News

leading her former boss by the hand to greet Assembly of First Nations National Chief **Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak**.

"On the one hand, the general protocol is that one doesn't do that: initiating physical contact, let alone physically leading members of the Royal Family," royal historian **Justin Vovk** of McMaster University told the CBC's *Royal Fascinator* **Janet Davison** on May 28.

"Jean probably did overstep the broad protocols, but she may have been given consent by His Majesty to do so or felt she could, based on their previous working relationship," Vovk said. Author and historian **Carolyn Harris**' hot take for the CBC was that royal tours in Commonwealth nations often have "a relaxed atmosphere," and that unlike his mother, "King Charles III has embraced comparative informality on royal tours of Canada."

Fry welcomes Fanjoy to the #DragonSlayerCaucus

And on the subject of **Bruce Fanjoy**, the rookie MP continued to enjoy rock-star status in his first week in the House, with his Liberal colleague **Hedy Fry** having a bit of a fan-girl moment.

"Met with Bruce Fanjoy, Member of Parliament for Carleton, who defeated **Pierre Poilievre**!"

"I never thought I'd find myself saying this... but it was a pleasure to meet with the Member from Carleton. BTW we are thinking of forming a #DragonSlayerCaucus."

The 11-term MP for Vancouver Centre, B.C., had her own Fanjoy moment when she was first elected back in 1993, defeating then-Progressive Conservative prime minister **Kim Campbell** and dubbed "the Giant Killer" at



Liberal MPs Bruce Fanjoy, left, and Hedy Fry. Photograph courtesy of X

the time. "Fry was the fifth person to unseat a sitting prime minister, and the first to do so in their first run for office," according to Wikipedia.

Scarpaleggia 'good' but not top five 'Speaker's drag' performances



Media analyst Lucas Meyer posted his top-five list of "Speaker's drags" on X last week. For him, Geoff Regan's 2015 performance is hard to beat. Screenshot courtesy of X

Toronto-based media consultant and analyst **Lucas Meyer** said he couldn't resist re-posting his list of top five so-called "Speaker of the House drags" when news broke on May 26 that Liberal MP **Francis Scarpaleggia** was chosen by his peers as the next House Speaker.

"While a good performance by Francis Scarpaleggia, still not enough to crack the Top 5—as I did here after [Greg] Fergus got elected," Meyer posted on X last week with a video of him from 2023 dissecting what he feels makes for good political theatre in the Westminster tradition of physically dragging the speaker to the chair.

"To me, it's all about who commits to the bit the most. Not just the person being dragged, but also the leaders doing the dragging," Meyers explained to **HOH** in an email.

"Politics has become so polarized in recent years and this is something that actually provides some levity for all parties," said Meyer, who confessed he enjoys "nerding out over presenting politics as sports commentary," drawing on his past career experiences.

Despite Fergus and Scarpaleggia's more recent performances, neither was able to crack Meyer's top five list which includes then-Liberal MP **Peter Milliken**

who claims both fifth and fourth places—he was speaker for 10 years—**Joe Clark**-era Liberal MP **James Jerome** in 1979, and coming in second place is current opposition leader in the House **Andrew Scheer**, who served as Speaker in the **Stephen Harper** era from 2011-2015.

But first place for Meyer remains former Liberal MP **Geoff Regan**. "Regan stands alone. Shaking his head, pulling back, acting like his arm is being twisted, having his tie pulled...he totally leans in," Meyer explained to **HOH** of the 2015 video of Regan being dragged by then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau** and interim opposition leader **Rona Ambrose**.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

CORRECTION:
The Hill Times, May 16 issue

Re: "Matthew Perry's legacy returns to his roots to build a home for recovery," (The Hill Times, May 16). This Party Central item incorrectly identified a group of protesters outside of a groundbreaking event as operating in the name of the Common Sense Planning Coalition. The coalition did not organize any such protest to coincide with the May 15 event. The Hill Times apologizes for the error.

To advance House business, Carney's Liberals may bypass Bloc in the Commons, but not in committees, says Bloc House Leader Normandin

The governing Liberals want to work with both the Conservatives and the Bloc in committees, say Liberal MPs Judy Sgro and Kevin Lamoureux.

BY ABBAS RANA

With only three parties holding recognized party status in the current Parliament—down from the usual four—both the governing Liberals and the opposition Conservatives must depend on the Bloc Québécois to advance any work in House committees, which are responsible for in-depth reviews of bills, says the Bloc's House leader.

"There's a difference between this [Parliament] and the past ones," said Bloc House Leader Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, Que.), in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "The main one being that the NDP is not a recognized party anymore, so they don't have a seat in committees. That gives us the balance of power in committees."

The current 343-member House includes 169 Liberals, 144 Conservatives, 22 Bloc Québécois MPs, seven NDP MPs, and one Green MP. With 172 seats needed for a majority, the Liberals are short by three. While the Liberals can work with the NDP in the House, they cannot do so in committees because the NDP lacks recognized party status and will have no committee representation. As a result, both the Liberals and Conservatives must rely on the Bloc Québécois to advance any committee business.

The influential Procedure and House Affairs Committee will soon finalize the structure of 28 parliamentary committees. Each is expected to have 10 members including the chair: five Liberals, four Conservatives, and one Bloc MP. Committee chairs—almost all from the governing party—only vote to break ties. Of the 28 House committees, only four—including Public Accounts; Access to Information, Privacy



Holding the balance of power in House committees, the Bloc Québécois plans to use its parliamentary leverage to promote Quebec's interests, says Bloc House Leader Christine Normandin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and Ethics; Government Operations and Estimates; and the Status of Women—are chaired by the opposition. The remaining 24 are led by government MPs.

In a minority Parliament, the government is outnumbered in both the House and on committees. This gives opposition parties significant power—they can stall or defeat legislation in committees or even bring down the government in the House. Committees are key venues for reviewing bills, estimates, appointments, and they often host the most rigorous questioning. Committees can also undertake studies on important issues of national and international issues. They can meet even when the House is not sitting. Meanwhile, the daily 45-minute Question Period remains another forum for opposition parties to hold the government to account.

The NDP lost its recognized party status in the April 28 election after winning just seven seats—short of the required 12. Strategic voting, fuelled chiefly by concerns over United States President Donald Trump's proposed trade tariffs, hurt the party's support. The last time the NDP lost party status was in 1993, when it was reduced to nine seats. The Bloc Québécois also lost official party status in 2011 and 2015, while the former Progressive Conservatives were reduced to just two seats in 1993.

Losing official party status means the NDP will lose millions of dollars of funding in caucus research, guaranteed speaking

time in the House, and voting rights on committees.

Normandin told *The Hill Times* that it's highly unlikely the NDP will regain official recognized party status, as it would require rule changes she doesn't expect to happen. However, she suggested the NDP could still be granted some resources for research, communications, and legislative staff through the Commons Board of Internal Economy, which includes MPs from all parties and is chaired by the Speaker—though unanimous agreement would be needed.

Even if the NDP is given some form of committee presence, Normandin pointed out the logistical challenge: with only seven MPs and 28 committees, they would struggle to maintain active participation. This puts the Bloc in a strong position. If it disagrees with the government on an issue, it can vote against it either in committee or in the House. Normandin added that this is the first time in recent history the Bloc has held such strategic advantage in a minority Parliament. The Bloc was the official opposition party in 1993 when it won 54 of Quebec's 75 seats, but lost its official opposition status in 1997 with 44 seats. In 2011, it lost its party status in the House with only four seats, but regained its third-party status in the 2019 election when it won 32 seats.

"They [the Liberals] can go around us in the House, but they can't in committee," said Normandin. "So we have a lot of power, and that gives us leverage for negotiation, for different things

that we might want to see passed in the House."

Normandin said the recent meeting of House leaders marked the beginning of how this Parliament will operate. One thing is clear, she said: both the Liberals and Conservatives understand they must engage with the Bloc if they want to accomplish anything in committees. Her party intends to use this leverage to defend and advance Quebec's interests.

Using Canada-U.S. trade as an example, Normandin said the Bloc will ensure that supply management is protected, that Quebec has a voice in trade talks, and that key Quebec industries—such as aluminum, fisheries, forestry, and clean energy—are not neglected. She also stressed that the Bloc will advocate for the protection of that province's cultural identity, including language, secularism, immigration, and values important to Quebecers.

Negotiations with the governing party, she added, will be on a case-by-case basis. The Bloc will not enter into any supply-and-confidence agreement, like the one previously struck between the Liberals and the NDP in the last Parliament.

The three-term MP acknowledged that the Bloc lost some seats to the Liberals in the last election due to voter concerns over Trump-era tariffs. However, she said the party aims to win back support by demonstrating its relevance and effectiveness in delivering results for Quebec.

"We still have to prove that we can do great work, and that's why

we are planning on being very constructive and having useful conversations with the government," Normandin said.

Ten-term Liberal MP Judy Sgro (Humber River-Black Creek, Ont.) said that Canadians sent a clear message in the last election: all parties must work together. She said the Liberals are open to working with both the Conservatives and the Bloc. Sgro said that the government will propose initiatives in the national interest—not just the Liberal Party's—and expressed hope that the Conservatives would co-operate in passing legislation. She also pointed to recent Conservative public statements suggesting their willingness to work with the Liberals.

"I'm hoping they [the Conservatives] learned," said Sgro. "This ended up to be an election that we did not expect to win, and it was the fourth time the Liberals have been re-elected and clearly, their [Conservative] approach didn't work very well, or they would be the government today. Instead, we are. So I suspect they need to get their act together and work with us at a time that's crucial for our country."

Sgro said that, based on what she's seen so far, the Bloc seems to recognize that co-operating with the government can help both parties deliver meaningful results for all Canadians—including Quebec.

"Quebecers were just as worried as the rest of us when you talk about sovereignty and all this stuff," said Sgro. "I don't believe they have an interest to separate [from Canada] and all the rest of it. And this was kind of a test for them about, how much you actually believe in Canada as a whole, and seeing how they voted."

Six-term Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.) said that in a minority Parliament, committees' effectiveness largely depends on the attitudes of opposition parties: when they engage constructively, much can be accomplished—but when they don't, it often leads to filibusters. He acknowledged that governments also sometimes filibuster to block opposition motions aimed at embarrassing the administration. Lamoureux said that both the government and opposition share the responsibility to collaborate, adding that the Liberals are open to working with both the Conservatives and the Bloc.

"It's very easy to just oppose for the sake of opposing, but if you want to really do something that's positive, that's creative, it doesn't mean you have to buy into everything the government does, but you have to respect the fact that it's [a] minority government in order to in order to proceed in a positive way," said Lamoureux.

"As an opposition party, you have to contribute positively. You're not just there to criticize and where committees get frustrated or feel it's necessary to become very political, it ultimately could lead to filibusters, whether it's coming from government or from some opposition members."

arana@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

International trade, the economy top-lobbied issues in April, and Ford, GM led the way

‘The world has shifted, and Canada must shift with it,’ reads a policy report from the Council of Canadian Innovators on May 6.

Continued from page 1

efforts to build domestic capacity,” said Daniel Perry, director of federal affairs for the Council of Canadian Innovators (CCI), in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times* on May 28. “This is a pivotal moment for economic policy, and we plan to be at the table with this new government every chance we get.”

Amid ongoing trade tensions with the United States, the subject of international trade was listed in 167 communication reports in April, surpassing any other topic for discussion in federal lobbying that month. The subject of economic development followed closely behind, appearing in 159 communication reports.

In terms of lobbying about international trade, vehicle firms Ford Motor Company of Canada and General Motors of Canada led the way in April, filing 11 and eight communication reports, respectively, listing that subject.

On April 3, U.S. tariffs of 25 per cent on Canadian automobiles came into effect, and this country responded with countermeasures including 25-per-cent tariffs on non-Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) compliant fully-assembled vehicles imported into Canada from the U.S., and with 25-per-cent tariffs on non-Canadian and non-Mexican content of CUSMA-compliant, fully-assembled vehicles imported into Canada from the U.S.

The Hill Times reached out to both Ford and General Motors to ask if the issues discussed in April were motivated by current tariffs. Ford Motor Company did not respond before *The Hill Times*’ deadline, and Marie Binette, GM Canada’s senior manager of corporate affairs and executive communications, responded in an email on May 28 only to say that the company “regularly engages with various policymakers on issues impacting our industry, employees, and customers.”

Ford Motor Company and the CCI were tied as the most active organizations overall in April, each contributing 11 communication reports for the month. Of CCI’s 11 reports, two listed international trade as a subject for discussion, which were for commu-



Prime Minister Mark Carney said, ‘The global economy is fundamentally different today than yesterday,’ and that Canada ‘must respond with purpose and force and take every step to protect Canadian workers and businesses’ against U.S. tariffs, in an April 3 press release from the Prime Minister’s Office. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

nications that took place on April 4 with Elizabeth Beckett, director general of regional operations for the Atlantic Opportunities Agency (ACOA), and on April 25 with David Boland, director general of regional operations for Newfoundland and Labrador for ACOA.

CCI released a policy report on May 6 intended to provide a blueprint for Canadian economic growth. Perry said in the emailed statement that, with the policy report, the CCI is engaging the federal government on priorities including privacy reform, modernization of the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax Credit Program, and “tech sovereignty.”

Canada is at a crossroads, and the recently-elected government “must hit the ground running,” according to the report.

“The assumptions that shaped our economy for the last century—that prosperity would flow from branch-plant manufacturing, deep U.S. integration, and raw resource exports—no longer hold. The world has shifted, and Canada must shift with it,” reads the report.

“To reverse course and substantially raise our standard of living, we need nothing less than a fundamental shift in how governments and domestic industries work together. Only through serious, strategic partnership can we secure good jobs, strong health-care, and affordable housing for Canadians.”

The report includes recommendations for the federal government including developing an independent innovation agency “that moves at the speed of business.” The report also recommends taking measures to help attract innovation talent to this country, including expanding programs such as the Global Talent



Daniel Perry, director of federal affairs for the Council of Canadian Innovators, says ‘Officials are increasingly looking for practical ways to strengthen Canada’s innovation ecosystem, especially amid a shifting global landscape shaped by trade tensions and renewed efforts to build domestic capacity.’ *Photograph courtesy of the CCI*

Stream, and to “market Canada as a stable alternative” to the U.S.

The CCI is represented on the registry in-house by its president, Benjamin Bergen, and by consultant Karen Moores of Town Advocacy.

In terms of overall communication reports in April, the U15-Group of Canadian Research Universities followed closely in second place with 10 reports filed. Dylan Hanley, U15’s executive vice-president, told *The Hill Times* that the group was reaching out to public office holders last month to discuss how research institutions are willing to “step up for Canada,” in response to current global instability, amongst other issues.

“We believe our leading research universities punch way

above their weight for the size of our country, internationally, and we want to make sure that we’re stepping up to the plate ourselves in the ways that we’re able to contribute,” said Hanley.

U15-Group released a “roadmap for homegrown success” on May 27, which, like the CCI report, described Canada as being at a crossroads, and argued that leading research universities are an asset that should be leveraged.

According to the report, the recently-elected Liberal government should commit to expanding Canada’s talent pipeline by closing the graduate degree gap with OECD peers, strengthening research training programs, and “rebuilding Canada’s global reputation to attract the best and brightest from around the world.”

Other recommendations in the report included helping to build out domestic research by establishing a “Sovereign Technologies Fund” to provide investments in fields like artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum and energy.

Hanley said that he doesn’t think it’s a secret that Canada’s previously “comfortable and familial relationship” with the U.S. has been shaken in recent months.

“We’ll always be close to the United States, but I do think it has opened our eyes to the need for Canadian sovereignty, and that’s what we’re talking about in that roadmap document,” he said. “On developing talent, we need to urgently explore initiatives to attract the best and brightest talent into Canada, and support more of the talented researchers that are already here. That means boosting support for graduate students and early career researchers, as well as finding ways to welcome world renowned academics to Canada.”

Last month, the U15-Group of Canadian Research Universities communicated with ISG Senator Stan Kutcher (Nova Scotia) on April 8, and with Valerie Laflamme, associate vice-president of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council on April 9 and April 30.

The organization is represented on the registry in-house by Chad Gaffield, its CEO.

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Top organizations lobbying on international trade in April

Organization	Communication reports
Ford Motor Company of Canada	11
General Motors of Canada	8
ArcelorMittal Dofasco	7
FCA Canada	6
Cereals Canada	6
Bombardier	5
Canadian Steel Producers Association	4
Canola Council of Canada	4
Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association	4
Aluminum Association of Canada	4
Fisheries Council of Canada	4
Spirits Canada	4

The above table shows the organizations that filed the most communication reports listing international trade as a subject for discussion in April, based on a search of the federal lobbyists’ registry on May 27, 2025.

Top overall lobbying organizations in April

Organization	Communication reports
Council of Canadian Innovators	11
Ford Motor Company of Canada, Ltd.	11
U15-Group of Canadian Research Universities	10
General Motors of Canada Company	8
ArcelorMittal Dofasco	7
Bell Canada	6
Bombardier Inc.	6
Business Council of Canada	6
Cereals Canada Inc	6
FCA Canada Inc.	6
Goodyear Canada Inc.	6
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation	6

The above table shows the organizations that filed the most overall communication reports for lobbying activity in April, based on a search of the federal lobbyists’ registry on May 27, 2025.

LET'S LEVEL



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NEWS

Feds set out \$486.9-billion in spending in 2025-26 main estimates

The total budgetary ask represents an 8.4 per cent jump over last year's spending document, and includes \$73.4-billion in special warrants issued while Parliament was prorogued.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The Carney government's first set of main estimates have been published, and set out \$486.9-billion in federal spending, an increase of roughly 8.4 per cent compared to the year prior.

With a new House of Commons Speaker elected on May 26, and the Speech from the Throne delivered by King Charles III the next day, one of the first items of business in the House Chamber was the tabling of the 2025-26 main estimates by Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali (Brampton-Chinguacousy Park, Ont.) on May 27.

"The main estimates clearly outline how our government is addressing Canadians' priorities and meeting the challenges and opportunities ahead," read a quote attributed to Ali in a departmental press release.

The main estimates are the first spending document of the fiscal year, and are typically tabled by March 1 and followed by multiple supplementary estimates, but the election delayed this year's usual supply process. In 2024-25, the mains set out a total of almost \$449.2-billion in federal budgetary spending—an amount which rose to almost \$486.7-billion by the end of the fiscal year.

To keep the wheels of government greased during the recent prorogation period—which included the start of the 2025-26 fiscal year on April 1—two special warrants were approved by the governor general totalling some \$73.4-billion in spending, which has been included in the budgetary breakdowns contained in the main estimates.

Of the \$486.9-billion in budgetary spending laid out for the start of the 2025-26 estimates process, just under \$264-billion is forecast

statutory spending already authorized through legislation, with the other \$222.9-billion to be subject to parliamentary votes. As noted in the document, statutory spending in the 2025-26 mains includes the new Canada Disability Benefit, as well as "increases in major transfer payments, most notably elderly benefits, the Canada Health Transfer and fiscal equalization."

Almost \$294.8-billion of the total spending ask—or about 60.5 per cent—is tied to transfer payments, with \$143.1-billion going towards operating and capital expenditures, and \$49.1-billion—or roughly 10.1 per cent—going toward public debt. In the 2024-25 mains, roughly \$46.5-billion in budgetary spending was tied to public debt, representing about 10.4 per cent of that document's total budgetary ask.

Another \$1.17-billion in non-budgetary spending—on things like loans, investments, and advances—brings the 2025-26 main estimates' bottom line to almost \$488.1-billion.

Taking into account the 2024 fall economic statement's spending projections, as well as things like revenue and items not included in the estimates, projected expenses for 2025-26 currently total \$554.5-billion.

As flagged in the document, statutory spending forecasts of ministerial salaries and car allowances do not reflect the changes made in the last two cabinet shuffles on March 14 and May

13. Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) opted for a smaller cabinet than his predecessor, trimming down his pre-election team to 23 ministers, and reconfiguring his current cabinet to 28 ministers and 10 secretaries of state. Cabinet ministers get a \$99,900 top-up to their base MP salary of \$209,800, and their junior counterparts get an added \$74,700. Carney, meanwhile, makes an annual salary of \$419,600.

DND, Indigenous Services top spending asks

Some 130 federal departments, agencies, and Crown corporations are seeking funds through this year's mains, five of which have requests subject to parliamentary approval of more than \$10-billion: the departments of National Defence (DND), Indigenous Services, Employment and Social Development (ESD), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA), and Health, respectively.

DND is seeking a total of almost \$35.7-billion in budgetary spending through this year's mains—up roughly 16.6 per cent from 2024-25—of which \$33.9-billion will be subject to votes, including \$21.5-billion in operating expenditures, \$10.9-billion in capital expenditures. Broken down by purpose, \$9.5-billion of the department's ask is tied to "Procurement of Capabilities,"



The 2025-26 main estimates were tabled in the House of Commons by new Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali on May 27. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

with \$4.8-billion for "Sustainable Bases, Information Technology Systems and Infrastructure"; \$4.4-billion for the "Defence Team"; almost \$2.3-billion for operations; about \$1.2-billion for "Future Force Design"; and close to \$1.1-billion for internal services.

Indigenous Services Canada has a total budgetary ask of \$25.3-billion—up roughly 20.4 per cent from last year—including \$4.1-billion in operating expenditures, \$6.5-million in capital expenditures, and \$21.1-billion in grants and contributions. Of that total, about \$25.2-billion will be subject to votes. Among the transfer payments listed for the department in this year's mains is a little more than \$2-billion in grants to "support the new fiscal relationship for First Nations," as well as almost \$784-million "to support child and family services co-ordination agreements and related fiscal arrangements."

ESD has the third-highest ask by organization in the mains, but the \$13.1-billion subject to parliamentary approval is a fraction of the \$105.7-billion in total budgetary spending—which is up roughly 7.1 per cent from 2024-25. The bulk of the department's spending is statutory, including \$64.7-billion tied to Old Age Security payments and \$20.1-billion for Guaranteed Income Supplement payments. MPs, however, will vote on \$197.2-million tied to the Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans debt write-off.

CIRNA's main estimates budgetary spending request totals a little more than \$13-billion—an

increase of roughly 19.5 per cent from the year prior—all but \$37.1-million of which will be subject to votes. Of that total, roughly \$11.6-billion is directed towards Crown-Indigenous relations, with \$1.3-billion going to Northern Affairs, and about \$143.6-million to the department's internal services. Altogether, about \$8.2-billion is tied to transfer payments, including almost

\$4.8-billion in grants to "First Nations to settle specific claims negotiated by Canada and/or awarded by the Specific Claims Tribunal, and to Indigenous groups to settle special claims."

The Department of Health, meanwhile, has an overall budgetary ask of \$10.6-billion in the 2025-26 mains—up 22.4 per cent—of which \$10.3-billion will be subject to Parliament's approval. Transfer payments listed for the department include \$4.6-billion tied to contributions to provinces and territories. Among its statutory spending is roughly \$100.9-million tied to recent increases to public pharmacare coverage.

The House of Commons is seeking \$656.5-million through the 2025-26 mains, an increase of about 5.3 per cent from the \$623.7-million sought in the 2024-25 mains, and the Senate is seeking almost \$139.3-million, a roughly 3.3 per cent jump.

In some notable changes, the Canada Revenue Agency—which, as recently reported, shed 6,656 staff in 2024-25—is seeking about \$10.4-billion in budgetary spending in these estimates, down almost 41 per cent from the roughly \$17.6-billion requested in the 2024-25 mains. That drop is largely tied to statutory funding, which dropped from \$12.9-billion in the 2024-25 mains to just \$5.5-billion, much of which can be attributed to the now-ended Canada Carbon Rebate.

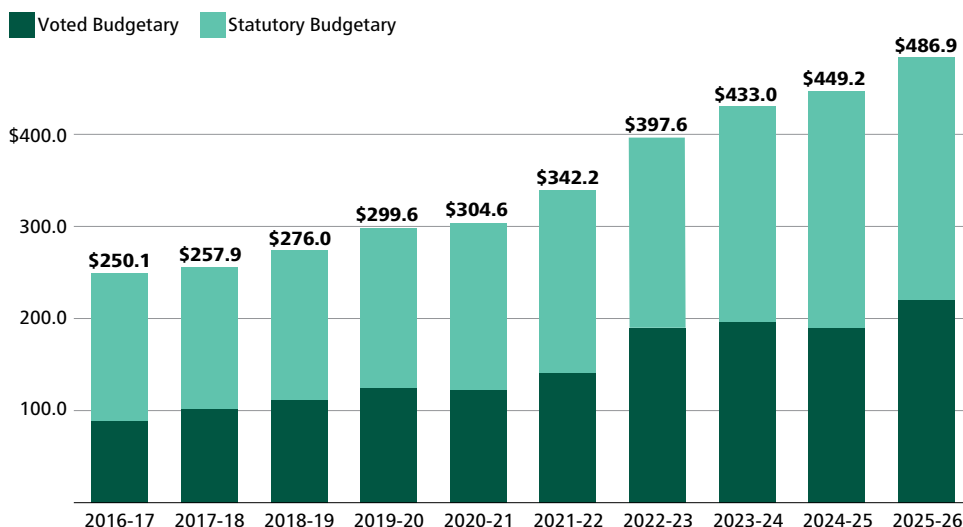
Funding for the Canada Border Services Agency is up by about \$305.9-million in the 2025-26 mains at just under \$3-billion compared to \$2.6-billion the year prior, and is up by \$277.5-million for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service at \$980.1-million this year compared to \$702.6-million in the 2024-25 mains.

Canada Post is seeking almost \$1.06-billion through this year's mains, almost five times the \$22.2-million it sought last year. The roughly \$1.03-billion difference—which is subject to a vote—is due to payments made to the corporation in line with Section 31 of the Canada Post Corporation Act, which provides for the government to cover the shortfall if the Crown corporation's revenues "are not sufficient to pay all the operating and income charges." A report released earlier this month by the Industrial Inquiry Commission declared Canada Post, which is currently facing looming strike action, to be "effectively insolvent."

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Main Estimates, year over year

The following chart lists the total budgetary spending (in billions of dollars) requested through the main estimates year over year, going back to 2016-17.



Source: Treasury Board Secretariat



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Editorial

Editorial

House debates don't match the serious times we're in

It has been months since Parliament Isat and, apart from the surprising pleasure of listening to King Charles read last week's Throne Speech with his dulcet tones, things sounded annoyingly hollow in the House of Commons the next day.

The country has just gone through a dramatic and costly federal election, and the people have expectations. The world is also watching Canada because of the leadership vacuum in the United States. We have a new prime minister and a new cabinet. There are now 343 MPs in the House, including 113 rookie MPs, and the NDP caucus has been reduced to rump status. All parties have an important role to play.

This Parliament should be setting a new tone to match the unprecedented challenges our country is facing, but the tone hasn't changed. It sounds like the last Parliament. Prime Minister Mark Carney didn't really answer questions in Question Period, some cabinet ministers simply read their scripted responses, and opposition MPs attacked cabinet ministers with their own scripted questions.

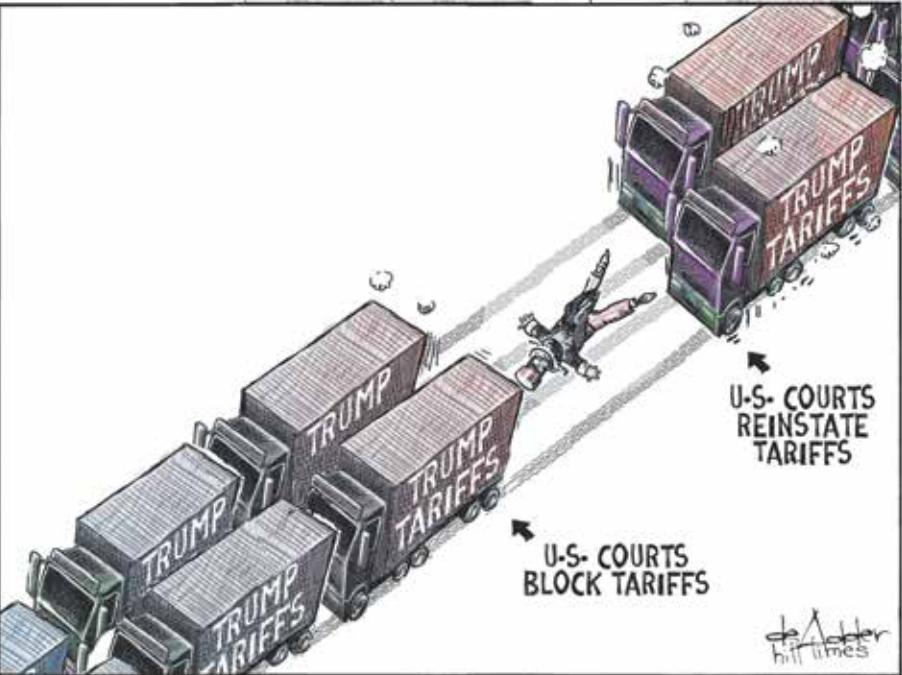
Outside the West Block, the world is looking rather bleak. U.S. President Donald Trump appears to be on a mission to destroy everything that is good in America, and he's still waging his economic war against Canada. He continues to threaten our country's sovereignty. Meanwhile, wars are raging around the world, climate change is still the number one threat to humanity, and yet last week's House debates rang empty, rehearsed, and—at times—out of touch.

"We must be clear-eyed: the world is a more dangerous and uncertain place than at any point since the Second World War. Canada is facing challenges that are unprecedented in our lifetimes," the King stated on May 27 when he read the Throne Speech.

The speech outlined some very ambitious plans. Carney wants to create one Canadian economy, set up a new Major Federal Project Office, double the rate of homebuilding, bring in legislation to enhance security at our borders, join ReArm Europe and invest in transatlantic security with European countries, double the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program from \$5-billion to \$10-billion, cap the total number of temporary foreign workers and international students to less than five per cent of Canada's population by 2027, reduce the government's operating budget from an increase in nine per cent to two per cent annually, and balance the government's operating budget over the next three years.

There's a lot there. The opposition parties have a duty to hold the government to account, but they should come up with more serious questions to fit the times in which we are living. Carney and his cabinet ministers also have an obligation to do better in the House Chamber. They owe it to the people to answer questions as honestly as they can and to be as open and transparent as possible. But everyone should quit play-acting for the cameras, and get real. This isn't a game.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Trump's Golden Dome a techno-maniacal fantasy: Kazdan

Re: "Carney should reject Trump's Star Wars production," (*The Hill Times*, May 26, 2025, by Douglas Roche). The American Physical Society, an organization of 55,000 physicists in the United States, has concluded that creating an effective defence against the threat posed by even the small number of relatively unsophisticated nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles remains a daunting challenge with hard problems likely to remain formidable over the next 15 years.

In view of the high cost, unknown reliability, and risk

of a cat-and-mouse arms race, who will really benefit from buying into this expensive technomaniacal fantasy?

If Canadians want to take their cue from an American president, it should not be Donald Trump but Dwight Eisenhower who famously warned, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

Larry Kazdan
Vancouver, B.C.

Bloc Québécois' boycott of Throne Speech insulting, writes Peterborough reader

Re: "Bloc Québécois MPs will be reading the speech from their offices, absent 'on principle' in response to a move they say is 'disrespectful to a lot of Quebecers,'" (*The Hill Times*, May 25). What is disrespectful is not attending the King's reading of the Throne Speech in person. The National Assembly of Quebec is a Westminster-style parliamentary system based on the British model. The Bloc leader was allowed to take part in the federal leaders' televised debate in person during the federal election, a privilege not even afforded the Green Party (which was a big mistake).

The Bloc Québécois also receives federal funding, not only towards that party as federal represen-

tatives in Canada, but also through major transfer payments. This is particularly notable through the Canada Community-Building Fund, providing long-term monies towards infrastructure projects, helping address community priorities such as housing, public transit, and water infrastructure. Quebec also receives federal funding for initiatives related to skilled trades, and there is a bilateral agreement with the federal government for health funding.

So to dismiss the relationship with the Commonwealth of which Canada is insulting, especially since Quebec reaps the benefits of such an arrangement as a Canadian province.

Fred Rapson
Peterborough, Ont.

COMMENT

Poilievre picks Scheer over Lantsman

Pierre Poilievre's decision to select Andrew Scheer as the interim opposition leader shows that he does not want any competition in the temporary job that he would like to fill permanently following an Alberta byelection.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Conservative deputy leader Melissa Lantsman did not look very happy when she rose to applaud her new opposition leader Andrew Scheer last week.

Who can blame her? She has done a lot of the heavy lifting as Pierre Poilievre's deputy leader. Instead of rewarding her with the opposition leader appointment, he chose a failed former leader.



Conservative MP Melissa Lantsman, left, pictured with Pierre Poilievre at a press conference in the House of Commons foyer of May 27, 2025, where he outlined his party's planned amendments to the Speech from the Throne. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The decision certainly reinforced the image of the Conservative party as an old boys' club. The choice is in keeping with the party's demographic in the House of Commons.

The Tories didn't even reach 20 per cent mark when it came to the success of women in the election. The 26 women in the caucus represent less than 19 per cent of the total team.

The choice of Lantsman would have sent a message that women play an important role in the party.

Instead, the selection of Scheer shows that Poilievre does not want any competition in the temporary job that he would like to fill permanently following an Alberta byelection.

Scheer has already been replaced as leader in a previous time, so is not likely to present any danger to the status of Poilievre as head honcho.

That status is not so solid as some would have us believe. The Conservative caucus is the only group to vote in favour of a proposed system proposed by MP Michael Chong where a majority of members can kick a leader out without the bother of having to go to a party convention.

In an effort to shore up support, Poilievre named a shadow cabinet that was three times larger than the government cabinet.

In that instance, he also ignored the principle of gender parity that was embraced by Prime Minister Mark Carney in the formation of his new cabinet.

Poilievre's shadow cabinet includes 21 per cent women in a 74-person roster of official party critics.

A notable star that was not included in the group was Jamil Jivani. Jivani was billed as one of Poilievre's personal choices when

Jivani ran to replace Erin O'Toole in a byelection.

Jivani has previously advised Ontario Premier Doug Ford, and is well-connected to the United States administration via his former university friend, American Vice-President JD Vance.

On the night of the election, Jivani emerged from defeat to attack Ford and blame the Ontario Conservatives for the federal loss.

That didn't sit well with colleagues who felt that the knives should not be pointed inward.

Jivani's absence from the 74-person shadow cabinet raised some eyebrows, as did his decision to table a private member's bill banning all temporary foreign workers from entering Canada.

Jivani has also launched a petition, which could be a tool to identify future leadership supporters.

Chances are that we will be seeing Jivani's name on a future Conservative leadership ballot.

When Poilievre opted for Scheer instead of Lantsman as Opposition leader in the House, he opened the door to her defection, as well. His caucus now holds his future in their hands.

The process to replace a leader is entitled the Reform Act, and empowers the majority of caucus to remove a leader by a secret-ballot vote.

Each party must vote on whether to employ the act at the beginning of every new Parliament.

The Liberals declined to adopt the process at their caucus meeting last week, preferring to solve challenges in private through internal discussion.

A caucus vote would likely have seen then-prime minister Justin Trudeau leave much sooner than he did, but it also means that the party membership has no say in what happens.

In Britain, the system has led to a leadership revolving door for successive governments.

Poilievre will now be subject to constant internal caucus review. The leader's survival until the next federal election is not guaranteed.

Meanwhile, Jivani is working hard to build his own political identity.

Lantsman may not follow in Jivani's footsteps, but she could view Scheer's appointment as enough of a snub to nurture her own future leadership ambitions.

She has proven her capacity both in the House of Commons, and on the campaign trail.

Poilievre is definitely riding a Conservative popularity wave today, but six months is a lifetime in politics.

Poilievre may not be leading the Conservatives into the next election.

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

Economic ambush awaits Carney

Unfortunately, for the prime minister, when it comes to mending the economy, there are no easy solutions, no quick fixes, no magic answers.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—One of the first rules of warfare is, "If your attack is going really well, it must be an ambush."

This is a rule Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal government needs to keep in mind.

After all, even though Liberal "attacks" have been going well lately (they did recently win a near majority election victory), they must now deal with a lot of serious economic issues that are lying in wait, ready to lure Carney's government into a trap.

These economic issues include the continuing housing afford-



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and his wife Diana Fox Carney tour Ottawa's Lansdowne Park with King Charles and Queen Camilla on May 26, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

ability crisis, declining productivity, expanding government deficits, tariffs, and a soft labour market.

Some experts are even saying Canada might soon be heading for a recession.

Ironically, of course, it's these economic problems that helped Carney win the election.

Keep in mind that not too long ago, when Justin Trudeau was still prime minister, the Liberals were sinking fast in the polls; Canadians were in the mood for change—a change in leadership

at the top, a change in government, and a change in voices leading the country.

As any political science textbook will tell you, when the public wants change, it's always bad news for an incumbent government.

But if there's one thing that can derail the public's desire for change, it's fear.

And fear entered Canada's political equation when United States President Donald Trump began to attack this country's sovereignty and to threaten massive tariffs.

Suddenly, when faced with this danger on our southern border, which caused economic uncertainty to dominate public perceptions, it seemed, for many Canadians, much too risky to change governments.

Plus, given Carney's background as an international banker, he seemed the safer choice when it came not only to dealing with Trump, but also to handling Canada's economic problems.

But here's the thing about fear: it's a difficult emotion to sustain over the long haul.

In fact, it appears that the fear of Trump is, at least for now, waning in Canada.

As pollster Nik Nanos recently reported, "Concern about jobs/the economy has been on the rise while focus on Trump/U.S. relations has been on the decline over the past number of weeks."

This could be because the threat of a debilitating U.S. tariff seems less likely now, or because Trump's rhetoric about Canada is fading into the background.

But whatever the reason, it seems we are once again looking inward, focusing on the ills of our economy.

This means Carney will have to figure out how to meet the expectations of Canadians who want him to make things right.

Unfortunately, for the prime minister, when it comes to mending the economy, there are no easy solutions, no quick fixes, and no magic answers.

Look at what happened, for instance, in the United Kingdom, where the Labour Party, after winning a crushing majority government victory in 2024, introduced a series of austerity measures, including cutting off winter fuel subsidies to seniors, in the name of restoring public finances.

It didn't go over very well.

In fact, the Labour Party almost immediately suffered a huge drop in popularity, from which it still hasn't recovered.

Does a similar fate await Carney, who will likely have to make some tough, unpopular decisions?

Making things even riskier for the Liberals is that Carney is not only a rookie prime minister, he's also a rookie politician, meaning he's going to face an extremely steep, on-the-job learning curve.

If these were normal times, maybe his lack of experience wouldn't be much of an issue, but these times are anything but normal.

At any rate, Carney will have to tread carefully if he's going to avoid the economic ambush that awaits.

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

COMMENT



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, meets with U.S. President Donald Trump in the White House on May 6, 2025. The recent royal visit engaged Canadians, and reminded the Orange One that Canada is very much a real country, a fully sovereign nation under a constitutional monarchy, writes Michael Harris. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/The White House (Official White House Photo by Daniel Torok)

Carney's tone a welcome distinction from Trump's taunts and threats

Political leadership requires civility and collegiality to get things done. That is the promise of Mark Carney, compared to the Dark Ages of Donald in the U.S. Our debates, policies, and laws will be worked out in Parliament, not in court.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Mark Carney has had a dream lift-off as a rookie prime minister taking charge of a country the size of Canada.

Consider the recent past.

A royal visit that engaged Canadians, and reminded the

Orange One that Canada is very much a real country, a fully sovereign nation under a constitutional monarchy.

Immediately getting down to work on his signature promise to forge a one-economy Canada by July 1, and one far less reliant on the destructive whims of current U.S. President Donald Trump, Carney will not be doing it top-down, but with the partnership of the provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples.

But what caught my eye was Carney's frank admission that he will make mistakes, and that he fully expects the opposition to call him out when he does. This goes to show that one can be strong and self-deprecating at the same time.

Fairly or unfairly, Justin Trudeau was often seen as elitist and occasionally condescending. Carney's tone to this point has been inclusive rather than confrontational, as so much of our politics has been of late. Pushy authoritarians may be all the rage south of the border. But it is conciliators who get things done in politics.

United States President Donald Trump can take most of the credit for the degrading descent

into fascism in America. He has transformed U.S. politics into the political equivalent of a Pier Nine brawl. In Trump World, there are only two options: you can be slavishly loyal, or you can be the enemy.

By my count, that enemies list is long and getting longer by the day. In what looks like the Trump Taliban, the president has launched a full-scale war against education in America, which includes taking aim at one of the country's most precious assets in Harvard University.

The Trump administration has cut funding to what is arguably the greatest university in the world, slashing a whopping \$2.5-billion so far.

Trump has also cancelled Harvard's ability to register foreign students. As for existing international students at Harvard, they can either transfer to other universities, or lose their non-immigrant status. Harvard has 6,800 foreign students, making up 27 per cent of the university's enrolment.

Trump's draconian move comes after Harvard rejected the federal government's request for detailed information on all foreign students. Kristi Noem, the

secretary of Homeland Security, accused Harvard of "fostering violence, antisemitism, and co-ordinating with the Chinese Communist party on campus."

Joseph McCarthy would blush at Trump's other demands of the famous university. The current president wants a say in the curriculum and a hand in who gets hired at Harvard.

Harvard has called Trump's moves "unlawful," and has filed suit against the government. For now, a federal judge has temporarily halted the president's decision to revoke Harvard's right to register foreign students.

Harvard is not the only target of Trump's populist rampage. The president also targeted elite law firms that have either employed his perceived enemies, or that have represented clients who have challenged his initiatives.

In issuing a permanent injunction against Trump's vindictive executive order, the judge said that it represented a "staggering punishment" to one of the targeted law firms. In all three cases that have gone to court, Trump's executive order has been blocked.

Trump has also attacked the media as "human scum" and the "enemy of the people." He has

described his media critics as "radical-Left" and "corrupt." Back in 2018, he banned CNN reporter Jim Acosta from the White House.

The president is suing CBS for \$10-billion over the alleged manipulation of an interview with then-presidential candidate Kamala Harris.

More recently, he cancelled funding for National Public Radio and PBS. NPR has already launched a lawsuit challenging Trump's funding cuts.

Trump's institutional belligerence knows no bounds. He is now attacking the judiciary as unelected nobodies. After the courts recently blocked most of his trade tariffs, one of his principal advisers, Stephen Miller, denounced the ruling and declared that the "judicial coup" in America was out of control.

The common denominator in all these examples is that Trump is fully prepared to punish his critics with the full force of the office he holds. How low can this guy go?

He's right down there with the earthworms.

When Taylor Swift endorsed Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential race, Trump denounced the singer on social media: "I hate Taylor Swift." But that wasn't enough. He later added, "Has anyone noticed that since I said I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT, she is no longer HOT?"

When Bruce "The Boss" Springsteen recently said while on tour in England that America "is currently in the hands of a corrupt, incompetent, and treasonous administration," Trump fired back.

He said that Springsteen, who also endorsed Kamala Harris in 2024, was a "dried-out 'prune' of a rocker" who "ought to KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT."

And just for good measure, Trump added a veiled threat about Springsteen's return to the U.S. after his concert tour abroad is over: "Then we'll all see how it goes for him."

And the result of all of Trump's callous and uncalled for combativeness? Nothing gets done in the U.S. these days, and the nation's business moves into court where the constitutionality of the president's executive orders is on the table. And he keeps losing.

And this is the guy who says Canadians would be better off as America's 51st state. What nonsense. Political leadership requires civility and collegiality to get things done. That is the promise of Carney, compared to the Dark Ages of Donald in the U.S. Our debates, policies, and laws will be worked out in Parliament, not in court.

As legendary singer-songwriter Paul Simon said recently in a concert in Toronto, the U.S. is about anger and division, leaving people looking for the "real" America.

"I'm happy to report that I've found it. It's here in Canada. You really are a beacon in the darkness at this point."

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Wildfires, climate change, and will we make it through?

The global economy and Canada's part in it is worth some focus, for sure. But one has to wonder if climate change in this very pivotal time will be eclipsed by big economy.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



It was a very good Speech from the Throne, given by royalty. The humility from King Charles III about reconciliation and his ongoing learning journey was touching, and the right tone for today. The content and tone meant to push off the American tyranny was also

a work of true art. Congratulations to the writers.

Canada is about diversity, and I deeply appreciated this line: "Democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, self-determination and freedom are values which Canadians hold dear, and ones which the government is determined to protect." We have to name it out loud, as silence is not an option when under pressure for our values. Much has been said about this speech and government focus on the big picture, the big economy. The global economy and Canada's part in it is worth some focus, for sure. But one has to wonder if climate change in this very pivotal time will be eclipsed by big economy.

At the time of writing, Alberta is facing more wildfires. At least three First Nations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba seems to be on fire from west to east. The town of Flin Flon, Man., is evacuated and Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew has called a province-wide state of emergency.

In case you haven't noticed, this is the new normal. We evacuate whole towns yearly to try to save lives from wildfires. The cost

of lost infrastructure is enormous. The loss of four-legged, feathered and finned wildlife is heartbreaking and will take a generation to recuperate—if it ever does. Ecological grief is about the loss of land, a loss of trust in the weather.

But it's also a grief to realize that we are not doing the meaningful work to protect the land called Canada. This year is going to be bad for wildfires. The signs are already there. Next year will be worse, and the year after that worse still. The evidence is already there.

Here are two quick wins for the Carney government. The first is reactive and the second is preventative. Nationalize wildfire fighting with a new national college to train firefighters, and reduce the cost of lives lost on the line. A national college could create a centre of excellence on all things wildfire prevention including techniques to protect all those pre-fab houses about to be built. It would simplify the logistics of sending resources to where they are needed. It also would step outside of the provin-

cial-territorial differences, a show of nationalism.

The second is to create a new national and powerful group including provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples on climate change. Make it an FPT-plus-Indigenous table with an urgent mandate to find ways and pressure each other's jurisdictions to protect what we have left. One minister of climate change wasn't able to make much impact, so let's try another structure.

Climate change is not getting enough visibility as the economy always trumps it. Energy is nice, but we won't have the land to stand on to use energy if we don't figure out how to walk and chew gum here. We don't have time for a singular focus. With the loss of ice roads to First Nations communities, rising sea levels impacting Inuit communities, and fires, Indigenous Peoples are on the front lines of climate change. While five years ago would have been nice, now's the time to build this table with a sense of true urgency.

I sure hope Flin Flon is still there when this column is



Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew declared a state of emergency in the province last week because of fast-spreading and extreme wildfires in northern Manitoba. Thousands of First Nations people in northern Manitoba were evacuated. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

printed. But I fear that Flin Flon will not be the only community impacted this year. I suppose if it were downtown Ottawa and Parliament facing down a raging wildfire, then we might have more urgency about this?

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

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COMMENT

Hurricane Carney blows into town



Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives at the Senate of Canada Building in Ottawa to attend the Throne Speech on May 27, 2025. He is so extraordinarily ambitious for this country, so focused, deliberate, and determined to do big things in record time, that it seems churlish to doubt him, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Mark Carney is also, at this early stage, a conundrum: a man who speaks in giant steps, but promises pragmatism.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



Prime Minister Mark Carney is a shock to our entire political ecosystem: to opposition parties, premiers, media, public service, and a larger world of like-minded countries.

He is also, at this early stage, a conundrum: man who speaks in giant steps, but promises pragmatism. He has “a bold ambitious plan” for Canada, as he frequently says, which was repeated in last week’s remarkable Throne Speech. Does he ever. A lot of politicians say that sort of thing, of course, but Carney has deadlines, details, professional experience in global finance, and, clearly, a burning impatience to get started.

His to-do list includes building the strongest economy in the G7. He also wants Canada to increase defence spending, play a “leading role” in NATO, and start buying more military equipment from Europe and less from you-know-where. He plans to retool the domestic economy so that we are, overall, less reliant on the United States, even when President Donald Trump has finally left the scene.

The prime minister was working this weekend with the premiers to kick-start a couple of specific, large infrastructure projects—highways, port improvements, rail extensions, pipelines?—in his view, to create new jobs and boost future prosperity. He wants to supercharge the Canadian housing industry—including enlarging the pre-fab and modular home sector—doubling the number of new builds in coming years, with an emphasis on “deeply affordable housing to address homelessness.”

That’s a partial list.

He is so extraordinarily ambitious for this country, so focused, deliberate, and determined to do big things in record time, that it seems churlish to doubt him. He radiates sincerity, too—not in a smarmy, self-congratulatory way—but in the form of conviction. He knows what he knows, and why

he knows it. He will explain it once. End of conversation.

But still, notwithstanding his default attitude of serene self-confidence, his is a daunting agenda. It skips lightly—or squashes firmly—the usual obstacles to progress in this country. They are many. Premiers, for example. As allies, they come and they go. In these early days, because electors almost everywhere are fed up with the squabbling, stasis, and excuses that kill good ideas and needed programs, and because of the always-present Trump menace, they are inclined to work with the prime minister.

While this lasts—although it may produce another unwellcome oil pipeline or two—it could create growth and, perhaps, more export avenues for our agriculture products and critical minerals. The idea is to open new markets for Canadian exports at a time when not only Trump, but China is imposing unwarranted tariffs on steel, autos, aluminum and potash—with pharmaceutical products, Hollywood film locations, and other potential targets also in Trump’s sights.

Diversifying our trading relationships is a great idea, and has been for more than 50 years. It hasn’t happened for a simple reason: it is easier to trade with

the U.S., which is closer, larger, wealthy, and culturally similar. Those historic trade flows are etched deeply in the earth now, and re-routing them will be a formidable job. The United Kingdom—our new best friend—was our third largest trading partner in 2024, but even that relationship has been strained by unpleasantness over cheese imports.

The elimination of most interprovincial trade barriers is another noble goal that makes so much sense you wonder why it hasn’t ever happened. That’s because provinces want to protect their own sectors—be it beer, construction materials, plumbers, or health services—from outside competition. No one ever champions those barriers publicly, yet they persist.

Again, there have been signs of movement, led by Atlantic premiers and powerfully endorsed by Ontario Premier Doug Ford. The federal government has also promised to remove all its barriers by July 1, presumably in time for the unveiling of One Canadian Economy. There are still grumbles from Alberta and Quebec, and a somewhat murky picture of what all these moves mean to the ordinary consumer. But nudging this tendentious file forward has to count as a small victory.

There is also the institutional inertia of the public service—of any large bureaucracy, in fact. This one, Carney should know how to deal with as well as anyone can. He laboured in the federal Finance Department before taking his talents to a larger stage. He knows all the bureaucratic strategies for sidelining a political idea the professionals don’t like.

In fact, it seems unjust to dismiss Carney’s goals as absurdly optimistic or unrealistic without giving him and his government more time. If he pulls it off—even half of his agenda—it will represent more transformational change than we have seen in some time, particularly in trade, defence and foreign relations.

That being said, once people get over his footwear choices, Justin Trudeau will also be remembered for some foundational changes: notably child care, dental care, and a reinforced child-benefits package. Perhaps because the primary beneficiaries of these initiative were women and low-income Canadians, they don’t register in some circles. And no matter how significant a prime minister’s accomplishment, their careers end in tears. It is almost a given.

But Carney has four more years—perhaps more—and, as long as he remains relatively popular, he should avoid another common problem: a restive and unhappy caucus.

For now, his most vocal, daily opposition will come from across the aisle—or from a mic stand in the Commons foyer until Pierre Poilievre wins a seat. It started full-throttle at last week’s first Question Period. It sounded dreadfully familiar: Carney’s promised middle-class tax cut, Poilievre suggested, is “very modest, very tiny ... barely enough to get you a Starbucks once a week”, much smaller than what the Conservatives promised. Also, the government must kill all of Trudeau’s environmental protections at once, including the industrial carbon tax and the ban on oil tankers off the British Columbia coast. Oh, and the prime minister is lying (already!) about retaliatory tariffs. (No, he isn’t.)

Carney handled the barrage with talking points and polite bemusement. Good beginning, but he might want to try ear plugs with his equanimity for future such encounters. If that sounds contemptuous of democracy, you misunderstand what Question Period has become in the social media age. It is not about extracting useful—even damning—information from government benches; it is about banking video clips for later use in fund-raising drives.

Honestly, Carney has better things to do with his time than sitting in on these ritual beatings—and a very tight deadline, both practically and politically, to get things done. Indeed, you’d have to be an embittered partisan not to wish him fair sailing. Especially while the wind blows his way.

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT



Via Rail's high-frequency trains would have been faster (and more reliable) than its current service, which was intended to be a selling point to jaded would-be riders, but wouldn't be high-speed rail, not like the Europeans have, writes Matt Gurney. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

So are we getting high-speed trains or not?

Justin Trudeau promised high-speed rail at the end of his mandate. It's now an opportunity for Mark Carney. How much faster can we get this done? What deadlines can be accelerated? What changes can be made to hurry this along? How quickly can we become more like the Europeans the PM so clearly admires?

Matt Gurney

Opinion



TORONTO—The King and Queen are gone now. Canada is still here, though, and we've got all kinds of problems, and we've got a new prime minister who seems determined to show us that he's willing and able to move faster than his predecessor.



Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives for the Liberal caucus meeting in West Block on May 25, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

But he's going to have to prove that. He can't just claim it. And while high-speed rail isn't the most pressing issue facing Canadians today—far from it—our “plan” for it is a really interesting test case for what kind of prime minister Mark Carney wants to be, and what kind of country he wants to build.

High-speed rail came to mind as the key example here for three reasons. First—and I'll get this out of the way right up front—I find high-speed rail to be absolutely hilarious. The public discussion of it in this country, I mean. All of us are sometimes forced to smile and nod through absolutely ridiculous statements. It happens. It's life. But hearing nominally serious people talk

about nominally real plans for high-speed rail in Canada always sounded a lot like former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh starting a sentence with “When I'm prime minister.”

It's impolite to laugh, but come on.

The second reason is simply that Carney has already said—in what I thought was a fascinating peek into his worldview—that Canada is the most European non-European nation. I don't know if that's true or not, but if Carney thinks it's true, or if he wants it to be true, it's worth pointing out that many European countries have really good high-speed-rail systems, and Canada extremely does not. Like *extremely*.

And the third reason is simply that I am writing this from a Via train, and the trip is not going well, friends. Not going well at all. So I decided to throw out my planned column and simply ask: so what's up with the fast trains?

The last we heard on this officially was just a few months ago, in what I think was actually one of the most embarrassing moments of late-stage Justin Trudeau. Shortly after he'd announced that he was stepping down, the-then Trudeau government decreed that Canada was moving ahead with a high-speed-rail plan. This was something of a surprise. Via had been exploring something they called “high-frequency rail” for years. High-frequency rail would shift Via's

passenger traffic on trips from Toronto to Ottawa and Montreal (and back, of course) onto dedicated tracks. Since Via is currently forced to share tracks with cargo trains, and the cargo companies own the railways, Via's trains have lower priority. This results in slow speeds and lousy reliability.

More bluntly, it results in the kind of trip I'm currently having. Day after day. And that is making it hard for Via to attract riders. (I really don't know what the hell I was thinking. I know better.)

Via's high-frequency trains would have been faster (and more reliable) than Via's current service, which was intended to be a selling point to jaded would-be riders, but wouldn't be high-speed rail, not like the Europeans have. Until, suddenly, it was. At massively greater expense, and after sitting on the issue without making a decision for basically his entire term, lame-duck Trudeau announced that we'd get truly high-speed rail instead. Specifically, he announced ... that we'd get right on figuring that out. A plan to come up with a plan, basically. And he gave the planning phase five years and billions of dollars. At the end of the five-year period, and once all the money was spent, maybe then we'd actually proceed.

It was pathetic, and transparent, and a pretty sad whimper at the end of Trudeau's near-decade in power.

But it's also an opportunity for Carney, now. How much faster can we get this done? What deadlines can be accelerated? What changes made to hurry this along? How quickly can we become more like the Europeans the PM so clearly admires (and on this front, with ample reason)?

I don't know. But I'd like to find out. This is a great way for Carney to signal that he's different, and to get Canadians moving.

Matt Gurney is a Toronto-based journalist. He is co-editor of The Line (ReadTheLine.ca), an online magazine. He can be reached at matt@readtheline.ca.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

King Charles delivered the message, now Carney's got to deliver the goods

If we want to keep our country, we cannot afford yet another failure. Prime Minister Mark Carney's government has to deliver a plan that will achieve success this time. Action not just words. And with much urgency, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



The Throne Speech was right to set out great opportunities and ambitions. But without some seriously clear-headed leadership and radical changes in public policies, it could become just empty aspirations.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—The opening of Parliament, with King Charles III delivering the Throne Speech, radiated promise and opportunity. But this now imposes a huge responsibility on Prime

Minister Mark Carney: we cannot afford yet another government that fails to deliver on its promise. We need success. The government has to deliver.

And the Throne Speech was full of ambition and promise. Worldwide changes will create the opportunity to “think big and act bigger,” the speech said, allowing Canada “to embark on the largest transformation of its economy since the Second World War.” The government’s “core mission,” the speech went on to state, “is to build the strongest economy in the G7.”

To accomplish this, the Throne Speech promised, the government “will unleash a new era of growth” so that we will end up “stronger than ever.” This new era “will enable Canada to become the world’s leading energy superpower in both clean and conventional energy. To build an industrial strategy that will make Canada more globally competitive, while fighting climate change. To build thousands of hundreds of good careers in the skilled trades. And to build Canada into the world’s leading hub for science and innovation.”

So no shortage of promise and ambition. Rather the opposite. Yet we’re starting from a weak position.

We have been a laggard in innovation and productivity. We lack scaled companies that are poised to deliver. Our financial system is failing our ambitious entrepreneurs. We are short-changing the education system and university-based fundamental research. Our training systems are not delivering the skilled workers needed. It will take more than reducing interprovincial barriers and building an oil or gas pipeline to deliver a new and better Canada.

The big challenge is to supercharge innovation-driven productivity across the economy. For a stronger economy we need stronger growth, and growth increasingly depends on innovation and technological progress.

Yet Canada—and especially domestic business—is a productivity laggard, trailing other advanced economies. But it is through sustained growth in productivity that we maintain and improve living standards. Productivity comes from the successful development and commercialization of new ideas, from technological progress, and from the design and adoption of new ways of doing things, as well as from supporting policies in education and skills, the provision of infra-

structure, and public policies that encourage an innovation culture.

In recent years, in contrast to other advanced economies, we have been going in reverse. We have had declining productivity growth since the start of the 21st century. And even between 1973 and 2000, Canada had one of the lowest growth rates in productivity among advanced economies.

So improving productivity is our biggest challenge—a key test not just for the Carney government, but also for our business and entrepreneurial communities. This is the most important message in the 2025 OECD Economic Survey of Canada. Unfortunately, the same message has appeared, year after year, in annual OECD assessments of this country’s economy, with little effect.

In 2023, our workforce generated just 77 per cent of the goods and services per hour worked, compared to our American counterpart. This doesn’t mean Canadian workers were lazier—it meant that investments haven’t been made that would enable them to work smarter. This is why we are not generating the wealth essential for higher pay and the tax revenues that pay for the public goods and services we want and need.

Business investment in technology per worker in 2022 was just 85 per cent of 2014 level, compared to a 21 per cent increase in the United States and 13 per cent in the Euro area. We lagged, as well, in investment in intellectual property and commercialization of intellectual property.

“Reviving Canada’s productivity has become even more critical because Canada’s productivity gap might become compounded with ongoing transformations brought about by population aging, the green transition, shifts in global trade, and the advancement of new digital technologies, notably AI,” the OECD report argues.

“These transformations are reshaping industries and labour markets and are presenting new policy challenges, but also opportunities to raise productivity.” But will we seize the opportunities?

The report offers many possible explanations for our poor productivity performance and the weak innovation culture in our business community. One factor is the high proportion of small and midsize businesses in Canada (100 or fewer employees)—47 per cent of employment here compared to 35 per cent in the U.S. Smaller firms tend to have lower levels productivity.

We need more world-scale companies. This is not for lack of trying. “Canada’s SMEs have rapid initial growth but struggle to scale up,” so “Canada’s promising start-ups are often acquired and developed abroad and the same goes for intellectual property products.” Access to capital is an issue.

The end result is that this country has relatively fewer large firms—firms with 500 or more employees account for 35 per cent of jobs in Canada, and about 50 per cent in the U.S. A lack of strong domestic technology anchor firms has played a role in our poor productivity performance, the report says. When thriving, Northern Telecom and Research in Motion “used to drive the diffusion of innovation in the digital and communications sectors in Canada.” Now they are missing.

The report makes many recommendations to improve technology diffusion in businesses, to redesign R&D tax credits to support growth companies, tax reform that eliminates the bias in favour of small businesses, to encourage investment in new technology, aggressively promote the potential of AI and the digital economy, to support the development of needed new skills in the workplace and to invigorate the financial sector to improve access to capital for young and innovative firms.

The Throne Speech was right to set out great opportunities and ambitions. But without some seriously clear-headed leadership and radical changes in public policies, it could become just empty aspirations. But if we want to keep our country, we cannot afford yet another failure. The Carney government has to deliver a plan that will achieve success this time. Action not just words. And with much urgency.

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

The Hill Times

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | June 2, 2025

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Tim Hodgson:
A BIG LOOK

ALBERTA'S
RENEWABLE
SECTOR
DOWN

Transforming
**ELECTRICITY
SYSTEMS**

CANADA'S ENERGY
TRILEMMA

NUCLEAR POWER
ENGINEERS
VITAL

CANADA'S
renewable energy
FUTURE UNCERTAIN

HOW CANADA CAN CUT
DECARBONIZATION GOALS

ENGINEERS
help drive Canada's
CAR INDUSTRY

RENEWABLE ENERGY Policy Briefing

Energy Minister Hodgson has experience with moving big projects, but some sector experts question plans to build up conventional energy alongside renewables

In the Throne Speech, King Charles III promised development of a Major Federal Project Office to reduce approvals for nationally significant projects from five years to two.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Some experts have concerns about whether plans by new Energy Minister Tim Hodgson to build up Canada's conventional energy sector alongside the clean energy sector is the right direction for Canada, but all agree he has a strong background and experience with moving forward on big projects.

"When Minister Hodgson says Canada can be an energy superpower, he's including fossil fuels and clean energy all in one envelope, like [Prime Minister Mark] Carney does. But that simply doesn't make sense," said Anil Hira, a political science professor at Simon Fraser University and lead researcher for the university's Clean Energy Research Group.

"My main concern, and I think the concern that a lot of people who study this sector, is that Canada is just not moving fast enough because we continue to subsidize and support fossil fuels. We are misallocating those resources that could be better used to fund and accelerate our transition to clean energy."

Hodgson (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.), a first-time MP elected on April 28, assumed responsibility for the Energy and Natural Resources cabinet role on May 13. He is a former managing director—and later CEO—for investment banking firm Goldman Sachs. He is also the former chair of Ontario utility giant Hydro One Ltd., is ex-vice-chair of the

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, and is a past board member of Calgary-based oilsands producer MEG Energy Corp.

His time with Goldman Sachs, between 1990 and 2010, overlapped with when Carney (Nepean, Ont.) worked for the company between 1988 and 2003 in various roles, which included as managing director of investment banking. Hodgson more recently served as a special adviser to Carney at the Bank of Canada between 2010 and 2012, while Carney was governor.

Hodgson outlined his vision of making Canada an energy superpower by taking advantage of both conventional and clean energy in a speech at an event hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on May 23.

"Every barrel of responsibly produced Canadian oil and every kilowatt of clean Canadian power can displace less clean, riskier energy elsewhere in the world. Our exports can help our allies break dependence on authoritarian regimes and help the world reduce our emissions," said

Hodgson during the event. "And by working with the energy sector to make investments that fight climate change, we can get more barrels to market while cutting carbon emissions."

Hodgson also talked about the importance of fast-tracking energy projects of national interest, adding that—rather than five-year reviews—decisions would come in two years for all projects.

During the Throne Speech on May 27, King Charles III also talked about speeding up approval timelines, and promised creation of a Major Federal Project Office to reduce approval schedules for nationally significant projects from five years to two. He added this office would accelerate project approvals "all while upholding Canada's world-leading environmental standards and its constitutional obligations to Indigenous Peoples."

Hira argued that the federal government has historically had a fiscal policy that depends on oil and gas revenues, and therefore it is very difficult—both politically and economically—to roll back conventional fuels.

"What they really need is a plan to start to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels revenues," he said. "There is a flurry of new reports that suggest that these carbon capture and storage projects ... are never going to produce the kinds of revenues that are required to make them viable. There is increasing skepticism about them, as well as increasing information about the escalation of issues with methane coming from natural gas. In carbon capture and storage, it's a way for the fossil fuel sector to continue its business as usual, while holding up this kind of phony shell of legitimization and justification."

Hira argued that, instead of subsidies for fossil fuels, Canada should prioritize the critical minerals sector, and projects such as the East-West electricity grid promised by Carney in his election campaign platform.

"The fact that B.C. can't easily sell hydropower—or Quebec or Manitoba can't easily sell hydropower—to Ontario means that Ontario is taking a much more costly route in terms of reviving



its nuclear industry. [Ontario] can have clean energy at a much cheaper price if we simply get that energy, that electricity, from Quebec and Manitoba," he said.

Daniel Rosenbloom, an assistant professor and Rosamond Ivey Research Chair in Sustainability Transitions with Carleton University, told *The Hill Times* that the Liberal government will be navigating the largest economic transformation since the Second World War, and the choice facing Canada's energy policy can be summed up as "planting seeds or grasping at straws."

"On the one hand, [it's about] how to build up a new industrial base around net-zero opportunities and those opportunities that will remain resilient in a climate-constrained world," he said.



Anil Hira, a political science professor at Simon Fraser University, says what Canada really needs 'is a plan to start to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels revenues.' Photograph courtesy of Anil Hira



Daniel Rosenbloom, an assistant professor and Rosamond Ivey Research Chair in Sustainability Transitions with Carleton University, says the choice facing Canada's energy policy can be summed up as 'planting seeds or grasping at straws.' Photograph courtesy of Daniel Rosenbloom



Fernando Melo, federal director of policy and government affairs for the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, says Hodgson is 'definitely up to the role,' owing in part to his experience with Hydro One. Photograph courtesy of Fernando Melo

Policy Briefing RENEWABLE ENERGY



Energy Minister Tim Hodgson, pictured left during the cabinet swearing in at Rideau Hall on May 13, discussed his vision of building Canada into 'a conventional and clean energy and natural resources superpower,' during an event hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on May 23. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

"On the other hand, investing in decarbonizing the oil sands and maintaining Canada's position in an industry that is set to decline. That's the core contradiction that has been underlying the Canadian economy for some time now, but ... has come to the forefront in the rhetoric that has been used by the current government in this notion of becoming a superpower in both areas, in both clean and conventional energy."

Fernando Melo, federal director of policy and government affairs for the Canadian Renewable Energy Association, told *The Hill Times* that he thinks Hodgson is "definitely up to the role," arguing that his experience with Hydro One gives the new minister familiarity with the complexities of getting major electricity projects built.

"He'll understand how, essentially, business decisions are made on these, so that's going to be really critical because ... isn't easy, necessarily, or intuitive to grasp what it takes to get the final investment decisions on projects like these," said Melo.

"I spend my time thinking about what's going to get renewable electricity and energy storage project built, and there's a variety of different things out there that work or won't work. And ultimately, in Canada, our energy projects ... don't really get built by the government; it's private sector investments and private sector decisions. So, I think it's going to be interesting to see ... ultimately, what the private sector does with those investments."

Craig Watt, vice-president of operations for Enserva, a national

trade association representing Canada's energy service, supply and manufacturing sector, told *The Hill Times* that the most significant challenge Hodgson will need to navigate is an "entrenched public service direction that's been in malaise" for more than a decade in Canada.

"I think the prime minister and Minister Hodgson have said they're determined to get projects built and move things faster than we've seen. They're going to need to work really hard to push through that 'the way we do things around here' mentality," said Watt.

"We have developed, as a country, a global reputation of not being able to get projects built, and that in itself is going to be a challenge because, if you're going to get a project built ... that capital only comes from the private

sector when they believe that there's a chance of success at the other end of the process."

When Hodgson appeared at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce event on May 23, Watt said the minister struck him as a serious individual with a background in energy, negotiating and public service, and who understands about getting large projects underway.

During the event, Hodgson proudly spoke about one of his first major deals with Goldman Sachs: getting the Alliance Pipeline off the ground—a natural gas pipeline built in 1999 and 2000 that runs from north-western Alberta and north-eastern British Columbia to Illinois in the United States.

Watt said getting the pipeline project across the finish line gives him confidence in Hodgson as Energy minister.

"That project was 18 months in the regulatory review process and a little over two years to build from start to finish. We haven't seen that since. If we're going to hit the timelines [Hodgson and Carney] are talking about on large projects, we need to go back to that kind of thinking. He seems to have an understanding of what that could look like," said Watt.

In regard to Hodgson's statement about building both conventional and clean energy resources, Watt said the minister is on the right track.

"[Hodgson is] acknowledging the reality that we're seeing, not only in Canada, but globally, that as we're building out our capacity in renewable energy ... it's underpinned by the conventional, the traditional oil and gas. Finding ways to do that more efficiently and more environmentally-friendly is a daily job for our members and for the industry. But it's an 'and' piece. It's not an 'or,'" he said.

Joanna Kyriazis, director of public affairs for Clean Energy Canada, said the biggest challenges facing Hodgson include improving affordability as households struggle with high cost of living and tariffs increasing the cost of doing business, enhancing energy security amid geopolitical conflicts and trade tensions, and improving Canada's economic competitiveness during an evolving relationship with the U.S.

Kyriazis argued that pursuing clean energy is the best path to achieve those objectives.

"Our research at Clean Energy Canada also consistently finds

that switching to clean energy options like electric vehicles and heat pumps save Canadian families money, and that's even when you're factoring in the upfront costs of buying and installing them," she said.

"In this quest to diversify our trading partnerships, we found that our 10 largest non-U.S. trading partners all have net-zero commitments and carbon pricing systems in place ... and then they also have domestic electric vehicle requirements that are reshaping their car markets and weaning them off of fossil fuels."

Kyriazis described Hodgson as someone with a "great get-things-done attitude," and with his finance background, he could have a keen eye to identify cost-effective nation building projects with long-term value for Canada, according to Kyriazis.

"If the Carney government wishes to pursue an industrial strategy that will also fight climate change—and if the Carney government is looking for projects that connect Canadians, diversify our economy and help us export products to new markets—clean energy projects are the type of projects that best fit that bill," said Kyriazis in an email follow-up on May 28.

Keith Brooks, program director for Environmental Defence, told *The Hill Times* that he thinks there will be challenges for the Liberal government in trying to square an increase in conventional energy production with the commitments around fighting climate change.

"Oil and gas is the largest source of emissions in Canada, and increasing the production of oil and gas is almost certainly going to increase the emissions there," he said.

When it comes to building up the conventional and renewable energy sectors, Brooks said "you can't have it both ways"

"Early indications seem to be that [Hodgson is] interested in conventional energy and interested in carbon capture. We would hope that, though, as someone with a financial background, he takes a serious look at the fundamentals of those projects," said Brooks.

"Carbon capture is a very expensive climate solution, and ... it doesn't even pretend to get close to net-zero. So, it looks like it's a dead-end solution to me, as well."

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Craig Watt, vice-president of operations for Enserva, says, Canada has 'a global reputation of not being able to get projects built, and that in itself is going to be a challenge because, if you're going to get a project built ... that capital only comes from the private sector when they believe that there's a chance of success.' Photograph courtesy of Craig Watt



Joanna Kyriazis, director of public affairs for Clean Energy Canada, says, 'Our research at Clean Energy Canada also consistently finds that switching to clean energy options like electric vehicles and heat pumps save Canadian families money, and that's even when you're factoring in the upfront costs of buying and installing them.' Photograph courtesy of Joanna Kyriazis

Canada renewable energy statistics (2019 to 2024)



- Canada's total wind, solar and storage installed capacity grew 46 per cent between 2019 and 2024, including nearly five gigawatt (GW) of new wind, two GW of new utility-scale solar, 600 megawatt (MW) of new on-site solar, and 200 MW of new energy storage.
- Solar energy capacity (utility-scale and onsite) grew 92 per cent between 2019 and 2024.
- Wind energy capacity grew 35 per cent in that time frame.
- Energy storage capacity grew 192 per cent.
- Total wind, solar and capacity is now more than 24 GW, including over 18 GW of wind, more than four GW of utility-scale solar, 1+ GW on-site solar, and 330 MW energy storage.
- Canada now has 341 wind energy projects producing power across the country.
- This country now has 217 major solar energy projects producing power across the country.
- There are now nearly 96,000 onsite solar energy installations across Canada.

Source: Industry data report released by the Canadian Renewable Energy Association on Jan. 30, 2025.

RENEWABLE ENERGY Policy Briefing



Aerial view of the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station near Kincardine, Ont. Educating more nuclear engineers will be essential as Canada increasingly turns to nuclear power as a clean energy source, write Hossam Kishawy and Salam Ali. Photograph courtesy of Commons Wikimedia

Nuclear power and the engineers behind it are vital to Canada's clean energy future

Canada is facing a shortage of skilled workers—including in engineering—underscoring the need for greater investments in engineering programs to attract and retain students.

Hossam Kishawy
& Salam Ali

Opinion



The latest report from the World Meteorological Association paints a grim picture of the unrelenting pace of climate change.

Continually rising greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to record-setting temperatures, warming oceans and rising sea levels—threatening ecosystems, lives, and economic prosperity.

The future of our country and the planet depends on clean, reliable, and sustainable energy—including nuclear power. By investing in nuclear technology and the engineers behind it, Canada can meet both its energy needs and its emission-reduction targets.

As this country moves towards net-zero emissions by 2050, nuclear energy will play a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions while providing stable baseload electricity—ensuring a steady supply of electrical energy regardless of weather conditions—unlike other renewables like wind and solar.

In Ontario, Natural Resources Canada reports that continued nuclear energy use will cut 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually or 3.8 per cent of projected 2030 emissions.

While hydroelectric power is the biggest source of renewable energy in Canada, it cannot meet all of our energy needs. Wind and solar power are growing sources of clean energy, but they provide only a small portion of Canada's electricity supply.

Nuclear energy, however, is already the third-most important source of electricity in the country, making up 15 per cent of Canada's supply—with nuclear reactors operating in Ontario and New Brunswick.

Nuclear energy provides 52 per cent of Ontario's power, and is set to become an increasingly important source of the province's renewable energy in the future.

The Ontario government is investing \$25-billion from 2016 to 2031 to refurbish 10 of its nuclear reactors, and it plans to further expand its nuclear capacity to meet growing clean energy demands.

The expansion of safe and reliable nuclear power would not be possible without the knowledge and skills of Canada's nuclear engineers.

This country is a world leader in nuclear technology due to the expertise of our engineers. They were vital in developing the country's CANDU nuclear reactors—operating both here at home and in other countries around the world—and continue to innovate them today.

CANDU technology also plays a crucial role in producing medical isotopes for sterilizing equipment and treating cancer.

Engineering ingenuity has also led to advancements in nuclear energy that have enhanced design, safety, efficiency and sustainability—including the development of small modular reactors (SMRs).

These innovative new reactors are smaller—both in size and

power output—than conventional nuclear reactors, providing a more flexible, scalable, affordable, and safer energy solution that is ideal for remote communities and industries like mining.

Given their potential to address both climate change and energy needs, several provinces are considering SMRs. Ontario has already committed to bringing four grid-scale SMRs online between 2029 and 2035.

While some might question whether nuclear energy is too risky, the reality is that safety is the overriding priority in the nuclear industry, guiding reactor design, operation, and decommissioning.

Engineers follow strict safety protocols, and use risk assessments and backup systems to protect the public and the environment. Contrary to misconceptions, modern reactors are far safer than earlier plants.

The CANDU reactors' decades-long safety record—they were first developed in the 1950s and 1960s—is a testament to the skills and knowledge of Canadian engineers.

Engineers also play a key role in safely decommissioning old plants—minimizing environmental impact—and maintaining, upgrading and recommissioning facilities to extend their life and improve efficiency.

They also manage radioactive waste—securely storing it for long-term environmental safety—and they are working on ways to reduce waste and enhance stability, supporting both safety and clean energy goals.

The primacy of safety is also a cornerstone of an engineering education. Accredited nuclear engineering programs provide a strong foundation in safety, efficiency and sustainability, alongside core principles like ethics, project management and problem-solving.

Educating more nuclear engineers will be essential as Canada increasingly turns to nuclear power as a clean energy source. Their knowledge, skills, resourcefulness and dedication to safety can help drive this country's sustainable future.

However, Canada is facing a shortage of skilled workers—including in engineering—underscoring the need for greater investments in engineering programs to attract and retain students.

Nuclear energy holds great promise for powering the country into the future while reducing its carbon footprint.

To unlock its potential, governments and industry must prioritize investments in both nuclear innovation and the education of future nuclear engineers.

Hossam Kishawy, PhD, PEng, is dean and a professor in the faculty of engineering and applied science at Ontario Tech University. Salam Ali, PhD, PEng, is an adjunct professor at the department of energy and nuclear engineering at Ontario Tech University, and an industry expert.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **RENEWABLE ENERGY**



Solar makes up about only one per cent of all electricity generation in Canada, writes Joshua Pearce, John M. Thompson chair in Innovation, cross appointed in the Ivey Business School and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Western University. Photograph courtesy of Bruno, Pixabay.com

How Canada can crush decarbonization goals, create millions of jobs, and rake in a boatload of cash from America in one fell swoop

If Canada were to get aggressive with agrivoltaics we would have more healthy food for our tables, more income for our farmers, more solar jobs, lower electricity costs, less carbon pollution and the sweet satisfaction of helping our southern neighbours.

Joshua Pearce

Opinion



For the first time, way back in 2011, my team proved solar photovoltaics had finally broke what we called “grid parity” throughout Canada, and then became flat out profitable. That meant that, at the time, many homeowners in this country could generate solar electricity for themselves at the same leveled cost as they could purchase it from the grid.

This is because the spot price for photovoltaics (PV) had dropped from \$1.80 per watt at the beginning of 2011 to \$0.90 per watt by year’s end. Then prices kept falling. Today, the spot price is a mind-blowing seven cents per watt. With these big drops, solar has been the lowest-cost form of energy pretty much everywhere on Earth for the last five years—with no subsidies and no BS. Not surprisingly, solar is the most rapidly growing source of energy because whether it’s your family or major corporations like Amazon, people like to save money. This includes Canadians, the vast majority of whom would prefer to

pay less for energy—particularly if it means doing less environmental damage. It gets better: we completed a study a few years ago that showed solar prices were so low they could ‘subsidize’ heat pumps so it would cost less than buying natural gas to heat your home in both Canada and the United States.

The American government’s take on these really low solar prices is to whine that Asians must be cheating, and set tariffs of up to 3,521 per cent on South East-Asian solar panels. Instead of cowering behind tariffs, I propose a different strategy for Canada: stand up and buy them—as many as we can—to not only completely decarbonize our grid, but let America pay us to decarbonize theirs.

Is this possible?

While the solar growth rate has been large, it is nowhere near fast enough to meet the timeline for any kind of reasonable net-zero goal for Canada. Solar only

makes up about one per cent of all electricity generation in this country. According to projections, renewable energy sources must massively scale-up. A recent study I wrote with Western University’s Shafquat Rana showed not only the technical feasibility of the deployment of solar PV in Canada could easily achieve our net-zero energy goals, but it would also mean we would need over 5.5 million solar jobs to be created by 2050 to deploy solar at a fast enough rate.

We already sell billions of dollars of electricity to the U.S. every year, and we could sell much more especially because Canadian solar power would allow us to dramatically undercut America’s antiquated dirty power costs. We also already know how to achieve 100-per-cent renewable and self-sufficient electricity in northern climates. We could easily cover all of our energy needs with solar. Only four per cent of our Canadian agricultural land integrated with PV would not only produce all of our electricity

with solar, but we could also electrify our transport and heating with heat pumps.

Do we really want to cover our farms with solar panels?

Yes, we absolutely do, using a concept called agrivoltaics. Many studies including many of my own have shown that crops actually produce more food if they are partially shaded with solar panels to keep them cooler and conserve water. It is non-intuitive, but dozens of studies have demonstrated increased yields from everything from wheat (plus three per cent in Germany) to peppers (plus 150 per cent in the U.S.).

Agrovoltics is a multibillion-dollar market and growing fast. Here in Canada, for example, we showed you could get 18 per cent more strawberries with agrivoltaics in Ontario. Converting only Canada’s strawberry farmland to agrivoltaics would increase fruit revenue by \$27-million and generate over \$150-million in electricity value. Joining Agrivoltaics Canada, farmers in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario among other provinces could make billions extra if they target larger crops.

In summary, if Canada got aggressive with agrivoltaics, we would have more healthy food for our tables, more income for our farmers, more solar jobs, lower electricity costs, less carbon pollution and the sweet satisfaction of helping our southern neighbors.

Joshua Pearce is John M. Thompson chair in Innovation, cross appointed in the Ivey Business School and the department of electrical and computer engineering at Western University. He is global leader on solar power and agrivoltaics.

The Hill Times

RENEWABLE ENERGY Policy Briefing

Amid rapid global growth, renewable energy's Canadian future remains uncertain

In Canada, the defining feature of renewable energy development has been profound instability. Over the past two decades, activity in the sector has alternated between periods of rapid growth and screeching halts.

Mark Winfield

Opinion



Globally renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind, have been experiencing a period of unprecedented growth. The dramatic expansion of investment and development of renewable energy sources has

been the product of a convergence of multiple factors.

The need to decarbonize energy systems, dramatic declines in costs and ongoing improvements in performance, and the growing capacity to integrate the output of renewable energy sources have all contributed to this growth. In the result, renewables have emerged as the dominant source of new electricity generation capacity being added to grids globally.

Unfortunately, while the global story around renewables has been one of consistent acceleration, the situation in this country has been much less promising.

In Canada, the defining feature of renewable energy development has been profound instability. Over the past two decades, activity in the sector has alternated between periods of rapid growth and screeching halts.

The best example of this pattern has been Ontario. The province led renewable energy development between 2006 and 2018, adding more than 8000MW of new renewable capacity to its electricity systems. The pace of development began to slow from 2014 onwards under the Liberal government of Kathleen Wynne. It was then brought to a complete halt by the arrival of Doug Ford's

Progressive Conservatives in June 2018.

After a nearly seven-year hiatus, Ontario eventually reopened the door to renewables development. Then it partially reversed itself. That added to the cloud of uncertainty around renewables, reinforced by the rapidly expanding role of gas-fired generation, and plans for a massive nuclear construction program.

When development in Ontario slowed down, Alberta emerged as this country's focal point for renewables development. That promising trajectory was met with a sudden moratorium in August 2023. Alberta United Conservative Party (UCP) Premier Danielle Smith's actions seemed propelled by a combination of a desire to make a statement against Ottawa's proposed Clean Electricity Regulations, and the need to play to the rural UCP base. The rules that followed the moratorium seemed designed to hamper further renewable energy development.

Nova Scotia, for its part, also made a strong initial start, but then pulled back from its community-oriented COM-FIT program. Quebec appears, for now, to be positioned as the renewable energy development

leader, matching wind resources with massive hydroelectric storage capacity. Wab Kinew's NDP government in Manitoba is also showing interest in wind development.

For its part, the federal Clean Energy Investment Tax Credit, although potentially helpful for renewables development, may also have the perverse effect of providing larger benefits to higher cost technologies like small modular nuclear reactors.

The instability for the renewables sector has been the result of multiple factors: unexpected local opposition; changes in government; and established utilities with deep connections to incumbent technologies and actors. The situation has made the development of supply chains and manufacturing, development and service capacities extremely challenging.

The scale of Canada's wind and solar resources is almost unlimited in energy terms. The challenges of intermittency can be overcome by improved grid management, the geographic distribution of assets and, most importantly, the rapid technological developments taking place in the field of energy storage. There, major improvements in

performance across a range of technologies have been matched by dramatic reductions in costs.

Local opposition in rural areas has been a key factor in the policy reversals seen around renewables in Ontario and Alberta. In Ontario, the Wynne government's emphasis on community engagement and participation in renewables development showed strong potential to overcome these challenges. In theory, a similar approach informs the province's current procurement, although the final outcomes remain to be seen.

Decarbonization will require the expansion of non-fossil fuel-fired electricity supplies. But if electricity costs rise so much that industrial, commercial and residential consumers pull back from electrification, the effort to move in the direction of net zero, essential to meeting the climate challenge, will fail. The track record of large, centralized generation technologies, like major new hydro projects and nuclear energy in Canada, and around the world, cannot inspire confidence in this regard.

Decarbonization strategies need to maximize energy productivity and efficiency first, while controlling energy costs. Renewables, in combination with energy storage, demand response, the optimization of provincial interconnections, and the development of distributed energy resources, offer best option for achieving these outcomes.

Mark Winfield is a professor of Environmental and Urban Change, and co-chair of the Sustainable Energy Initiative at York University in Toronto. He is co-editor of Sustainable Energy Transitions in Canada (UBC Press 2023).

The Hill Times

Alberta's renewables sector is down, but let's not count it out

Will Noel & Jason Wang

Opinion



This time two years ago, Alberta was the destination of choice for renewable energy investment in Canada. For years, it had consistently led the country on new additions of wind and solar, generating billions of dollars in investment and municipal tax revenues that were flowing back to local communities—all while adding new low-cost generation options to the province's electricity grid.

But no matter the industry, there's one thing that's always bad for investment: uncertainty. And in the last two years, the Government of Alberta has heaped a ton of it on renewables developers.

It began with the sudden pause in approvals for new renewable

projects that the province put in place in the summer of 2023. The immediate effect was sharp: 53 projects, likely worth billions of dollars, pulled out practically overnight.

But although that moratorium has been over for more than a year now, our analysis shows that investor confidence is still in a tailspin. According to our analysis, in 2024, for the first time, the overall volume of proposed projects in Alberta's renewables queue shrank. And although the queue is now back at pre-moratorium levels, there is a concerning increase in cancellations—suggesting that while investors may be joining the queue, many are then leaving before their project is approved, or deciding not to put shovels in the ground even after they have the approvals in hand.

That's likely because they are now contending with a range of other new restrictions and requirements. These include

outright bans and ambiguous restrictions on areas of land where wind and solar projects can be built, new requirements relating to equipment recycling and land reclamation, as well as changes to transmission legislation, all of which will likely add new regulatory burdens and upfront costs to renewables developers. It is notable that many of these new requirements are not being equally applied to other industries in Alberta, including other energy sectors, such as oil and gas.

At the same time, the provincial government has opted to pursue a wide-ranging restructuring of its whole electricity market, the outcome of which has the potential to undermine the profitability of renewable energy projects. And then, in May, came the news that the province will launch a legal challenge against the federal clean electricity regulations—an important policy

that is intended to send a positive investment signal to proponents of low-carbon electricity all over the country, helping us build a modern, secure electricity grid all across Canada.

Other governments have already had a mindset shift about this. In 2024, British Columbia awarded contracts to nine wind projects and one solar project, which will increase the supply of renewable electricity in British Columbia by eight per cent when complete. Similarly, Ontario awarded contracts to 10 battery storage projects in 2023. These moves are not solely driven by a desire to reduce emissions and fight climate change—they are about maximizing the lowest-cost technologies available to us, to make electricity grids that are resilient, flexible and fit for the next century.

In South Australia, 70 per cent of electricity already comes from wind and solar; in Denmark it is

65 per cent. Even Texas—Alberta's fellow oil and gas powerhouse in North America—runs over 30 per cent of its grid with renewables. But here in Alberta, we're languishing at about 18 per cent. Other governments and populations are already feeling the benefits; not just the billions of dollars of capital investment, but in terms of affordability too. Our analysis found, for example, that growing the province's clean electricity supply would reduce Albertans' electricity bills by hundreds of dollars annually.

Global investment in clean electricity generation was ten times higher than unabated fossil fuels last year. If we want a nation-building project in Canada that creates jobs, investment, increases energy resilience and sets us up for economic success for the next decade and beyond, then creating a cross-Canadian clean electricity grid is it. That will be best achieved if all provinces, including Alberta, are willing to do their part and maximize the renewable energy options available to them.

Will Noel and Jason Wang are both senior analysts with the Pembina Institute's electricity team.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing RENEWABLE ENERGY

Transforming the electricity system should begin with proven technologies

To further the electrical grid renewal and decarbonization there are some 'low-hanging fruit' initiatives that would indicate at least an attempt to progress toward a low carbon electrical grid.

David A. Johnson

Opinion



Based on current projections, the goal of decarbonizing the electrical grid by 2035 seems, at best, an unobtainable goal.

Unfortunately, Recent political chaos has diverted attention

away from many climate-based initiatives, but these are critical for long range climate action. Prior to this we have seen significant transformation in the electrical grid with many distributed generators such as wind and solar added to a conventional large generation facility model. To further the electrical grid renewal and decarbonization there are some "low hanging fruit" initiatives that would indicate at least an attempt to progress toward a low carbon electrical grid.

For example, there is a clear opportunity for integration of renewables into communities, predominantly Indigenous communities, located away from the conventional electrical grid across Canada. These are commonly termed "off-grid" or "remote" communities although this carries a negative connotation. In these communities, energy costs are significantly higher, energy is less reliable, and diesel fuel-based electricity generation is the ubiquitous choice. Fuel transportation costs, combustion emissions, potential spills and significant fuel storage requirements are all detractors

of this traditional carbon-based technology.

Many of these locations are some of the windiest places in Canada, and therefore represent an ideal opportunity for wind-based renewables. There is no question that this is a challenging environment for any energy system including renewables such as wind energy, and from my experience, requires a supportive, engaged local community, well-proven technology and skilled implementation of state-of-the-art technology. Due to the typically smaller electrical load demands of these communities there are currently very few—if any—modern wind turbines produced that would meet the requirements. Technology upgrades of well-established older designs would meet the requirements.

Currently, these systems are operated in a confusing combination of federal funding with provincial or territorial utilities operation, or as independent community-based utilities. With successful deployment of renewable systems, these communities could be independent owners of their own energy future and

could reduce their reliance on carbon-based electricity generation. This would also serve to enhance the energy systems in Canada's northern regions strengthening our country's presence in the Arctic region.

Another clear opportunity for providing more renewable generating capacity on the conventional electrical grid would be the development of freshwater, offshore wind generation capacity. In this case the opportunity is clear in Ontario in the Great Lakes region. One only has to look at the distribution of conventional onshore wind farms to see that the strongest winds, and therefore the most productive wind turbines, are on the coastal regions of the Great Lakes. With currently available single wind turbine nameplate capacity around 10 MW, only 30 of these turbines would be equivalent to the 300 MW small modular reactor proposed for long range development in Ontario. This wind turbine technology is established and readily deployable in a short time frame by trained skilled workers. The single deterrent to deployment would seem to

be the political will to consider offshore development.

Wind turbines are not suitable for all locations in the Great Lakes, but with excellent assessment and consultation there is an untapped opportunity. The United Kingdom and other European countries have embraced the deployment of renewable energy in offshore wind projects with considerable new financial investment, creating significant new employment opportunities.

These are but two examples, focused on my area of expertise, that could readily be implemented to decarbonize the electrical grid, and reduce energy costs in our northern communities. Technology and expertise currently exist for both examples and in both cases could deliver less reliance on carbon-based electricity generation.

There are many paths that we can take transforming the electricity system looking forward, but we should surely begin with the ones that use existing, proven technologies to create investment in Canada and provide new opportunities for long-term employment of skilled workers now.

David A. Johnson, PEng, is a professor in the department of mechanical engineering at the University of Waterloo, a former municipal electric utility manager, and a long-time researcher in renewable energy technologies. *The Hill Times*

Engineers help drive innovation in Canada's car industry

As the industry continues to evolve, engineers are increasingly focused on economic and ecological efficiency, driving the design of lighter, more sustainable vehicles.

Hossam Kishawy

Opinion



The Canada-United States trade war has put car manufacturing directly in the cross-hairs. Previously, car manufacturing was the gold star of cross-border co-operation, with car parts manufactured travelling back and forth across the Canadian, U.S. and Mexican borders multiple times before a car was completed and ready for purchase. Those days, it seems, are now behind us.

As Canada re-envision the car industry, including ramping up parts manufacturing in our own country, engineers have a critical role to play.

Engineers have helped drive innovation in the Canadian car industry before—and we can do it again. A look at our past can help energize the future.

When you get behind the wheel of a car, it's easy to overlook the decades of innovation that made your journey possible. From early transportation developments to cutting-edge systems in modern vehicles, each component reflects generations of human ingenuity. Our smooth, reliable driving experience results from countless engineering breakthroughs in design, safety, efficiency and performance.

The first automobile emerged in the late 19th century when engineers refined combustion engines and developed the first gasoline-powered car. As the industry advanced, Oshawa, Ontario emerged as a central hub in Canada's automotive sector. Here, the McLaughlin family transitioned from carriage-making to automobile manufacturing by 1907, laying the foundation for General Motors of Canada—one of the country's largest automotive manufacturers and a key player in the global industry.

This early shift from carriage-making to automobile manufacturing sparked a broader societal transformation. Over the past century, cars have transitioned from being luxury items to essential fixtures in our daily lives.

Engineering disciplines have converged to enhance structural integrity, optimize mechanical performance and introduce comfort features like air conditioning, GPS and assistive driving technologies. Today, automobiles are not merely a means of transportation; they are integral to modern life, providing convenience, comfort and advanced technology that shape how we live, work and interact with the world.

As the industry continues to evolve, engineers are increasingly focused on economic and ecological efficiency, driving the design of lighter, more sustainable vehicles.

Early vehicles were made from cast iron, steel and wood—materials borrowed from carriage manufacturing. By reducing vehicle weight, cars now require less power and fuel for acceleration, benefiting the environment through a smaller carbon footprint, and consumers, through lower fuel costs.

The forces of globalization have further fueled innovation.

This competitive environment has pushed manufacturers to meet strict global environmental and safety regulations, driving technological progress. Engineers, fronted with rising sustainability and affordability demands, have embraced these challenges as opportunities for creativity.

Amid this landscape, Canada's automotive industry has not only been a hub for innovation but also a driver of economic prosperity.

According to Statistics Canada, the industry plays a vital role in manufacturing and infrastructure development, with 26.3 million registered motor vehicles in 2022 and motor vehicle and parts manufacturing generating \$109.5-million in revenue in 2023—underscoring its impact on mobility, job creation and economic growth.

As the industry shifts toward electric and autonomous vehicles, Canadian institutions and research centres are shaping the future of transportation. Their work focuses on advancing electric and hydrogen-powered vehicle technologies, strengthening supply chain resilience and promoting sustainable manufacturing.

Specialized research centres are accelerating this progress. At Ontario Tech University, the ACE

Core Research Facility, home to one of the world's most sophisticated climatic wind tunnels, advances extreme-condition vehicle testing, helping manufacturers develop more resilient, efficient and sustainable transportation solutions.

Facilities like ACE bolster Canada's position as an automotive innovation leader, attract global manufacturers, create high-skilled jobs and drive economic growth.

This momentum is supported by broader initiatives, such as Project Arrow—the first all-Canadian zero-emission vehicle—designed, engineered and built through collaboration between Canada's top-tier automotive supply sector and post-secondary institutions.

Ontario's 2019 *Driving Prosperity Plan* reinforces the province's commitment to automotive excellence through engineering expertise and technological advancements. GM's \$1.3-billion investment in Oshawa's plant and Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation's installation of fast chargers for electric vehicles depend on ongoing engineering developments.

As automakers invest billions in electrification, engineers keep Canada a key player in the global automotive economy—positioning Canada as a leader in next-generation vehicle production and development.

Hossam Kishawy, PhD PEng, is the dean and professor of the faculty of engineering and applied science at Ontario Tech University in Oshawa, Ont.

The Hill Times

RENEWABLE ENERGY Policy Briefing



A stable, coherent regulatory environment with well-structured incentives to attract the investments needed is a necessary step toward solving the affordability portion of the energy trilemma, writes Olha Sotska, policy adviser at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Photograph courtesy of Pixabay

Canada's critical role in solving the energy trilemma

While the growth of renewables is critical (and to be continued), they will largely be layered on top of existing traditional energy sources, rather than replacing them altogether.

Olha Sotska

Opinion



Energy sustains our existence—from charging our devices, to warming and cooling our homes,

to fuelling our transportation, to driving industry and innovation.

With such widespread use, the demand for energy is relentlessly climbing. According to the latest edition of the International Energy Agency's Global Energy Review, global demand rose by 2.2 per cent last year, significantly outpacing the typical yearly growth of 1.3 per cent between 2013 and 2023.

Propelled by population increases, technological advancement, and shifting consumer preferences, there's no reason for this upward trajectory to slow down. Yet, meeting demand is only one side of the equation. Finding a balanced approach to production that supports security, sustainability, and affordability—what is commonly referred to as the “energy trilemma”—is the other side.

The trilemma arose against the backdrop of countless commitments made by G7 countries to meet their climate goals and

expedite the transition to renewable energy, while affirming the importance of building more resilient energy systems that address affordability and security concerns.

Straightforward in theory, solving the trilemma is easier said than done—which is why it was one of the key agenda items at the Business 7 (B7) Summit recently hosted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

To begin with, a country cannot have national or economic security or even sovereignty if it does not have energy security, defined as uninterrupted access to energy. We saw the truth of this during the COVID-19 pandemic, when energy demand spiked sharply and supply failed to keep up. Many countries, particularly in Europe, suddenly needed to secure sufficient energy access, leading to a rapid increase in prices. By 2021, energy prices had quadrupled.

This situation was further exacerbated in 2022 when Russia

invaded Ukraine, signalling a pivotal shift towards the weaponization of energy. Countries went from having concerns about cost and availability to being in fully-fledged crisis mode as they searched for alternative sources after years of heavy reliance on Russian oil and gas.

And then, of course, there's the current state of Canada-United States relations—yet another reminder of why energy security is critically important.

These recent developments share a common theme: the importance of having a secure, trusted supplier. A challenge as most of energy exporting nations are not run by stable democracies. However, such a complex geopolitical reality also presents a significant opportunity for Canada to help reshape global energy flows for the better.

With vast reserves of oil and gas—estimated to last for hundreds of years—our nation

boasts enormous energy potential. Despite this, we currently produce only about half as much as Russia. This literally untapped potential represents a missed opportunity for Canada to contribute to global energy supply and stability, while also advancing our own economic wellbeing through responsible energy development that meets environmental promises.

The move away from established energy sources can't happen by just snapping our fingers. So, while the growth of renewables is critical (and to be continued), they will largely be layered on top of existing traditional energy sources rather than replacing them altogether. As such, progress toward climate goals will not occur purely from the perspective of energy transition, but rather as energy addition.

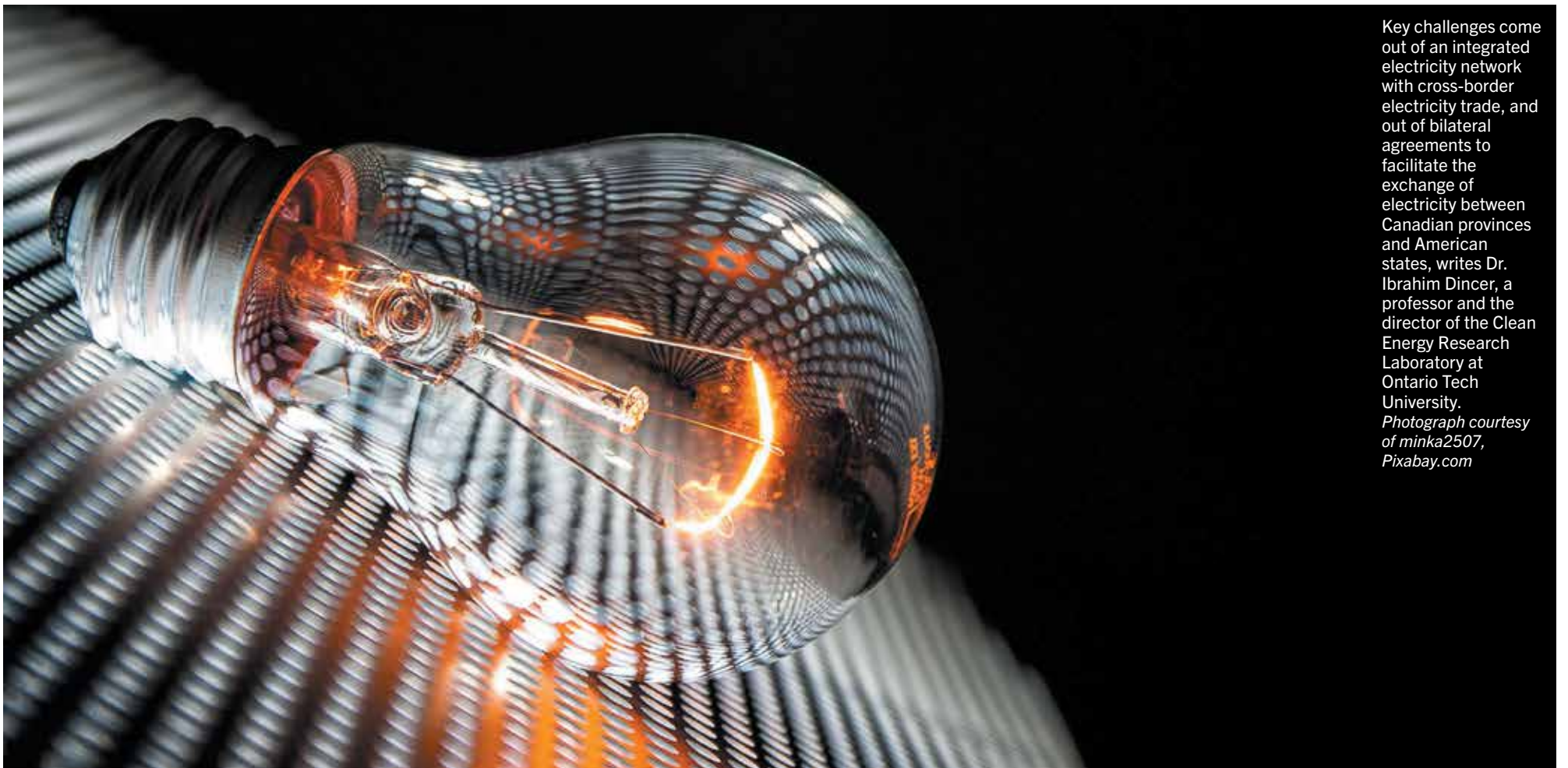
Finally, we need to ask ourselves: what does affordable mean in this context? It is important to broaden that lens beyond just the price tag as the answer is likely to be proportional to the action on geopolitical and environmental fronts. Additionally, affordability is tied to the presence of clear and consistent policy rules. A stable, coherent regulatory environment with well-structured incentives to attract the investments needed is a necessary step toward solving the affordability portion of the energy trilemma.

Solving the trilemma demands a practical approach. While ambitious goals often drive progress, in the face of economic, political and social reality, aligning ideals with what can realistically be implemented is the only path forward.

Olha Sotska is a policy adviser at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **RENEWABLE ENERGY**



Key challenges come out of an integrated electricity network with cross-border electricity trade, and out of bilateral agreements to facilitate the exchange of electricity between Canadian provinces and American states, writes Dr. Ibrahim Dincer, a professor and the director of the Clean Energy Research Laboratory at Ontario Tech University. Photograph courtesy of minka2507, Pixabay.com

How will new tariffs and trade war affect the renewable energy equation for Canada?

There is a strong need to reformulate the energy equation to address electrification challenges in Canada since there is no more feasible cross-border electricity trade, which leaves both sides vulnerable.

Ibrahim Dincer

Opinion



Canada is recognized as a world leader in renewable electricity production and utilization, which makes the country uniquely positioned and admired by many. This is due to the fact that Canada, geographically, has the advantage of having abundant renewable energy sources that are considered a critical part of its energy equation, where fossil

fuels, nuclear, and renewables are essentially included in electricity generation. If we spell out these specific contributions, nearly 70 per cent comes from renewables (with about 62 per cent from hydro, six per cent from wind, one per cent from solar, one per cent from biomass and 0.1 per cent from other types, including marine and geothermal) while nuclear and fossil fuels contribute about 13 per cent and 17 per cent (with 12 per cent from natural gas, four per cent from coal and one per cent from petroleum products), respectively, based on the 2023 values.

The carbon dioxide emissions coming out of the use of these fossil fuels in electricity generation are about 15 mega tonnes, which is about 20 per cent of the total Canada's emissions. So, this number is really important in decarbonization efforts to make this country carbon neutral. This clearly requires renewables and nuclear to take over this combined responsibility to take care of 17 per cent for electricity generation.

Up until 2035, the short-term efforts will primarily be focused on phasing out electricity generation from coal and oil (totalling up to five per cent), and exerted on doubling the wind share up

to about 12 per cent and increasing the solar share up to about four per cent, respectively, while the expected increases on other types of renewables remain not noticeable.

In regard to solar energy use here at home, there is a great potential. Canada has about 820 TWh electricity generation capacity, while currently generating only about 5.75 TWh of electricity. Canadians should really take advantage of available solar energy and make use of it in every sector.

Even though there is a plan to increase the share in the electricity generation pie from one per cent to four per cent up to 2035, that will still not be tangible enough, keeping in mind that there is a fast penetration of electric vehicles that will increase the need of electricity by 50 per cent by 2035, and double by 2050.

To further elaborate on wind energy utilization in this country, a potential of about 1200 TWh electricity generation capacity is remarkable, while currently generating only about 100 TWh (only about 8.5 per cent of it), which confirms its absolute underuse in Canada. Developing a concrete wind sector should be given a clear priority even though there

is a plan to increase the share in the electricity generation pie from six per cent to 12 per cent up to 2035, which will not be much to consider tangible enough.

There have been some concerns raised about the viability of wind turbines for cold climates. There are additional requirements if wind turbines are expected to operate in climates like ours, such as better site selection, better structural design of the tower, utilization of heated sensors accordingly to ensure that they remain ice free for accurate wind speed and direction measurements, selection of suitable wind turbines, implementation of proper monitoring and measurement systems for sensors and other devices/equipment, consideration of installation in warm weather conditions, and accessibility and site communication.

Furthermore, grid decarbonization is recognized as a crucial challenge in many countries, including ours. There are multiple barriers, such as lack of proper market development (due to permitting procedures, regulations and policies, project delays, price increases, inconsistent frameworks), lack of political will and/or public support for new infrastructure, dearth of storage

capacities and facilities which are badly needed for grid stability and reliability, lack of smart marketing connectivity, absence of sufficient distribution network, and scarcity of generous incentives, subsidies/loans and tax credits as well as increased costs and interest rates.

The arrival of the new American president has complicated the bilateral relationship and has created obstacles with new tariffs of 25 per cent on almost all Canadian goods, except that energy products have faced a lesser tariff by 10 per cent.

The key challenges come out of an integrated electricity network with cross-border electricity trade, and out of bilateral agreements to facilitate the exchange of electricity between Canadian provinces and American states.

Is there a quick solution for this? Probably not! There is a strong need to reformulate the energy equation to address electrification challenges in Canada since there is no more feasible cross-border electricity trade, which leaves both sides vulnerable. There is a need to develop short-, mid- and long-term strategies to manage the electricity demand and supply in an effective and efficient manner by promoting energy storage and developing hydrogen economy where such demand and supply will be carefully addressed.

Finally, this is a wake-up call for Canada to go back to our roots to turn such challenges into opportunities through innovative solutions.

Dr. Ibrahim Dincer is a professor and the director of the Clean Energy Research Laboratory at Ontario Tech University in Oshawa, Ont.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Note to MPs: free advice on setting up your constituency office

Never lose sight of the prime directive: you want to put in place a team to deal with an inordinate number of complicated files in a manner that leaves the constituent with the view that they were treated in a professional and timely way. Not only will you not win them all—you will not win the vast majority of them and how people feel they have been treated will be very important to your future.

Joe Jordan

Opinion



Note: This is the second article in a series that was originally published in 2006. Content has been updated to reflect some of the new and evolving realities of public life.

As a Member of Parliament, you wear two hats. You are a legislator, diligently examining proposed legislation, interviewing committee witnesses to ensure the implications of any changes align with the stated public policy objectives, and proposing or supporting amendments to bills as they make their way through the legislative process. As an aside, even though our system is based on the “Government-proposes-and-Parliament-disposes” model, the private members’ business mechanism does allow individual MPs to actually propose new legislation to place before the House, but that opportunity is both rare and highly restrictive.

Secondly—and perhaps a tad less highbrow—you are also now manager of the complaints section at the Government Department Store! You will notice



Newly elected Conservative MP Michael Ma, left, who represents Markham-Unionville, Ont., and Billy Morin, who represents Edmonton Northwest, Alta., attend an orientation session put on by House of Commons staff on May 21, 2025. They will have to set up their riding offices, too. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Newly elected Members of Parliament attend an orientation session put on by House of Commons staff on May 21, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

that I did not say Federal Government Department Store as most Canadians have not undertaken a detailed study of Sec. 91 and Sec. 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867. Trust me when I say, the infuriated person in your waiting area cares little of the subservient aspects of the Canadian division of powers; all they know is their cable TV is fuzzy!

At this point, I should make the distinction between being a government or an opposition MP. Clearly the buck stops with government MPs, while the opposition MP has the added luxury—or additional layer of protection—of being able to align with and then redirect constituent criticism to the appropriate target, which is defined as anyone who is not them.

On the administration side, ensure that you have a simple and effective system for keeping track of constituent files. At a minimum, it should include the necessary contact information, a list of past calls and meetings including

the subject matter, progress, and potential resolution. It is also handy to update the file with any personal information—for example, family details/birthday/employment—about the person that might be useful in your future dealings with them. Also, make sure that there is co-ordination between your Ottawa office and your constituency office(s) as cagey complainants have been known to contact both locations in an attempt to advance a file by employing some sort of death-race competition.

You can also classify a person’s issue. Most issues can be defined as either the individual does not feel the rules have properly been applied to their specific circumstances, or they just don’t like the current rules. Obviously, your response and the expectation you set will be markedly different depending on where the issue lands. Always remember that people—especially ones in a bit of distress—will hear

what they want to hear in your response. Be very careful not to set an expectation for resolution that you will not be able to meet. This is especially when you consider that at the initial meeting with a constituent on an issue, you may not get the full story. There is a third category—I refer to this one as “my idea, your money”—these constituents view government as a great big cookie jar, and your job is to grab them those cookies.

In terms of actual constituents, I like to paraphrase the brilliant Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, in the sense that 20 per cent of your constituents will cause your office staff 80 per cent of their grief, and I very well could be high on the former and low on the latter. This is a class of client that my former staff affectionately labelled “Frequent Fliers.” Not to belabour the point, but let’s just say that these folks will test your devotion to duty in new and exciting ways!

Given the large and growing number of daily inquiries that the constituency office faces, the systems you put in place should be designed to make the best use of the resources you have. When constituents walk into your office, they will want to see you, the person they all apparently voted for. Know that there is no way you can handle that workload, and you will need to have someone who can skillfully triage the files or meetings that end up at your feet. The key is to have your staff handle the more administrative or routinized files in a way that maximizes political benefit, or at the very least mitigates against negative impacts. These systems will evolve and improve over time, but good record-keeping is fundamental.

At a base level, you will need to track and handle client issues, respond to meeting requests and invitations, issue congratulatory certificates, have a schedule for outreach, and deal with your local media. It is very easy to lose control of this in a hurry. There are a number of extremely useful and effective heuristics that can be adopted. For example, in terms of correspondence, good news should always come from the MP, while bad news should come from the minister or the department, with reference to gallant—albeit unsuccessful—intervention efforts of their local MP.

I would also consider providing passport services. You can have one of your staff trained to review the applications prior to submitting them for processing. Done properly, it may represent the only touchpoint that you have with some constituents, and can leave a positive impression.

It may also be a good idea to have your constituency staff spend some time in your Ottawa office. The thrill may wear off for you, but the place will always be impressive and help instill a sense of the job’s importance.

You will also need to put in place the appropriate rules and protocols for the protection of your staff, as well as yourself, and these should be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

Never lose sight of the prime directive: you want to put in place a team to deal with an inordinate number of complicated files in a manner that leaves the constituent with the view that they were treated in a professional and timely way. Not only will you not win them all—you will not win the vast majority of them—but how people feel they have been treated will be very important to your future.

My final observation is architectural in nature: make sure your office has a back door. Just in case a frequent flier is holding court in your reception area.

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

Global



Quite suddenly, under President Donald Trump, the United States has become just another great power where foreigners watch what they say, try to minimize contacts with official bodies, writes Gwynne Dyer. *Photograph courtesy of the White House/ Daniel Torok*

Add America to the no-go list for many journalists

Tourists don't feel the immediate effects of the countries clamping down, but journalists are the canaries in the coalmine, and I'm certainly feeling the change.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Straws in the wind: recently I ran across a post by the CEO of a nationwide professional association in Canada. People like him are used to hopping across the United States border for various meetings several times a month, but he was remarking on what people had

been talking about at the association's recent annual conference in a big Canadian city.

What his post said was: "Consensus here is that it's risky to travel to [U.S. flag emoji] but if you have to go, bring a burner phone. Have a plan in case you get detained. Watch what you say. Who you meet." And I thought "Yeah. Me too."

I'm a journalist, so I will still go to the United States if I absolutely have to, but not for pleasure, not for paid lectures and things, and yes, please, on the burner phone.

Back when I started out in this trade, half the world was off limits, especially for freelance journalists. The Cold War reached a second peak in the early 1980s, and you couldn't go to the Soviet Union unless you had a big media organization negotiating for you. Even then it took months for a visa, and you were followed everywhere.

The Communist-ruled "satellite" countries in Eastern Europe were a little easier, and China was letting tourists into some parts of the country (but not stray journalists). Albania, North

Korea, and Iran were completely closed, and most of South-East Asia and much of Central and South America were ruled by military dictators who ran death squads.

Then non-violent democratic revolutions began all over the "Third World," the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe collapsed, and the old Soviet Union itself followed suit. Soon almost the whole world opened up.

It was a nice ride while it lasted, but then the whole process went into reverse.

You won't feel the effects much if you travel as a tourist or even do business abroad, but journalists (including foreign journalists) are the canaries in the coalmine on this, and I'm certainly feeling the change. The number of countries I won't go to any more is growing every year.

It started, weirdly enough, with Turkey, a place I thought I knew well. I've lived there, I speak the language (or at least I used to), and I even thought President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was a welcome change from a militantly secular government that ignored

the rights of the pious half of the population.

Then the editor of the newspaper that ran my column in Turkey was jailed, the publisher went into exile, and the new regime turned the paper into a government propaganda outlet. I know there's a fat file on me somewhere in Ankara, and I've seen the inside of a Turkish jail (as a visitor), so I don't go there any more. Twenty years now.

Next was Russia, where I had been practically commuting in the early '90s. Vladimir Putin became president in 1999 and it was still alright for a while, but by 2005 he was killing opposition leaders and I started reporting from afar. Note, by the way, that these changes were happening after more-or-less free elections—although they tended to be the last fair elections.

Then came a round of non-violent pro-democracy uprisings in the Middle East, most of them drowned in blood. That set off a whole cluster of civil wars, and the whole region became very hard to work in. It still is.

Next was China, where they arrested, tried, and jailed two

random Canadian businessmen in 2018 really as hostages to exchange for a Chinese citizen in Canada whom they wanted back.

It wasn't aimed specifically at journalists, and the victims were freed after 1,000 days in prison, but I and many other people took it as a signal to do your Chinese business from afar.

However, I never thought that I would be adding the United States to the list. Even during Donald Trump's first term as president, foreign journalists were no more at risk of arbitrary imprisonment than the average American citizen, and nobody followed you around or listened to your phone calls. (Well, no more than they listen to everybody else's calls.)

Now, quite suddenly, America has become just another great power where foreigners watch what they say, try to minimize contacts with official bodies, or just stay away. The thought even occurs that, as in so many other cases, there will still be elections, but we will know the outcome in advance.

It sounds almost hysterical to talk like this and many non-journalist travelers won't even notice it, but the world is closing down again. I have no idea if and when it will reopen.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION



PSG Senator Peter Harder has introduced a historic bill in the Upper Chamber, titled An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1982 (notwithstanding clause). Its main goal is to put in place legislative safeguards to prevent the excessive use of the notwithstanding clause at the federal level, writes Errol Mendes. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Senate throws a lifeline to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Senator Peter Harder's bill would prohibit the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clause at the federal level.

Errol P. Mendes

Opinion



In the past decade there has been growing evidence of the slow death of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the increasing actual or threatened use of the Sec. 33 notwithstanding clause by provincial leaders in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and New Brunswick. It is politically significant that the

Throne Speech crafted by Prime Minister Mark Carney stressed the importance of the Charter as a part of the foundational values of Canadian society.

The use of the clause that seemed to prepare the Charter's grave the most was the pre-emptive use of the clause that states that a law that may violate the most important rights in the Charter will be operative from its passing regardless of any future judicial ruling that may confirm the severe breach of Charter rights. Some of the most controversial uses have been by Quebec which used this pre-emptive use of the clause regarding use of religious clothing in official positions, while Ontario has used it after the start of an election to cut down the number of electoral wards in Toronto and also attempting to limit the funding by third parties before an election or preventing strikes by educational workers. Sadly, these controversial uses have even extended to Saskatchewan limiting what pronouns students

“ IF THESE SAFEGUARDS ARE ADOPTED BY BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE, IT COULD BE A LIFELINE TO PREVENT THE START OF THE CHARTER'S SLOW DEATH IN PARLIAMENT.

can use for themselves in primary schools. In all these controversial uses of the clause, Parliament has, for the most, part remained silent, with the federal Liberal government only asserting that it may intervene when the Quebec religious headwear challenge reaches the Supreme Court.

However, when Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre promised to use clause to promote his party's criminal justice goals, it was not the House, but the Senate that decided to start a national legislative effort to restrain the excessive use of the clause that imperils the Charter.

Last week, PSG Senator Peter Harder introduced a historic bill in the Upper Chamber titled An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1982 (notwithstanding clause). Its main goal is to put in place legislative safeguards to prevent the excessive use of the notwithstanding clause at the federal level.

The bill attempts to do this through the following key provisions. First, it will only apply to the Parliament and Government of Canada in respect to all matters within Parliament's authority. Second, while a bill with the clause must be introduced in Parliament by a minister, it can only be done after the Supreme Court has already ruled that a federal law has violated the most important rights covered by the clause. This would prohibit the pre-emptive use of the clause at the federal level. If provinces were to enact similar legislation, those laws could similarly prohibit the clause's use in provincial legislatures unless a provincial Superior Court has already ruled that a provincial law that violates the most important rights covered by the clause.

Additionally, the Senate bill requires any federal law that

contains the clause must also have a preamble that gives a reason for its use. The minister that introduces the bill must also table a statement that describes the reasons for using the clause, the impact on the Charter's most important rights, and why such infringements cannot be justified under the first section of the Charter that allows governments to impose reasonable limits on rights. Finally, this historic Senate bill asks that any use of the clause in federal law must allow sufficient time allocation for discussion of its use in Parliament.

If these safeguards are adopted by both the Senate and the House, it could be a lifeline to prevent the start of the Charter's slow death in Parliament. The excessive use of the clause at the provincial levels in Quebec, Ontario and in the actual or threatened use by Saskatchewan, Alberta, and New Brunswick has severely tarnished the promise to Canadians in 1982 with the introduction of the Charter that their most fundamental rights would be safe from the authoritarian whims of future federal and provincial leaders.

If the Senate bill is successful in Parliament, it is, therefore, important that provincial legislatures that really do respect their citizens' most fundamental rights must consider either introducing a similar safeguard law against excessive use of the clause, or have honesty to declare they place political expediency over the rights of those who have voted them into office.

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

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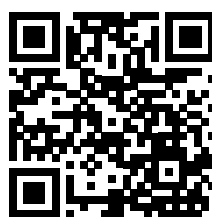


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OPINION

Carney wants a pipeline, but building one will be even harder than it sounds

The Liberal government is pushing for a ‘nation-building’ project to expand fossil fuel production, but the barriers are enormous.

Shawn McCarthy

Opinion



The federal government is planning to get back into the oil pipeline business, although executing on that goal will be extremely tough, given commercial, political, and constitutional realities.

In the spring election campaign, Prime Minister Mark Carney vowed to pursue pipeline construction across the country, including an oil pipeline that would displace foreign imports of crude into Eastern and Central Canada. Both he and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson have since reiterated that commitment.

Carney is not proposing that the government take ownership of projects as it did with the expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline that crosses British Columbia to Burnaby. Rather, he pledges to be a determined facilitator whose government will greatly accelerate regulatory approval and secure acceptance from provinces and Indigenous communities, with new legislation if necessary.

The pipeline pledge—which also covers infrastructure to boost exports of liquified natural gas—is part of Carney’s “build, baby, build” strategy to strengthen the economy, and diversify trade away from the United States in light of President Donald Trump’s bellicose tariff stand.

With his support for fast-tracking new fossil fuel infrastructure, Carney also hopes to alleviate Alberta’s frustration over the previous Liberal government’s perceived hostility towards the oil industry.

The current federal government’s pipeline pledge faces opposition from climate activists who worry about greenhouse gas emissions from the fossil fuel sector, as well as political challenges from provincial governments and Indigenous communities



Prime Minister Mark Carney holds his first press conference after the 45th general election in the National Press Theatre in Ottawa on May 2, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

whose territories will bear the environmental risks from pipeline construction and tanker traffic.

Corporations wary of investing in new pipelines

As far as producing provinces and industry are concerned, the biggest prize would be a crude pipeline from Alberta to Kitimat, B.C. But reviving the Northern Gateway Project, which was scrapped in 2016, would draw staunch opposition from First Nations whose title rights are enshrined in the Constitution.

At the moment, there appears to be little corporate interest in building a new oil pipeline. In addition to political risks facing such a project, there are questions about the growth potential of Western Canadian supply, the enormous price tag associated with new pipelines, and the potential to expand capacity on existing lines.

In order to attract commercial interest in an oil pipeline, governments in Alberta and Ottawa may have to underwrite it on the grounds it would divert trade away from the U.S. and fulfill Carney’s pledge to make Canada “an energy superpower.”

In the heat of Trump’s trade wars, diversification of markets and security of supply appear to be urgent priorities. However, that urgency may recede and those goals will be recognized as hugely expensive insurance policies that would be both politically and environmentally disruptive.

The Trans Mountain pipeline through B.C. and existing pipelines into the U.S. already have considerable potential to increase capacity, said Jackie Forrest, executive director of the ARC Energy Research Institute, in an interview. Adding capacity to ship more crude oil by rail may be less costly than building a new pipeline.

“If we don’t have tariffs, it’s hard to see any of this going forward because generally the transportation costs on any new pipeline would be quite a bit more than existing pipelines,” Forrest said.

Even with few options, Carney’s committed to boosting production

Despite the enormous barriers, the Liberal government continues to promote the need for an additional oil pipeline.

In a speech in Calgary on May 23, Hodgson reiterated Carney’s election pledge to build infrastructure to support both conventional and clean energy production.

Hodgson insisted Canada can expand oil production and exports while addressing climate concerns through the multi-billion Pathways Alliance project that would capture and sequester the industry’s carbon dioxide emissions.

“We need infrastructure that gets our energy to tidewater and to trusted allies—diversifying beyond the U.S.,” Hodgson told the Calgary crowd.

Under a Carney government, it appears that Canada will join other major fossil fuel producers in the race to maintain their share of a global oil market that is expected to peak this decade and begin to decline as the world seeks to transition off fossil fuels.

There are several options for a new pipeline. Most are versions of previous projects that were killed, such as Northern Gateway. Two others are Energy East, which would have carried crude to refineries in Quebec and New Brunswick and to export markets from Saint John; and Keystone XL, which aimed to expand access to the vast refining and export hub on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

For Alberta and the industry, the top priority by far would be

a crude pipeline to Kitimat, B.C., which would provide a deep-water port for the largest crude supertankers.

The new Gateway option would provide Canadian producers with expanded access to growing Asian markets. But Carney would have to reverse the ban on tanker traffic in the environmentally sensitive waters off northern B.C., a restriction that was instituted by his Liberal predecessor.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has demanded the federal government end that ban and support a new pipeline to the West Coast. At a Western premiers meeting in Yellowknife, N.W.T., on May 23, B.C. Premier David Eby indicated he is cool to the idea of a new oil pipeline crossing his province, though he did not rule it out.

However, it would face staunch opposition from some Indigenous groups. The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, which represents 100 Indigenous Nations, issued a statement back in January in which its president, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, said the failed Gateway project “would have been an absolute disaster for our lands and waters.”

East-west pipeline faces bigger hurdles

In their pipeline comments, Carney and Hodgson have emphasized the importance of displacing imported oil with domestic sources in order to enhance security of supply. This desire for resource self-reliance provided a key rationale for the west-to-east Energy East pipeline proposed by TransCanada Energy Corp. in 2014. The company would have converted some capacity on the cross-country natural gas mainline to carry crude.

In 2024, this country imported on average 518,000 barrels per

day of crude, primarily to the refineries in Quebec and New Brunswick. Nearly 80 per cent of those imports came from the U.S. Gulf Coast. Ontario’s four refineries—with capacity of nearly 400,000 barrels per day—run on Canadian crude delivered via Enbridge Inc.’s Line 5 that runs through the U.S.

While there has been no issue with the security of sea-borne imports to New Brunswick and Quebec, there is a threat from Michigan, where Governor Gretchen Witmer has worked to shut down Enbridge’s Line 5 due to environmental concerns.

Trump has supported the Canadian view that the line should be refurbished, not shut down. In April, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers announced it is expediting the review process for a crucial five-kilometre stretch of new pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac after the president issued an executive order to facilitate the Line 5 construction.

A revised Energy East option would face huge hurdles—not the least of which is the fact that the gas pipeline is now nearly full and not available for repurposing. TransCanada, now called TC Energy, was the original proponent of Energy East, but sold off its liquids pipeline business last year.

To build an entirely new pipeline to the East Coast would cost well over \$30-billion, TC Energy president François Poirier said on an ARC Energy podcast in March. “I don’t believe that it would be economical to build such a line,” Poirier said, adding the permitting risk in Quebec would dissuade any company from moving forward with such a proposal.

Even if the political issues disappeared, the high tolls faced by producers to use the line would be a major disincentive, ARC Energy’s Forrest said, adding that it would be more economic to expand crude by rail capacity to feed Eastern refineries. “Crude by rail can happen a lot quicker than building a pipeline,” she said.

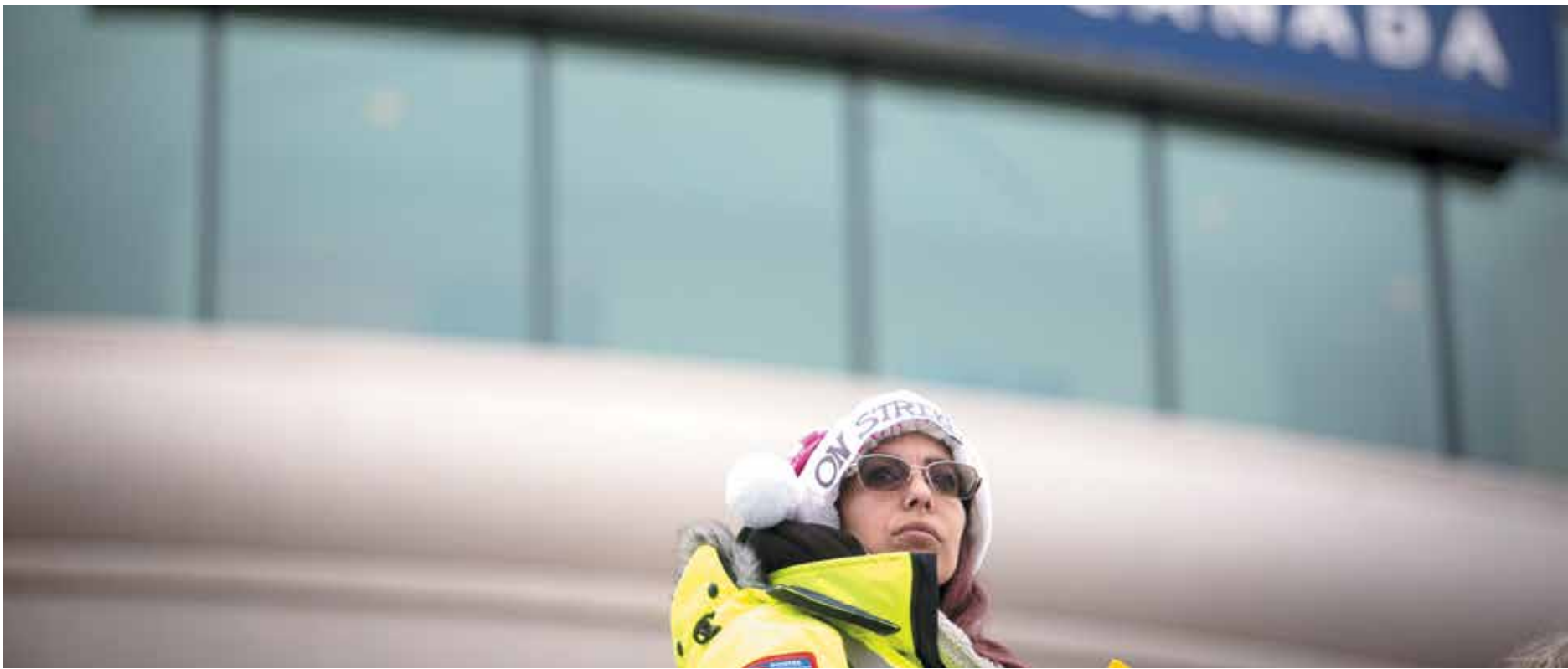
Trump wants industry to revisit the Keystone XL project that would have delivered 830,000 barrels per day of heavy crude to the Gulf Coast, where refineries were built to process the sludge-like oilsands crude. South Bow Corp., the current owner of the existing Keystone pipeline, has shown no interest in reviving XL. And while industry might welcome the added capacity, it would do nothing to diversify Canada’s energy trade.

So if the goal is a new all-Canadian oil pipeline, the options are few. Carney and Hodgson would have to either secure commercial interest in a new west-to-east proposal, or re-engage in the Northern Gateway battle. Clearing federal regulatory hurdles and getting provincial and Indigenous acceptance within the two-year timeframe that the prime minister has laid out would be a Herculean task.

Shawn McCarthy is an independent writer and senior counsel with Sussex Strategy Group. This piece has been co-published by The Hill Times and Corporate Knights, with permission.

The Hill Times

OPINION



Aurelia Arcaro, a Canada Post worker from Rigaud, Que., pickets outside the head office in Ottawa when Canada Post was on strike Nov. 28, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada Post is a dying dinosaur; Parliament must lead a strategic exit

The choice before Parliament is binary: strategic reinvention or fiscal drift. It's time to stop pretending this business model can be modernized with enough public cash injections. It can't. The smarter move is a managed exit—structured, deliberate, and designed to maximize public value.

Ram Mathilakath



Opinion

Canada Post is the kind of asset that would've been marked "non-core" in any serious investment banking portfolio review a decade ago. Today, it's a legacy cost centre hemorrhaging public capital—and Parliament needs

to stop throwing good money after bad.

In 2023 alone, the Canada Post Corporation (CPC) posted a pre-tax loss of \$748-million, marking its sixth consecutive year in the red. Total cumulative losses since 2018 have now blown past \$3-billion. The modest uptick in 2024? A one-time lift from asset sales. Strip those out, and the fundamentals still scream "sell."

These losses aren't market blips. They reflect a structural impairment—an irreversible secular decline in demand. Since 2006, Canadians have changed how they communicate. Letter volumes are down 60 per cent; mail revenues have fallen 30 per cent. Email, e-billing, and digital forms have wiped out the traditional use case for CPC's core business. This isn't a down cycle. It's a demand cliff.

Yet, CPC is still running an operating model built for a 5.5 billion-letter world. In 2023, it processed just over 2 billion. If this were a private-sector operation, a consultant would have walked in with a red pen and a restructuring plan 10 years ago. But instead of rationalizing its footprint, CPC continues to carry 1990s-era infrastructure into a 2025 economy. That disconnect is burning taxpayer capital at an alarming rate.

Some suggest that parcel delivery might be CPC's new growth engine. Unfortunately,

“In 2023, the Canada Post Corporation posted a pre-tax loss of \$748-million, marking its sixth consecutive year in the red. Total cumulative losses since 2018 have now blown past \$3-billion.”

that ship has not only sailed—it's docked in Seattle. CPC's share of the parcel market has collapsed from 62 per cent in 2019 to just 29 per cent in 2023. Amazon, FedEx, and UPS are the dominant players now, offering faster, more predictable, and better-integrated logistics services.

So here's the real question for Parliament: do we keep underwriting a structurally broken, cash-flow-negative business with declining utility to the public? Or do we reallocate capital toward initiatives that can actually generate national returns?

From a fiscal policy lens, the opportunity cost is clear. Every dollar funneled into CPC's losses is a dollar that doesn't go toward healthcare, Indigenous housing, digital infrastructure, or economic resilience. In capital markets, we'd call this a misallocation of resources. In public policy, it's a strategic error.

CPC is not "too big to fail"—it's too antiquated to save. And just like in mergers and acquisitions, emotional attachment to legacy assets is no substitute for strategic clarity.

Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands have all divested their postal systems while safeguarding rural and remote service through regulation and targeted subsidies. These were not fire sales. They were deliberate exits built around public value and fiscal responsibility.

Canada can—and should—follow suit. A phased divestiture should begin with the most commercially viable segments, such as parcel delivery. Private-sector players have the agility, technology, and incentive structure to run them efficiently. Meanwhile, rural service obligations can be preserved via contractual mechanisms—just as we do with broadband expansion or passenger rail.

The fiscal upside is significant. Strategic divestiture could unlock one-time revenues through asset sales and reduce the need for annual operating subsidies. That capital could be redirected to areas where public investment creates compounding value: green energy, urban transit, child-care, and clean-tech R&D. It's what we in finance would call a redeployment of capital for alpha generation—in public terms, it's simply smart budgeting.

What's needed now is a transparent policy process. Parliament should commission an independent review of CPC's commercial viability, assess regulatory options for essential service continuity, consult with labour groups and rural communities, and engage credible financial advisors to scope market appetite and transaction frameworks. This isn't about cutting and running. It's about fiscal prudence.

The choice before Parliament is binary: strategic reinvention or fiscal drift. It's time to stop pretending this business model can be modernized with enough public cash injections. It can't. The smarter move is a managed exit: structured, deliberate, and designed to maximize public value.

After all, even in government, portfolio management matters. Let's stop subsidizing yesterday and start investing in tomorrow.

Ram Mathilakath is a former Parliamentary Budget Office/federal executive who is now an executive consultant and turnaround strategist.

The Hill Times

NEWS

Carney's success hinges on effective caucus management, but he has struggled so far, say some Liberal MPs

At last week's national caucus meeting, staffers were barred from attending, and Liberal MPs discussed ways to improve the structure of future weekly meetings, Liberal MPs told *The Hill Times*.

Continued from page 1

not uncommon in long-governing parties, which makes it a challenge to manage the caucus effectively.

"Every backbench MP is comparing themselves to the current ministers, questioning why they weren't chosen—and why someone they see as less qualified got a promotion," said an MP who spoke on a not-for-attribution basis in order to speak their mind.

Throughout last year, tensions grew as MPs pushed for Trudeau to step aside, viewing him as a political liability because of tanking polling numbers. They say their efforts were driven by a desire to prevent the party from falling to third or fourth place in the next election. The current caucus that Carney has inherited is a very different one from 2015, and it will require a significant amount of effort from him to keep the unity by treating everyone fairly, especially when it comes to promotions to the front bench.

"It's a caucus with scars and bumps and dents and, you cannot just assume that you can shape this caucus to your liking like Trudeau," said the Liberal MP.

Although Carney is now the party leader and prime minister, he remains a political newcomer to elected politics. He only entered the political arena in January and was elected to the House for the first time in the April 28 election, making him part of the class of 2025. Roughly one-third of the caucus is newly elected like him, but the majority of MPs have been serving since 2015, with about 10 MPs having been elected even before then.

This means two-thirds of the caucus are seasoned parliamentarians. Many of those who were passed over for cabinet positions under Trudeau had hoped for a promotion under Carney's leader-

ship, while former cabinet ministers expected to retain their roles. To put his own stamp on the front bench, however, Carney made significant changes in his May cabinet shuffle—disappointing both groups who were not able to make it to his executive branch.

This includes MPs—Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Que.), Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.), Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.), and Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Ont.)—who were promoted to cabinet by Carney in March only to be dropped in May without a scandal, gaffe, or wrongdoing. Some like Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.), Darren Fisher (Dartmouth-Cole Harbour, N.S.), Elisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Que.) and Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.) who got promotions in December by Trudeau, were later dropped by Carney in his May 13 cabinet.

Some of the former cabinet ministers privately expressed frustration with colleagues, saying they were "used" to show diversity or differentiation from Trudeau's cabinet, and said they felt "publicly humiliated" by their sudden removal.

"They feel betrayed, double crossed," said the MP.

Carney announced the appointment of Bendayan and Blois as his parliamentary secretaries at the May 25 national caucus meeting.

Frustrated by being left out of cabinet, some Liberal MPs predicted that dropped Trudeau-era ministers—or long-serving MPs with little chance of promotion—may resign in the coming months, potentially triggering byelections. One of the most speculated names in this context is former defence minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.). When reached last week by *The Hill Times* after the

national caucus meeting to confirm whether he plans to serve out his entire term or will step down before that, he declined to comment.

"I'm not commenting," said Blair, 71, a former Toronto Police chief, who held several senior ministerial portfolios between 2018 and 2025, but was dropped from cabinet last month.

MPs speculate that at least three senior caucus members could step down in the coming months. If that happens, it could create political headaches for Carney, especially in a minority government where every seat matters—the Liberals are currently three seats short of a majority. The loss of three byelections last year in previously Liberal-held ridings—Toronto—St. Paul's, Ont.; LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Que.; and Cloverdale—Langley City, B.C.—left Liberal MPs uneasy, reinforcing the sense that most of their seats could be up for grabs in the next federal election. This gave them a strong reason to push out Trudeau.

For about two years, the Liberals trailed the Conservatives by more than 20 points in the polls. The tide began to turn after Trudeau announced he wouldn't lead the party into the next election. Momentum grew during the Liberal leadership race, with many rank and file members viewing Carney's financial background as an asset against Trump's tariff threats. He won all 343 ridings in the leadership election. Under Carney's leadership, the Liberals secured 8.5 million votes and won a strong minority with 169 seats—just three short of a majority. He revived the Liberals.

Political insiders expected a bump in the polls for the Liberals after they formed government following the April 28 election—but they remain neck and neck with

the Conservatives, separated by less than two percentage points, according to a recent Nanos Research poll. A May 23 poll released by Nanos suggested that the Liberals were at 40.4 per cent, the Conservatives 38.6 per cent, the NDP 9.8 per cent, the Bloc 5.9 per cent and the Greens 3.7 per cent.

Meanwhile, a second MP voiced frustration over being passed over for cabinet.

"I'm just so sick and tired of this party, all being about people putting in their own friends. I really am. I'm like, 'Really, after all these years, you guys kicked me in the teeth every step of the way and now I have to relive this again.' It's astounding," the MP said who is unsure if they will stick around for the next election.

"I was hoping this [under Carney] was going to be a reset, and I'm like 'really, here we go again.' Same reality. Liberal insiders putting in their own friends. Come on! I thought this was supposed to be about meritocracy. I have never made a stink about anything but now it's enough. Mark Carney was supposed to be different than Justin Trudeau. I'm so disgusted. Over all these years, I was like, 'Chin up, chin up, don't worry, don't worry.' But now I think nothing ever changes with this party."

This MP remarked that during the election campaign, Carney consistently heard calls for renewal: new faces and a new team. However, many "principal ministers" in his cabinet are holdovers from the Trudeau era, which has raised concerns among MPs hoping for a change, the MP said.

The MP also highlighted the lack of cabinet representation along the 401 corridor from Toronto to Ottawa—including cities like Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, and Kingston—as well as towards

Windsor, leaving regions such as Guelph, Kitchener, St. Catharines, Waterloo, and Hamilton without a voice at the cabinet table. The MP said that this is just one example, and there are others in different regions of the country.

After being dropped from cabinet, Erskine-Smith also publicly expressed his disappointment in a social media post.

Similarly, ahead of the May 13 cabinet announcement, Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver—Capilano, B.C.) put out a three-page statement outlining his accomplishments as a minister. Though he did not directly criticize Carney, colleagues saw it as a subtle message—highlighting his track record to emphasize that he was dropped despite his achievements.

Meanwhile, several Liberal MPs interviewed for this article pointed to four-term Liberal MP James Maloney's (Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ont.) acclamation as national caucus chair as a positive step, saying that he brings experience and a fresh start under a new leader. Previously, Maloney served as chair of the Ontario Liberal caucus—the largest regional caucus of any political party on Parliament Hill. MPs hoped that he would change the structure of the caucus meetings to give more time to backbench MPs to share their concerns with the prime minister and his front bench. Maloney was acclaimed as caucus chair at the first meeting on May 25 after the April 28 federal election.

Last Wednesday, no PMO or any other staffer was allowed to attend the meeting, and MPs discussed ways to make national caucus meetings more productive and efficient. MPs said they hoped that, going forward, no staffers would be allowed to attend caucus meetings. Under Trudeau, senior PMO staff routinely attended national caucus meetings—a practice many MPs opposed, arguing that these meetings should allow them direct, unfiltered access to the prime minister without staffers in the room.

During the eras of then-prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, staffers were strictly barred—caucus was reserved for MPs and the prime minister only. Since 2015, many MPs have pushed to return to that practice, calling for staff to be excluded from caucus meetings.

"If you want to be a successful prime minister, you need to have direct contacts with every single one of your caucus members," said a third Liberal MP. "There should never be anyone between the prime minister and the member. Any caucus member should have access to the prime minister and national caucus should be a place where he's listening."

In a brief interview with *The Hill Times*, while Maloney declined to disclose any specific caucus discussions due to confidentiality, he said that, in general terms, MPs are actively exploring ways to make caucus meetings more productive.

"I'm going to talk to my caucus colleagues and see what they want to do," said Maloney.

arana@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Prime Minister Mark Carney, centre, at the Liberals' national caucus meeting on Parliament Hill on May 25. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Carney benches Trudeau's 'Hallmark card' mandate letter format, opts for broad priority list for all ministers

Prime Minister Mark Carney's public across-cabinet missive is short, outlining only seven priorities for all 28 ministers, and departing from his predecessor's lengthy directions to each minister.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Prime Minister Mark Carney is striking "the right balance" with his single public cabinet mandate letter, departing from his predecessor's "unfocused," "rambling," public relations approach that observers say neutralized the priorities meant to direct ministers and keep them—privately—accountable.

In a break from former prime minister Justin Trudeau's tradition, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) released a sole letter to his 28 ministers on May 21. It is short and broad, outlining only seven priorities for his senior team, with none aimed at specific ministries. At about 800 words, it stands in sharp contrast to Trudeau's lengthy mandate letters, which sometimes exceeded 3,000 words, were specific to each minister, and outlined itemized lists of initiatives ministers were responsible for completing.

Some who have worked in the Privy Council Office or the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) under former governments say this shift away from long public mandate letters is a good move, calling Trudeau's mandate letters—which were made public in a commitment to governmental transparency—"a communication device" intended for public consumption, stripping the missives of their purpose, which was to inform ministers of their priorities. Carney's approach leaves it to his ministers to respond to his letter with their individual priorities, which will likely not be made public.

"What Trudeau did—which I thought was an abomination—was essentially turned the mandate letter, which is a statement



Prime Minister Mark Carney's singular mandate letter addressed to all ministers, released May 21, puts the onus on ministers to develop their individual priorities within his broader commitments. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of priority to a minister, into a communications device," said Mel Cappe, a retired public servant who served as clerk of the Privy Council as well as special adviser to then-prime minister Jean Chrétien, among other senior positions. "It's not intended for that."

Prior to Trudeau's move to publicize mandate letters in 2015, such cabinet instructions were confidential communications, seen only by ministers, the prime minister, and some senior civil servants. Some saw Trudeau's move as a step forward for accountability and transparency, but the shift also resulted in lengthy—and sometimes delayed—mandate letters, which were often chock full of repeated campaign promises and long introductions to set up the included initiatives.

In Cappe's view, this altered the letters' utility for the worse.

"[Trudeau] listed everything that could be put into a mandate letter," said Cappe, who penned a 2022 op-ed denouncing the requirement to make mandate letters public in Ontario, a decision which was later struck down by the Supreme Court. "If you look at the minister of finance's mandate letter from Justin Trudeau, it had about 150 priorities. Now, if you have 150 priorities, you have no priorities."

Trudeau's 2021 mandate letter to then-deputy prime minister and minister of finance Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) contained 51 "commitments" in bullet-point format, coming in at over 3,300 words in length.

In 2015, the first year of Trudeau's public mandates, the total tally of initiatives ministers were instructed to complete was 289. The government later tracked these initiatives in their Mandate Letter Tracker, and reported that 219 initiatives were met, 65 had "progress made" on them, and only five were not met and "not being pursued."

Senator Percy Downe (Charlottetown, P.E.I.), who is the liaison for the Canadian Senators Group and who also served as chief of staff for Chrétien prior to his Senate appointment, said the Trudeau approach to mandate letters was to treat them "like Hallmark cards."

"They have captured every trendy comment or anything that was perceived to be right for the times," Downe told *The Hill Times*. "They were unfocused, and they were rambling. And you have to have a set of priorities. You can't have 500 priorities."

Carney's mandate letter, while more concise than Trudeau's, does contain an introduction where campaign pledges are repeated. Unlike Trudeau's missives, the introduction is broader in scope, shorter, and focused on overarching goals. The letter begins by addressing the "geopolitical risks" facing Canada, repeating promises to "redefine" this country's relationships, increase infrastructure development speeds, and build the economy, among other campaign pledges.

It then outlines the following seven priorities in a numerical list: establishing a "new" rela-

tionship with the United States, and strengthening Canada's trading relationship with other countries, improving the economy by removing interprovincial trade barriers and expediting "nation-building" projects, improving affordability, making housing more affordable, improving Canadian military and security, adjusting immigration, and reducing government spending.

The listed priorities are wide-ranging, and not closely tied to specific ministries. In what follows, Carney instructs ministers to "identify how specifically you can contribute to these missions" as well as identify "key goals" and "measures of success" that can be used to evaluate their results.

This leaves Carney's ministers with the task of compiling and outlining their individual priorities within their departments. Unlike the released mandate letter, these responses are unlikely to be made public—a clear move away from Trudeau's long bullet-point public lists for each ministry.

Brian Klunder, who served as a senior adviser to several ministers under former prime minister Chrétien and then-prime minister Paul Martin, said Carney's half way between Trudeau's detailed "PR document" letters and complete confidentiality is "probably the right course of action."

"I am in favour of mandate letters being public if they're actually meaningful," Klunder, senior counsel at the government and public relations firm Temple Scott Associates, told *The Hill Times*. "But if they're just a PR exercise, then we might as well go back to them being secret. What I like about the Carney letter is it's a public letter setting priorities that departments are going to individually have to react to."

Downe echoed Klunder's assessment, saying that Carney's singular, shorter mandate letter "hit the right balance" as it "empowers" ministers to act without needing to run every decision through the PMO, something that Downe said "bottlenecks" the office.

"It's impossible for the Prime Minister's Office to be involved in all parts of government," Downe said. "You end up with slow decisions across government. ... You have to empower ministers and their departments to take the action required to deal with the problems within their mandate."

Downe also highlighted that Carney plans to move swiftly,

having promised on the campaign trail that his government would "need to do things previously thought impossible at speeds we haven't seen in generations"—a phrase that was repeated in the opening paragraphs of his mandate letter. This efficiency, Downe emphasized, requires delegating to ministers and giving them freedom.

On May 25, Carney addressed the Liberal caucus with media present, and repeated his pledge of speed, telling MPs they were going "to be very, very busy in the next few weeks," months, and years, also committing to introduce legislation "immediately" to address affordability.

But there is a question of whether the release of just one letter signifies the opposite of delegation—that there is only the "one minister" leading operations, and that is Carney.

Scott Reid, former communications director for prime minister Martin and principal and co-founder of Feschuk-Reid, wrote in *The Hub* that Carney's choice is "intriguing," making a clear "emphasis on the sole letter," and therefore "the sole minister"—the "prime minister."

"That may not be surprising since the singular offering of Carney propelled the Liberals' electoral revival," Reid writes. "But if the message in releasing only one letter is that there is really only one minister, that will start to wear. On Canadians. And on Carney. Even the strongest leaders must be able to count on their ministers to help carry the heavy load of government."

Having a singular, short mandate letter also calls into question if Carney's move will result in less opportunity for accountability and scrutiny on his government's actions and results.

When asked about this, Klunder said there are other ways for the public to gauge the government's pledges and hold them accountable, pointing to the legislative priorities outlined in the Throne Speech, which was delivered May 27 by King Charles III, as well as tabled budgets and economic statements, as examples.

Cappe offered a similar assessment, also pointing to the need for a level of secrecy between the prime minister and his ministers as a requirement for the PM to hold them accountable, saying there are sufficient means for public accountability without intergovernmental communication being made public.

"The prime minister needs an instrument to hold his ministers to account. He needs to be able to say to a minister, you're out of line," Cappe said. "If it's all public, he can't do that."

"There's public accountability, and that's on the Speech from the Throne and/or the overarching mandate letter," he continued. "But the negotiated mandate letter that each minister will write back to the prime minister on is something that the prime minister will use to hold his ministers to account."

ewand@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

Former NDP MP Julian raises alarm over future of pharmacare program



In a post-Throne Speech panel hosted by the Pearson Centre for Progressive Policy, former British Columbia MP Peter Julian noted the speech only signalled maintaining the current national pharmacare program. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Peter Julian says the national pharmacare program, in its current state, was only meant to be the initial step to universal coverage for prescriptions and it's 'profoundly disappointing' the Throne Speech gave 'clear signalling' the Liberals have no plans to proceed to this next stage.

BY MARLO GLASS

Former long-serving NDP MP Peter Julian, who was defeated in last month's federal election, says the future of the universal pharmacare program is in jeopardy given the "very clear signalling" on the government's priorities laid out in the Speech from the Throne.

In a May 29 panel held two days after the historic speech delivered in the Senate by King Charles III, the former British Columbia politician noted the speech only signalled maintaining the current national pharmacare program, which was pushed by the NDP as a part of its supply-and-confidence deal with the Liberals under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau last Parliament.



King Charles III inspects the honour guard at the Senate of Canada Building before delivering the Speech from the Throne on May 27. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The speech says "the government will protect the programs that are already saving families thousands of dollars every year," including childcare and pharmacare, and "in addition to these, the government has recently expanded the Canadian Dental Care Plan to cover about eight million Canadians, saving the average person more than \$800 per year."

Julian said the national pharmacare program, in its current state, was only meant to be the initial step to universal coverage for prescriptions.

"What exists now was only the first step in pharmacare, and that covers diabetes, medication and devices, and covers contraception," said Julian, speaking at the virtual event hosted by the Pearson Centre for Progressive Policy, alongside co-panellists former Liberal MP Ya'ara Saks, and former Conservative MP Karen Vecchio. Saks, who was first elected

in 2020, was a former federal minister in former prime minister Justin Trudeau's government, but lost her York Centre, Ont., seat the election to Conservative Roman Baber. Saks lost by 5,792 votes. Vecchio, who had represented Elgin-Middlesex-London, Ont., since 2015, did not run again.

Julian said the program can save hundreds of lives per year for diabetic Canadians who can't afford their prescriptions, and Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) government can save many more if it expands the program.

"There are many, many more, more Canadians that die because they can't afford to access heart medication and other medications that are essential for life," added Julian, a one-time NDP leadership hopeful who was an MP from 2004 until losing his seat in the April 28 election.

"So for Mr. Carney to signal clearly in the Throne Speech that he is not moving forward with the

next stage of pharmacare—which would include a whole range of other life-preserving essential medication—I find that profoundly disappointing."

Julian said there's "very clear signalling" the governing Liberals won't expand the pharmacare program. "I find that disturbing and saddening, quite frankly," said Julian, who narrowly lost his re-election bid in New Westminster-Burnaby-Maillardville, B.C., by fewer than 2,000 votes to Liberal Jake Sawatzky.

"This is where we really hit the road in terms of the Throne Speech," Julian said. "If we're not moving ahead with pharmacare, we know ultimately that is sentencing a few hundred Canadians over the next year to death because they won't be able to afford their medication, and they will die as a result. This is the kind of essential element, emergency element, I think the government has to pick up on."

Bill C-64, which set the path forward for a national pharmacare program, gives the health minister the authority to negotiate bilateral funding only for "specific prescription drugs and related products intended for contraception or the treatment of diabetes." The bill states that the government will undergo the work described in the bill "with the aim of continuing to work toward the implementation of national universal pharmacare."

At a press conference in Ottawa on Feb. 29, 2024, following the introduction of Bill C-64, then-health minister Mark Holland said that pharmacare as defined by the bill would be a "proof-of-concept opportunity" to try out the two classes of medicines on a universal model and that the government would have the "opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of that model."

After the pharmacare legislation was passed in October 2024, Trudeau's government signed bilateral agreements for funding with Manitoba, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island. Just before the election, Yukon signed not long after Carney took the helm as Liberal leader.

Saks, a former minister of mental health and addictions, and associate health minister, said her philosophy is that good social policy drives good economic policy.

"Carney has said many times: we're investing in Canadians," she said. "So spend less, invest more."

She added, "the foundational work is there," for pharmacare, childcare, and more. "Those things are in place and they're not being taken away."

Saks acknowledged Julian and the NDP's hard work on "getting those pieces rolling."

"It is the beginning, and certainly not the end," adding some Canadians may be worried these programs may be cut, but "they're firmly in place."

She said the provinces also need to "assume their role in a deeper way," citing the bilateral agreement with the provinces, which includes \$200-billion in funding set to be doled out over 10 years.

"And this is where we get to step up together because the foundation has been set," she said.

Interim NDP leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) criticized the Throne Speech's lack of mentioning health care, among other issues.

"How could you have a Canadian Throne Speech that fails to even use the word health care?" he said.

With Parliament's return, Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) said the NDP won't be granted official party status, as the Parliament of Canada Act states a party needs to have 12 seats in the House of Commons. The NDP won just seven seats in the April 28 election, compared to the 24 it held when Parliament was dissolved pre-election, meaning the likelihood of a push for progressive legislation, as seen during the Trudeau years, is not high.

Julian added the Throne Speech signalled other austerity measures and emphasized fiscal discipline, something that indicates a "concerning" tack to the right, he said.

"It was very similar to speeches from other governments," Julian said. Aside from references to supporting the CBC, "Stephen Harper would have been very comfy giving the speech," Julian said, calling a number of elements of the speech that referenced austerity measures concerning.

The Throne Speech referenced cutting revenue in the form of a middle-class income tax reduction, as well as lowering government spending, which Carney said has been growing at an unsustainable rate of eight per cent each year. He's pledged to keep that below a two per cent rate of growth.

The speech, which Julian says functions as the government's statement of intent for the new session of Parliament, signified a conservative shift—"and I don't think that is what Canadians voted for."

He noted all Canadians would agree that "the most important imperative" is pushing back against the agenda from south of the border. Carney invited the King to deliver the speech in order to assert Canada's sovereignty as a constitutional monarchy and part of the British Commonwealth.

Following the Throne Speech, United States President Donald Trump has renewed his threats of making Canada a 51st state.

Responding to the speech during debate in the House of Commons, Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer (Regina-Qu'Appelle, Sask.) said it "effectively admitted that it was their policies that caused the suffering for Canadians," by "reckless borrowing and massive deficits" causing inflation.

There's a total of six days scheduled for MPs to respond to the speech in the House of Commons, with the final vote coming on June 4. The government is only expected to sit for four weeks, adjourning for the summer on June 20.

mglass@hilltimes.com
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NEWS

‘New Democrats are going to do our job no matter what,’ says interim leader Davies as party stickhandles losing status in the House



Interim NDP leader Don Davies says the party is pushing for additional resources amidst return to Parliament without recognized House status and the fewest seats ever won in the party's history. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

After a devastating election that shrunk the NDP caucus, interim leader Don Davies says his caucus can still play an important role, predicting that in some cases, ‘whether the government survives or falls will depend on us.’

BY ELEANOR WAND

The New Democratic Party is facing a new reality on the Hill as it returns with fewer parliamentary privileges following the worst electoral defeat in the party's history, but interim leader Don Davies and NDP MP Leah Gazan say they will play an important role “no matter what,” and make their mark “whether [they're] on committees or not.”

Being a recognized party in the House of Commons requires a minimum of 12 seats, which grants MPs guaranteed seats on committees where bills are reviewed before passing through to the Senate; a right to ask more frequent questions in Question Period; and financial resources used to fund party research, which are allocated by the House Board of Internal Economy. The NDP only has seven seats.

Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) told *The Hill Times* that in spite of his party's losing two-thirds of its seats—and status—the seven remaining MPs are poised to play a key role in Parliament, and remain “an official party.”

“This is a minority Parliament,” Davies said. “The government has 169 votes. You need 172. And we have seven. So, it's very conceivable that on a particular issue, whether the government survives or falls, will depend on us.”

The recent federal election—which granted the Liberals their third consecutive minority government, but this time under

the new leadership of first-time MP and Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.)—shrank the NDP's caucus to the smallest number in the party's 64-year history. The party is a fraction of the 24 members at Parliament's dissolution after 13 incumbents lost their re-election bids, including former NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who came a distant third in Burnaby Central, B.C., behind new Liberal MP Wade Chang.

NDP MP Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.) noted there has been a “shift” since returning to the House with such a reduced caucus, but said that “regardless of whether [they're] on committees or not ... the New Democrats know how to get things done.”

“I have no problem working hard,” Gazan told *The Hill Times*. “I was a single mom. ... I was at times in my life working three jobs—something that no person should have to do. I have no aversion to working hard and getting things done for the people in my riding of Winnipeg Centre.”

Former NDP MP Matthew Dubé said the caucus is in for “a huge challenge” this session as the party will be missing “a lot of resources,” which will make it difficult to have influence on the key issues for them and their stakeholders.

“From a communications perspective ... getting limited time in Question Period, not being able to go to committees—I recognize that there's a lot of people in the public that aren't paying attention to that day-to-day—but ... it comes down to staunch supporters, stakeholders,” he said. “There's a whole set of groups for whom that stuff is very important.”

NDP to push for more resources despite status loss

The concept of recognized party status, which is unique to Canada's Westminster system, comes from a 1963 amendment to the Parliament of Canada Act. The amendment states that an MP “who is the leader of a party that has a recognized membership of 12 or more persons in the House” is entitled to “additional annual allowances.” It makes no mention of committee seats or Question

Period time—that comes down to practice and to the House Speaker's discretion.

The Speaker dictates the right to questions asked in Question Period, but much of that dictation is based on tradition and practice. In an email statement to *The Hill Times*, a representative from the Speaker's Office said that there is a “general principle” that “independent members are entitled to their approximate mathematical proportion of questions,” noting that the determination is ultimately up to the Speaker, and could change.

The current Speaker, Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.)—a Liberal MP who was elected to the role on May 27—has determined that the NDP will be allowed to ask seven questions per sitting week—which, evenly distributed, means only one question per Question Period, therefore sticking to the traditional practice.

Davies said he was “pleased” to be given a minimum of one question, saying it allows the New Democrats “to have a voice in Question Period every single day on the issue of the day.”

Though it is the Speaker's authority that determines the questions granted, there is no standing order that explicitly dictates that MPs who ask questions at a certain frequency must be from a party with recognized status.

Similarly, there are no standing orders which dictate that committee seats must be held by parties with status in the House. However, recognized parties inherently control the process of assigning membership, as only whips of such parties may submit membership candidates, so parties with official party status would need to agree to seat NDP MPs on committees.

Davies said New Democrats are requesting a grant of funds from the powerful House Board of Internal Economy in light of losing their recognized status to hire legislative, research, and communication staff, so the party can “meaningfully participate,” and “understand what's happening on a day-to-day basis in Parliament and respond appropriately.”

“We're not just one seat here,” Davies said. “We are seven independent offices, and the ability for us to co-ordinate, especially

when the results of our votes may cause a government to fall, makes it critical that we be able to follow the very fast-paced, ever-changing legislative agenda that's happening in the House of Commons.”

Davies added that the NDP “are going to do our job no matter what”—regardless of additional resources—but said that he has been having “fruitful” discussions with other parties from the beginning, and that there has been a “maturing in the parties' understanding” following six years of minority governments.

“This is the third consecutive minority [government],” Davies said. “There's an enormous amount of collaboration and information sharing and co-operation that happens all the time, and all four parties know that, and all four parties benefit from it at one point or another. ... When we have discussions with each other about making sure that we have some minimal baseline resources to participate meaningfully, that's understood.”

But Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, Que.) has made it clear that the Bloc does not want the NDP to sit on committees. In a press scrum on May 27, Blanchet said “it's our balance of power and we will protect it quite seriously.”

He added that while “there might be conversations about the resources that might be devoted to them ... we have to say, ‘okay, what ... do you want, and what's in it for the rest of us?’”

Dubé called Blanchet's assessment “a bit rich,” emphasizing, like Davies, that the Liberal government is only three seats short of a majority, which makes the seven NDP MPs “more than enough” to sway House votes, noting that the Liberals don't need the Bloc's full caucus to secure a majority.

Concept of House recognized party is ‘anti-democratic’: Elizabeth May

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, B.C.) has long operated in the House of Commons without her party being officially recognized, ever since she was first elected in 2011.

She called the “whole concept” of party status in the House “appalling and anti-democratic,” repeating calls for it to be repealed.

May also emphasized that there is no rule or law dictating that an Independent MP—or an MP from a party without status—cannot sit on committees or ask questions in Question Period. She urged MPs to drop the “bad habits” of restricting questions and committee membership, and to “follow our rules.”

“There is no justification for treating the NDP members or me as less than the equals of every other MP in the House,” May told *The Hill Times*. “We are all equal. ... Just the way ... every district within the country is equal to any other district. There's no justification whatsoever in saying we don't have the same rights to speak in Question Period, that we don't have the same rights to sit on committees.”

When asked about May's assessment, Gazan said, “we need to go beyond that,” pointing to the need for electoral reform, something for which May has also advocated.

“We need to move towards proportional representation,” Gazan said. “So that people can vote for who they want and not fall prey to the misinformation that's touted in strategic voting.”

Strategic voting was a major contributor to the NDP's downfall this election. A number of NDP strongholds bled key support to the Liberals, with many voters under the impression a Liberal vote was the ticket to preventing the Conservatives from forming government. In some cases, this led to Conservative MPs being elected in historically NDP ridings due to a split progressive vote.

But May said she will continue to fight against the concept of recognized party status.

“I've been trying non-stop since 2011, and I will not stop trying,” she said. “For Parliament to work, we need those NDP MPs sitting on committees because they're experienced, knowledgeable, strong parliamentarians.”

“They have a right to be full—as I do—to be a full member of any committee.”

ewand@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Trudeau era's 'activist' health policy moves likely in the rear-view mirror, say consultants

Major health policy shifts including cannabis legalization and national dental care were introduced by the previous Liberal government, but the path forward for this government is expected to be more restrained.

Continued from page 1

"I think it's a recognition that the activist health policy days of the [Justin] Trudeau era are likely in the past," said Peter Cleary, principal at Santis Health, in a phone interview with *The Hill Times* on May 28. "This is going to be a retrenchment of how the federal government has traditionally supported health care with provinces and territories."

"Health care remains in the frame—just from a cost-of-living angle," said Kevin den Heijer, a senior consultant at Enterprise Health, in an email to *The Hill Times* on May 28.

Since the Liberals under Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) won the April 28 election, Canadians have learned more about his government's priorities in the form of a single mandate letter that was provided to his cabinet and published online on May 21. The solo letter broke away from former prime minister Trudeau's tradition of supplying each of his cabinet ministers with a letter that was specific to their role and department.

Although some commentary has lauded the focused nature of the solo mandate letter and the move away from multiple lengthy to-do lists, there is also much that is unsaid about priorities that don't directly fit into the categories of "economy," "security" and "sovereignty."

Canadians' second look into the federal government's priorities occurred on May 27, when King Charles III read the Throne Speech from the Senate Chamber. The speech did include specific references to health policy, including that the government will protect existing pharmacare and dental care programs.

"The continued support for dental care and pharmacare is less about system reform and more about direct affordability for Canadians. It's a noticeable shift from previous years,



Liberal MP Marjorie Michel, centre, pictured with Prime Minister Mark Carney and Governor General Mary Simon at the cabinet swearing-in on May 13, is the minister now tasked with driving forward Carney's health agenda. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

where health care was more prominently featured as a policy domain in its own right," wrote den Heijer, who was a Liberal staffer to Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.) when she was health minister.

Some significant shifts in health policy—such as the move to legalize cannabis in 2018 and an attempt to reduce pharmaceutical drug prices through regulatory changes—occurred under the Justin Trudeau Liberals.

Trudeau's government also launched new national programs for pharmacare and dental care though those were specifically conditions of the supply-and-confidence agreement with the NDP that was in place between March 2022 and September 2024.

Carney has promised to maintain those programs.

The Canadian Dental Care Plan, which has been implemented in phases since 2022, is now fully available to all eligible Canadians.

On the other hand, the pharmacare plan is limited to specific diabetes medications and contraception. Only three provinces and one territory have signed up for the bilateral funding that's meant to ensure these products are covered by provincial and territorial public plans.

The previous health minister, Kamal Khera, told *Hill Times* Health on March 22 prior to the election call that a Liberal government under Carney's leadership would continue to negotiate bilateral agreements with provinces and territories that wanted to sign on. But Carney himself has not provided any signals that the program could expand beyond coverage for diabetes medications and contraception. Khera was not successful in her re-election bid.

First-time MP Marjorie Michel, who succeeded Trudeau in his Papineau, Que., riding on April 28, was named the health minister on May 13. Although new to the House of Commons, Michel is a well-known Liberal operative having served as a political staffer for nearly 10 years. This includes more than three years as Trudeau's deputy chief of staff. Before Michel was announced as the candidate for Papineau this past March, she was the Liberals' deputy campaign director. She has a master's degree in social work, and organizational psychology.

"Based on all the language we see, it's maintaining what the commitments have been to date, which is the two indications [for diabetes and contraception], and they would likely seek to find further deals with provinces that haven't signed yet," said Cleary about pharmacare. Cleary was once a Liberal staffer in then-health minister's Jane Philpott's office.

"How aggressively will they pursue those? That is something to be determined."

Grits promise shorter timelines for public coverage of new drugs

Although the Throne Speech and mandate letter were sparse on details, the Liberals' election platform dedicated close to four pages to health plans. This includes a promise to reduce the amount of time it takes to add medicines to public plans.

A new drug in Canada must go through multiple reviews before a government at the federal, provincial, or territorial level will consider paying for it.

The process starts with Health Canada, which reviews the pharmaceutical company's application to ensure a new medicine is safe.

Separate reviews are also conducted by two federally funded but independent groups. The Patented Medicine Prices Review Board looks to see that the price of a drug is not considered excessive by the board's standards. Then Canada's Drug Agency (previously known as the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health) conducts a health technology assessment to advise as to whether provincial and territorial public drug plans should provide coverage.

Drug pricing negotiations that precede the public coverage of a new medicine are conducted by the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, whose members represent federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Information published last month by Innovative Medicines Canada states that this process lasts two years, and that doesn't include the time it takes for Health Canada to approve new drugs. Private insurers add new medicines to their plans in less than one year following approval from the federal health department.

The regulatory function of approving medicines is a traditional role for Health Canada, Cleary noted.

He said the Liberal Party's promise to improve that process is a reflection of the mentality of "let's get back to the basic business."

But even getting back to basics could come with a cost, which will have to be confronted by a government that is intent on cutting operational spending. The Throne Speech states that the

government wants to bring that type of spending growth down to less than two per cent from previous levels of nine per cent.

"Hundreds—even thousands—of scientists and other evaluators work in Health Canada. Are they going to need some more investments to deal with all the new innovations that are coming forward to be evaluated as regulators?" said Bill Dempster, president of 3Sixty Public Affairs, in a phone interview with *The Hill Times* on May 27.

"If you've got a spending cap of two-per-cent growth—and if it's even less potentially for health because they want to spend more, say, in the Canadian Armed Forces or [the Department of National Defence]—those are going to be some tough conversations around the cabinet table."

"You're in a situation where there's not enough resources at the moment in order to keep up with the number of drug submissions coming in," said Cleary.

Fitting health into the national sovereignty puzzle

The Carney government has been clear that its focus is on building a stronger country that can operate more independently. This follows tensions with its largest trading partner, the United States, amid President Donald Trump's threats to the trading relationship and to Canadian sovereignty overall.

Cleary said he sees multiple actions that could be taken on health policy to contribute to the goal of protecting Canadian sovereignty, including the diversification of supply chains and improving labour mobility.

That includes taking into account whether Canadian firms are contributing to the global medical product and device market, and improving the ability of health care professionals to practice across provinces and territories, according to Cleary.

During the election campaign, the Liberals specifically promised to work on labour mobility—including for health care professionals.

With a mandate letter and Throne Speech shedding little light on health, the Liberals' election platform with its more expansive commitments to health policy will be the "touchstone" for stakeholders going forward, said Dempster.

The platform "talks about building critical health infrastructure, which contributes to the economy, and expands access to health care across the country. Health is mentioned almost 100 times in the platform, and it's a focus especially in federal jurisdictions like Veterans Affairs, the [Canadian] Armed Forces and Indigenous health," he said.

As for upcoming signals of the Liberal government's commitment to health policy, den Heijer said that the 2025 budget, which has been promised for a fall reading, and the first ministers meeting taking place on June 2 in Saskatoon "will be key litmus tests for how much depth and funding the government will attach to the broader health file."

tsanci@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Party Central



By Stuart Benson



It was a Hill housewarming fit for a King

With the Royals away, politicos, politicians, and journalists partied the night away on May 27 at Earnscliffe Strategies' and Politico's spring housewarming at The Metropolitan Brasserie.

After a whirlwind 24 hours in the nation's capital, journalists, politicians, and lobbyists packed the Métropolitain Brasserie—and most of the outdoor patio—for a special spring edition of *Politico* and Earnscliffe Strategies' annual "House-warming" to raise a glass to the new session of Parliament and wish *bon voyage* to the recently departed King and Queen of Canada.

After a week-long, two-day visit from King Charles III and Queen Camilla—and the increasing concern **Party Central** may have suffered mild heat stroke after hours of standing in the blistering sun awaiting their arrival at the Senate of Canada Building, plus another 90 minutes on the tarmac of the Macdonald-Cartier International Airport for their departure—the cool leather booths of the Mét on May 27 may as well have been Shangri-La.

Arriving just before 5:30 p.m., **Party Central** secured the cool-kids booth near the back of the bar to balm his sunburn with a pint of Dominion City's Sunsplit while editing photos of

the Royals that weren't just the back of their heads.

As guests began filing into the Mét after finishing their own workdays, **Party Central** was joined at the booth by **Hunter Cresswell**, deputy editor of *The Hill Times*' Lobby Monitor, and Fertilizer Canada's **Matthew Don Trapp**, the latter of whom almost kiboshed the whole night by introducing this reporter to the *Election Atlas*.

After resisting the siren call of a data-driven rabbit hole, **Party Central** finally unholstered the Canon Rebel T6 and began his appointed rounds of the venue while guests began to arrive in force for the first of several rounds at the bar between selfies and group photos with the life-size cutout of King Charles provided by the Met's managing partner **Sarah Chown**.

While **Party Central** generally lists all of the who's who in attendance, any attempt at an exhaustive individual list would fill the whole column. However, alongside a litany of PMO and ministerial staffers, there were lobbyists and public affairs professionals from nearly every shop in Ottawa, from a sizable contingent of the night's hosts at Earnscliffe, as well as strong showings from Summa, Bluesky, Crestview, KAN, Sussex, McMillan Vantage, Maple Leaf, Proof, Strategy Corp, Pendulum Group, and Searchlight, as well as reps from the Canadian Council of Innovators, IBM, Greenshield, Capital Power, the Renewables Association, Eurasia Group's **Gerald Butts**, the Canadian Women's Foundation's **Mitzie Hunter**, and World Press Freedom Canada's **Greg Weston** and **Janet**



Silver, and even former Toronto Argonaut **Nasser Jamal**, to name just a small selection.

There were also plenty of other thirsty, sunbaked journalists, including *Politico*'s **Nick Taylor Vaisey**,

CTV's **Colton Prail** and **Mike Le Coteur**, CBC's **David Cochrane** and **Kate McKenna**, CPAC's **Rémi Authier**, Global News' **Mackenzie Gray**, The Canadian Press' **Alessia Passifume**, *The Globe and Mail*'s **Robert Fife** and **Emily Haws**, *The National Post*'s **Chris Nardi**, *The Toronto Star*'s **Althia Raj**, **Raisa Patel**, **Tonda MacCharles**, and **Joy SpearChief-Morris**, *The Hill Times*' **Abbas Rana** and **Christina Leadlay**; *The Ottawa Citizen*'s **Paula Tran** and **Matteo Cimellaro**, independent journalist **Paul Wells**, and a handful of international journalists, including the BBC's **Nadine Yousif**, and *New York Magazine*'s **Simon van Zuylen-Wood**.

Continued on page 37

PARTY CENTRAL

Continued from [page 36](#)

Party Central also spotted a large bi-partisan cohort of parliamentarians and politicians scattered throughout the crowd, including Liberal Minister **Gary Anand**; Secretary of State **Randeep Sarai**; MPs **Corey Hogan**, **Rachel Bendayan**, **Chi Nguyen**, **Sima Acan**, **Lisa Hepfner**, **Eli**

Ehsassi, **Chris Bittle**, **Kody Blois**, **Charles Sousa**, **Jaime Battiste**, and **Sameer Zuberi**; former caucus member **George Chahal** and former national campaign director **Andrew Bevan**; Conservative MPs **Aaron Gunn**, **Scot Davidson**, and **Roman Baber**; NDP MP **Heather McPherson** and party spokesperson **Anne McGrath**; Senators **Colin Deacon**, **Hassan Yussuff**, and **Clement Gignac**; and

even recently elected P.E.I. Premier **Rob Lantz** made an appearance, spotted holding court on the patio outside.

After making several laps around the bar to gather photos, **Party Central** joined several other journoes to feast on the Mét's complimentary grilled cheese, shrimp, and french fries, while comparing battle scars and farmers' tans from the previous two days.

Just after 10 p.m., the bar was still in high spirits, which had continued to rise through the night commensurate with the growing bar tabs, but after a nearly 15-hour day, **Party Central** called it a night, after one last selfie with the King.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson

1. World Press Freedom Canada's Heather Bakken, left, Janet Silver, and Greg Weston raise a toast to the cardboard King Charles III inside The Métropolitain Brasserie on May 27 at a special royal edition of Earncliffe Strategies and Politico's annual House-(of Commons)-warming party. **2.** Earncliffe Strategies' Alexandra Zion, left, Patricia Lacroix, Melanie Richer, Stephanie Enns-Coulter. **3.** Savoir Air's Patrick Robert, left, CCPA's Pierre Verreault, and Earncliffe's Daniel Bernier. **4.** *The Globe and Mail's* Emily Haws, left, Liberal MP Chris Bittle, *The Toronto Star's* Raisa Patel, *Politico's* Mickey Djuric, and CTV's Colton Prall let off some steam with the cardboard King after nearly 24 hours of following the flesh-and-blood monarch around town. **5.** Sussex Strategy's Liam Daly, left, Proof Strategies' Matthew Dubé, and Liberal MP Corey Hogan. **6.** KAN Strategies' Greg MacEachern, left, CPAC's Rémi Authier, and 338Canada's Philippe J. Fournier. **7.** Former Liberal campaign director Andrew Bevan, left, and NDP spokesperson Anne McGrath. **8.** Build a Dream's Stacey Noronha, left, and Lynne Hamilton, CEO of Local Consultants. **9.** Crestview Strategy's Ashton Arsenault, left, with Capital Power's Josh Pentland and Matthew Davis. **10.** Rayna Sutherland, left, Rachel Sutton, Audrey Milette, Mohammad Hussain, and Will Greene. **11.** BBC News' Nadine Yousif, left, Toronto Star's Joy SpearChief-Morris, and Canadian Press' Alessia Passifiume. **12.** Mary Anne Carter, left, Anthony Carricato, Thoren Hudyma, Craig Robinson, Sophie Laghi-Ford, Victoria LaChance, Philip Cartwright, and Gary Keller.

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Meet the first 12 chiefs of staff confirmed for the Carney cabinet

The list includes some first-time chiefs of staff, along with plenty of familiar faces.

The names of the first 12 cabinet chiefs of staff under Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** Liberal government were released on May 23, and the list includes five rookie chiefs.

Of the 12, four are women—one of whom is Inuk—and two are Black men.

Altogether, Carney's cabinet includes 28 ministers and 10 secretaries of state.

Starting with the new, **Hilary Leftick** is back on the Hill, this time as chief of staff to Canadian Identity and Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault**.

Leftick recently led Carney's successful campaign to represent Nepean, Ont., in the House of Commons, and was in the room for his swearing in last week. She was last on the Hill in 2022 as director of public appointments in **Justin Trudeau's** office as then-prime minister (PMO), where she'd overall worked since early 2016, beginning as a youth affairs adviser to Trudeau (who at the time was also responsible for the youth file).

Until recently, Leftick was vice-president of sustainability and communications with Food Cycle Science, which is focused on food waste. Leftick is also a former director of volunteer mobilization for the federal Liberal Party.

Another first-time chief of staff is **Marie-Pascale Des Rosiers**, who was a deputy director for both Carney's leadership campaign and the Liberals' national campaign, and has been named chief of staff to Housing and Infrastructure Minister **Gregor Robertson**.

Des Rosiers has been working for cabinet ministers since the end of 2015, starting as a Quebec assistant to then-infrastructure minister **Amarjeet Sohi**. She went on to be press secretary to then-environment minister **Catherine McKenna**, a communications assistant in Trudeau's PMO, and director of communications to then-fisheries minister **Jonathan Wilkinson** before stepping

away from politics following the 2019 federal election. Des Rosiers spent a few years working in the private sector, including as a communications manager with PwC Canada and a director with consultancy firm Will & Way, before returning in the fall of 2023 as a PMO advance—her most recent role.

Neil MacIsaac has been hired to run new Fisheries Minister **Joanne Thompson's** office.

MacIsaac was chief of staff to **Kody Blois** during Blois' recent, brief turn as agriculture and rural economic development minister in Carney's first, short-lived cabinet, and before then was deputy chief of staff and director of policy to then-rural economic development minister

Gudie Hutchings.

A former Nova Scotia Liberal staffer and past Atlantic adviser in then-interim Liberal leader **Bob Rae's** office, MacIsaac isn't new to the fisheries file.

He previously worked for the minister for fisheries and oceans from the end of 2019 until the summer of 2023, starting as director of operations to then-minister **Bernadette Jordan** and ending as director of fisheries management and deputy

chief of staff to then-minister **Joyce Murray**.

Emergency Management and Community Resilience Minister **Eleanor Olszewski**, who's also responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, has hired **Morgan Breitreuz** to run her office.

Breitreuz previously worked for the federal Liberal Party, and started on the Hill in 2021 as an Alberta and Saskatchewan adviser to then-special representative for the Prairies **Jim Carr**. After that year's election, Breitreuz joined then-tourism and associate finance minister **Randy Boissonnault's** team as director of operations. Breitreuz was later deputy chief of staff and director of operations to Boissonnault as then-employment minister, and most recently chief of staff to then-sport and Prairies Economic Development minister **Terry Duguid**.

Jade Mallette has been tapped to run new Health Minister **Marjorie Michel's** shop.

A first-time chief of staff, Mallette has been with the health minister's office since February 2022, beginning as director of parliamentary affairs to then-minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**.

An ex-aide to then-Liberal MP **Andrew Leslie**, Mallette was hired to the Treasury Board president's office as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs and issues management to then-president **Duclos** after the 2019 election. By the 2021 writs, Mallette had worked her way up to senior adviser for parliamentary affairs and labour relations. She stuck with the office for a short time post-election as director of labour relations to then-president **Mona Fortier** before following Duclos to the health.

New Energy and Natural Resources Minister **Tim Hodgson** has named **Eamonn McGuinty** as chief of staff.

McGuinty, who is the son of Defence Minister **David McGuinty**, has been working off the Hill as a business adviser with BDC since 2023, but for about a year and a half between 2022 and 2023 the younger McGuinty was a senior policy adviser to Guilbeault as then-environment minister. Eamonn McGuinty's CV includes time spent working as a consultant for Deloitte, as a research adviser with Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab (he holds a master's degree in natural resource and environmental management from the school), as an international trade underwriter with Export Development Canada, and as an investment associate with InvestEco Capital, among other past jobs.

Turning to the familiar, **Ian Foucher** is staying on as chief of staff to now-Finance Minister **François-Philippe Champagne**. Foucher was previously chief of staff to Champagne as then-innovation minister, starting on an acting basis in 2022 and continuing in a permanent capacity as of March 2023.

A former Bank of Canada senior analyst (overlapping with Champagne at the Bank for about one year), Foucher worked for then-finance minister **Bill Morneau** during the Trudeau government's first almost five years in power, starting as an adviser for financial sector policy and international trade in December 2015, and ending in 2020 as a special adviser on the economy and director of appointments. In between, Foucher held the titles of deputy director of financial sector policy, and director of policy. After Morneau left cabinet, Foucher briefly

worked as a senior manager with Deloitte before returning to the Hill to work for Champagne.

Privy Council President and Intergovernmental Affairs, Canada-U.S. Trade, and One Canadian Economy Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** has likewise kept his chief of staff from the last Parliament, **Brandon Rowe**, who was first promoted to run LeBlanc's office as then-minister for intergovernmental affairs and democratic institutions in July 2024. LeBlanc has since been minister of finance and intergovernmental affairs, and briefly was also minister of international trade and intergovernmental affairs in addition to serving as Privy Council president.

Rowe has been working on the Hill since the 2015 election, starting as an assistant to then-Liberal MP **Arif Virani**. He went on to work as assistant to the parliamentary secretary, and later Atlantic regional adviser, in the immigration minister's office under then-ministers **John McCallum** and **Ahmed Hussen**, and was first hired as a policy adviser to LeBlanc as then-intergovernmental affairs and northern affairs and internal trade minister in 2018. Sticking with LeBlanc through his various portfolio iterations since, Rowe worked his way up to senior policy adviser, then director of policy, before adding deputy chief of staff to his title in 2023.

Unsurprisingly, **Rheal Lewis** is continuing as chief of staff to Government House Leader **Steven MacKinnon**. Given the office's specialization in House rules and procedures, its staff roster is typically much more static.

Lewis' time on the Hill dates back to the 36th Parliament, and after a roughly three-year run with Summa Strategies, he's been in various Hill offices since 2004, starting as an assistant to then-Liberal MP **Paul Zed**. Between 2008 and 2015, he worked in the Liberal official opposition leader's office through **Stéphane Dion**, **Michael Ignatieff**, **Rae**, and Trudeau's turns in

the role, largely as director of or senior adviser for parliamentary affairs. After the 2015 election, Lewis joined Trudeau's PMO as a legislative assistant but left just shy of a year in to become chief of staff to then-House leader **Bardish Chagger**. He's been leading the office ever since.

Jobs and Families Minister **Patty Hajdu**, who's also responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, has scooped up **Chris Evelyn** as her chief of staff.

Evelyn has been working for Liberal ministers since 2015—starting as a policy adviser to then-democratic institutions minister **Karina Gould**—and has been a cabinet chief of staff since 2020, having first been elevated to the role by then-women and gender equality and rural economic development minister **Maryam**

Monsef. Prior to his promotion, Evelyn had been director of operations to Monsef. He's since been chief of staff to then-women and gender equality and youth minister **Marci Ien**, and more recently to then-families, children, and social development minister **Jenna Suds**.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Evelyn was director of outreach for the Liberals' 2025 campaign. Prior to 2015, he worked for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, last as a policy adviser.

Another experienced chief, **Guy Gallant**, has been tapped to run new Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister **Heath MacDonald's** office.

Hailing from the East Coast, Gallant was most recently chief of staff to Liberal MP **Ginette Petitpas Taylor**, starting in 2021 during her time as then-official languages minister and continuing through her turns as minister for veterans affairs, and most recently Treasury Board president.

A former press secretary to then-P.E.I. premier **Robert Ghiz** and ex-communications director to then-New Brunswick premier **Brian Gallant** (no relation)—among other things—Gallant was hired as director of communications to then-agriculture minister **Lawrence MacAulay** in early 2016. He went on to briefly oversee communications for then-heritage minister **Pablo Rodriguez** before returning to MacAulay's agriculture office as chief of staff at the start of 2019. Gallant later ran MacAulay's office as then-veterans affairs minister before stepping away from the Hill for a little more than a year, which he spent as vice-president of communications for the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association. He returned after the 2021 election to run Petitpas Taylor's office.

Finally, another cabinet rookie, Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister **Rebecca Chartrand**, has hired **Kathy Kettler** as her chief of staff. Kettler became the first-ever Inuk chief of staff to a federal minister in 2022 when she was tapped to run then-northern affairs minister **Dan Vandal's** office. Vandal, who did not seek re-election this year, was dropped from cabinet this past December, and Kettler subsequently became a senior adviser for the North and Arctic to then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Gary Anandasangaree**.

A former policy analyst with the Assembly of First Nations and an ex-senior policy adviser with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Kettler began working for the Trudeau government in the fall of 2017, beginning as an adviser in then-Indigenous services minister **Jane Philpott**. She was later promoted to director of operations by then-Indigenous services minister **Marc Miller**, who she later followed to the Crown-Indigenous relations portfolio as deputy chief of staff.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Hilary Leftick is chief of staff to the Canadian identity and culture minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Ian Foucher is chief of staff to the finance minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



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.

An evening with Charlie Angus and Gwynne Dyer at the Porcupine Dante Club in Timmins, Ont., on June 5



The City of Timmins hosts a conversation between syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer and former NDP MP Charlie Angus, pictured, focused on today's ever-changing political world. Thursday, June 5, at 7 p.m. ET at the Porcupine Dante Club, 162 Cedar St. S., Timmins, Ont. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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.

'AI and the Federal Government'—The University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts its summer speaker series 2025. Mark Schaan, deputy secretary to cabinet for Artificial Intelligence at the Privy Council Office, will speak on "AI and the Federal Government." Wednesday, June 11, at 12 p.m. ET at Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv., University of Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

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.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11—FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Seminar: 'Faith, Politics, and Uncertainty'—The Laurentian Leadership Centre hosts a three-day seminar titled "Dis/Course: Faith, Politics, and Uncertainty," applying an inquiry-based learning model to the question of faithful Christian living in a time of

ans: How Real-World Insights Shape Monetary Policy," hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, June 5, at 12 p.m. ET at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

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. 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 Hoesktra to Deliver Remarks—United States Ambassador to Canada Peter Hoesktra 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

the British High Commission host an invitation only a panel discussion on the 2025 NATO Summit, "Finding Consensus at a High-Stake Summit." Wednesday, June 4, at 9 a.m. ET in Ottawa. Details: cgai.ca.

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 Schaan, and assistant secretary of the cabinet Gaveen 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.

Lecture by Bank of Canada Deputy Governor—Bank of Canada deputy governor Sharon Kozicki will deliver the Laidler Lecture, "Talking to Canadi-

political uncertainty. Wednesday, June 11, to Friday, June 13, at the Laurentian Leadership Centre, 252 Metcalfe St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12—FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Conference: 'Space Security and Emerging Technologies'—The Centre for International Governance Innovation hosts a conference on "Space Security and Emerging Technologies: From Principles to Practice" featuring Aaron Shull, managing director and general counsel at CIGI, and Jessica West, a CIGI senior fellow and senior researcher at Project Ploughshares. Thursday, June 12, to Friday, June 13,

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

Governor General's Performing Arts Awards—The 2025 Governor General's Performing Arts Awards will take place with a gala evening featuring red-carpet arrivals of the laureates and special guests, performances and tributes. Saturday, June 14, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: nac-cna.ca.

SUNDAY, JUNE 15—TUESDAY, JUNE 17

G7 Summit—This year, Canada is president of the G7, and the annual leaders' meeting will take place in Kananaskis, Alta., from Sunday, June 15, to Tuesday, June 17. Details: g7.canada.ca.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

Panel: 'Asserting Canada's Arctic Sovereignty'—Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeeagok, head of Greenland's representation to the United States and Canada Jacob Isbosethsen, Trent University professor Whitney Lackenbauer, and Arctic360 president and CEO Dr. Jessica M. Shadian will deliver the Tom Kierans Lecture 2025 hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, June 17, at the C.D. Howe Institute, 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

Parliamentary Reception hosted by NMMA Canada—It's boating season in Canada. Join us on the Rideau Canal to experience our boats and meet our Canadian manufacturers on Wednesday, June 18 from 5 p.m.-8 p.m. beside the NAC patio and the canal. RSVP by June 13 to rsvp@blueskystrategygroup.com

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