



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS POLICY BRIEFING ► PAGE 15-20

CRITICS DECRY LIBERALS  
PIGGYBACKING PRIVACY LAW  
CHANGES ON UNRELATED  
AFFORDABILITY BILL

► PAGE 3

Netanyahu may have  
bitten off more than  
he can chew

► PAGE 10



# THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2232

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025 \$5.00

NEWS

**'I'm a tariff person':  
Trump  
doubles down  
on levies as  
new deal  
pledged within  
30 days**

BY NEIL MOSS

**B**ANFF, ALTA.—With a target to conclude talks on a trade agreement within 30 days, United States President Donald Trump reiterated his preference for tariffs as the G7 summit officially kicked off on June 16.

Canada—and the rest of the world—has been subject to a slew of American tariff threats, pauses, evocations, and exemptions that have created an air of capriciousness over the economy.

"I'm a tariff person. I've always been a tariff [person]," Trump told reporters prior to a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) on June 16.

"It's simple. It's easy. It's precise. And it just goes very quickly," he said.

The meeting was the first bilateral discussion Carney had

Continued on **page 26**

NEWS

**Electoral success a  
temporary substitute for  
Israel-Gaza consensus as  
caucus quiet on sanctions,  
say Liberal sources**

BY STUART BENSON

**P**rim Minister Mark Carney's approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict may not be making everyone happy, but his recent election victory and the United States' one-sided position will keep internal divisions and caucus complaints under control so long as his polling remains high, say Liberal sources. And as the Carney government searches for its "north star" on the issue, foreign policy expert Thomas Juneau says the government seems more focused on managing international relations rather than "domestic performance."

Liberal sources who spoke with *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis to speak freely said that while tensions

Continued on **page 23**



Prime Minister Mark Carney is far less interested in 'keeping both sides happy,' and given his strong polling numbers and the hopes of potential caucus shuffles, it's no longer 'open season' to second guess his foreign policy decisions, say Liberal sources. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

**BOIE pushes  
discussion  
of NDP  
resources  
to future  
meeting as  
Bloc mulls  
'significant'  
rule changes**

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

**T**he House Board of Internal Economy recently held its first meeting of the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament, but passed on making a decision on the NDP's request for additional resources, pushing the matter to the future as the Bloc Québécois signals it's looking into possible permanent amendments to House rules to address such circumstances.

With only seven MPs elected on April 28, the NDP did not meet the threshold for recognized party status this Parliament, which requires at least 12 sitting

Continued on **page 4**

NEWS

**Potential Canada-EU defence deal short on details as  
questions loom over feasibility of displacing U.S. links**

BY NEIL MOSS

**W**ith Canada heading towards joining Europe's

defence rearmament plan, much remains up in the air about how fully it would reorient Canada's defence co-operation away

from its current reliance on the United States.

The May 27 Throne Speech noted that Ottawa would "boost

Canada's defence industry by joining ReArm Europe, to invest in transatlantic security with Canada's European partners."

ReArm Europe is a European Commission project to have the bloc spend \$1.25-trillion on defence over the next five years.

A May white paper for the plan noted that co-operation between Europe and Canada has "intensified and should be further enhanced ... to strengthen transatlantic security."

Continued on **page 24**



# Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

## Pierre Poilievre airs second 'get to know the team' interview



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, chats with new Alberta MP Billy Morin in a 48-minute video on X on June 14. Screenshot courtesy of X

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** released the second long-form interview profiling a member of his team last weekend, "part of [his] series to introduce you to the growing and even more impressive Conservative caucus, people who will form part of a future Conservative government," Poilievre said by way of introduction to the June 14 video titled *Conservative Conversations: Pierre and Chief Billy Morin MP*.

Seated on either side of a large wooden desk in a dark, den-like space decorated with a few books, plants, and Conservative Party decals, the leader and the rookie MP for Edmonton Northwest, Alta., chatted for 48 minutes about Morin's background and experiences. "Thanks to our @CPC\_HQ Leader for giving me a little more space & time to discuss how, why & who helped me

get here on behalf of EdmNW," Morin wrote on X that same day.

Poilievre released a similar "get to know the people, understand the team" video on May 31 featuring another new Tory MP, Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.'s **Ellis Ross**, which was shorter (half an hour) and had a more casual vibe, with the men seated in club chairs against an exposed brick wall and no podcast-style microphones.

## 'Emotional,' 'compelling' film of refugee family gets Ottawa premiere June 19

The Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers is hosting a free movie night at the ByTowne Cinema this Thursday. The Canadian documentary film, *Shining Light: A Vietnamese Canadian Legacy*, will make its Ottawa premiere followed by a panel discussion with the director and many key players in this personal tale of resettlement.

"This is a compelling story, a good-news story about what Canada can do in international affairs," former Canadian ambassador **Gary Smith** told *Heard on the Hill* last week by phone.

Smith, who's a co-producer of the film, said the true story of a Vietnamese mother who gives birth on a Danish ship while escaping war-torn Saigon, who's then air-lifted by helicopter to Hong Kong where she and her infant are processed by a young Canadian immigration officer, is "a really good story, a personal story, with an international dimension and a Canadian

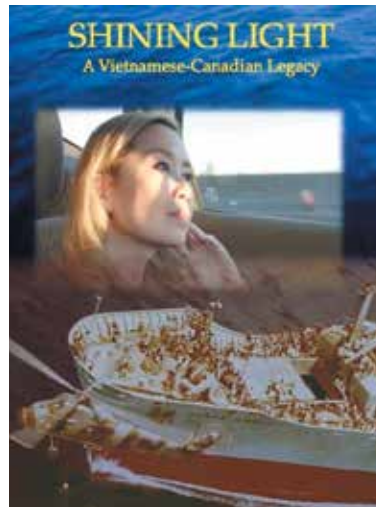
dimension." With support from Heritage Canada, *Shining Light* celebrates this year's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war, showcasing the positive outcomes that taking in refugees has had on this country.

While the documentary will make good viewing for those interested in refugee policy and resettlement concerns, it's also a great snapshot of the work foreign service officers do in the field, Smith told *HOH*.

Smith will be moderating the post-screening panel discussion featuring the mother **Mui Nguyen Bui**, her daughter **Anh Vu-Lieberman**, the now-former Canadian immigration officer **Margaret Tebbutt**, and representatives from the Danish Embassy, the UNHCR, and the British High Commission on behalf of the other key players in this "emotional" story. Director/co-producer **Robbie Hart** with Adobe Pictures in Montreal will be there, too.

*Shining Light* screens on Thursday, June 19, at 7 p.m. ET

at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St. Tickets are available through Eventbrite.



The June 19 screening of *Shining Light: A Vietnamese Canadian Legacy* will be followed by a panel with the director and many of the documentary's key players. Image courtesy of Gary Smith

## Pablo Rodriguez clinches Quebec Liberal leadership

Former federal Liberal cabinet minister **Pablo Rodriguez** won the leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party on June 14. The former MP defeated a total of four rivals over two rounds of voting: **Karl Blackburn**, **Marc Bélanger**, and **Mario Roy** were eliminated on the first ballot, while **Charles Milliard** lost to Rodriguez's 52.3 per cent of the vote on the second round.



Ex-federal cabinet minister Pablo Rodriguez was elected Quebec Liberal Leader in Laval, Que., on June 14. Photograph courtesy of X

The party celebrated its new leader by setting the next goalpost, the provincial election: "Together, on Oct. 5, 2026, we will give Quebec the government it deserves: a Quebec Liberal government!" Two-term CAQ Premier **François Legault** offered his congratulations to Rodriguez on X that same day, saying he looks "forward to collaborating on the major issues affecting Quebecers."

## Two parliamentarians receive Belgian honours

CSG Senator **Clément Gignac** and Environment Minister **Julie Dabrusin** each received the Chevalier de L'Ordre de la Couronne medal from Belgian Ambassador **Patrick van Gheel** last week. "It's been a pleasure serving as co-chair of the Canada-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group," Dabrusin posted on X along with a photo of the trio. "Best wishes to the new co-chairs as they continue to strengthen ties between our nations."



CSG Senator Clément Gignac, left, Belgian Ambassador Patrick van Gheel, and Environment Minister Julie Dabrusin. Photograph courtesy of X

## AFN moves July AGA to the fall

The ongoing wildfires have prompted the Assembly of First Nations to postpone its annual general assembly from July to September, the group announced on X on June 12. Still scheduled to take place in Winnipeg, the three-day meeting will now happen Sept. 3-5. "The decision to postpone was made in response to the ongoing wildfire situation, which continues to affect First Nations across the country,"

reads a statement on the AFN's website.

Meanwhile, AFN leadership hosted a national virtual forum on the Liberal government's proposed Bill C-5, the Building Canada Act, on June 16. "AFN National Chief **Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak** has expressed alarm about that timeline and has warned that First Nations have not been properly consulted," The Canadian Press reported on June 13.

## Nordic embassies celebrate Midsummer



German Ambassador Matthias Lüttenberg, left, Embassy of Norway's chargé d'affaires Trygve Bendiksbj, Pendulum Group's Heather Bakken, Swedish Ambassador Signe Burgstaller, *The Hill Times* publisher Leslie Dickson, and Latvian Ambassador Kaspars Ozolins. Photograph courtesy of Tessa Barton

Swedish Ambassador **Signe Burgstaller** hosted the annual Nordic Embassies' Midsummer party at her Rockcliffe Park residence on June 13. Featuring flower crowns, traditional cuisine, live music, and dancing around

the maypole, the event was a celebration of Nordic culture, and was co-presented by the ambassadors of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



# Piggybacking changes to privacy laws ‘has nothing to do with affordability,’ say critics of Bill C-4

Just because the prime minister is in a hurry doesn't excuse rushing controversial Elections Act changes on the back of needed affordability measures, says Green Leader Elizabeth May.

BY STUART BENSON

As the Liberals move to expedite omnibus bills through Parliament before the summer recess, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May says the urgency to provide affordability and tax relief to Canadians is no excuse to disrespect opposition parties and the Senate's ability to study the wide-ranging and—in some cases—incongruous contents.

On June 5, the government introduced legislation to tackle Canadians' affordability troubles and lower taxes: Bill C-4, the Making Life More Affordable for Canadians Act.

During his introduction of the legislation, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) highlighted the income tax reduction measures and the elimination of the federal fuel charge as well as the GST for new homes under \$1-million.

However, he neglected any mention of the bill's fourth section, which proposes amendments to the Canada Elections Act immunizing federal political parties from compliance “with an Act of a province or territory that regulates activities in relation to personal information” unless those parties create a personal information policy that dictates otherwise.

The legislation would only require federal parties to adhere to the policies they create themselves. The parties must state the types of personal information they collect, and have a designated privacy officer to oversee compliance with the policy, which they have been required to do since 2018, following the enactment of Bill C-76, the Elections Modernization Act.



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne was in no hurry to explain how Bill C-4's proposed changes to the Elections Act and how political parties handle Canadians' private information will help make their lives more affordable. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The proposed amendments are the Liberals' third attempt to modify the Elections Act with similar changes. They follow similar language in the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament's Bill C-65, which specifically proposed amendments to the Canada Elections Act but died on the Order Paper at second reading, and in the 39<sup>th</sup> Division of Bill C-47, the 2023 Budget Implementation Act.

However, critics were quick to accuse the government of attempting to use the legislation to circumvent a long-standing legal battle in British Columbia, where last year, the province's Supreme Court ruled the federal Liberals, Conservatives, and New Democratic Party must comply with provincial privacy laws and are subject to investigation by their privacy commissioners.

Green Leader May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.), one of the few MPs to question the government on the privacy provisions during second-reading debate on June



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May says the proposed changes to the Elections Act in Bill C-4 seem aimed at getting ‘political parties off the hook’ for their responsibilities to provincial privacy laws. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

11, told *The Hill Times* that the Liberals' preference for large omnibus bills—which she said are appropriate in some cases when all of the proposed sections of a piece of legislation serve a “central purpose”—is completely inappropriate in C-4 since “privacy has nothing to do with affordability.”

“These changes are designed to get political parties off the hook, and take Canada backwards on privacy protection,” May said, noting that, if passed, the changes would come into force retroactively, dating back to May 31, 2000, which would precede

some sections of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act passed in 2000.

While C-4 is “the most glaring example” of the inclusion of an unrelated section in the omnibus bills the Liberals are currently attempting to pass before the House rises for the summer, May said there seems to be one “through line” connecting them all: “Carney's in a hurry.”

Champagne was also in a hurry after the June 10 cabinet meeting, and declined to stop to answer questions about the

appropriateness of Part 4, given the legislation's stated focus on affordability and the appeals process in the B.C. courts. That process was scheduled to begin June 24 but will likely be rescheduled until the fall.

In an emailed statement to *The Hill Times*, the office of Government House Leader Steve MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) wrote that the proposed amendments to the Elections Act would ensure a uniform federal standard for the management of personal information, and that the collection and use of personal information is “crucial” to the voter outreach and engagement that are “vital and essential to a healthy, modern democracy.”

While MacKinnon's office did not directly answer questions regarding how that relates to affordability or the appropriateness of the changes given the court ruling, the statement noted that the changes were the same as those proposed in the 2024 elections reform bill, and that “the plan to protect the privacy of Canadians continues to be just as important now as when C-65 was introduced a year ago.”

May said despite the changes being previously included in an earlier bill, the Liberals' current approach demonstrates a “disrespect to the parliamentary function of reviewing legislation,” noting the acceleration motion regarding Bill C-5 tabled in the House on June 12 would only give the House Transport, Infrastructure and Communities committee until 11:59 p.m. on June 18 to complete its study of the bill. The committee's first meeting on June 16 was reserved to appoint the committee's chair and vice-chairs.

Bill C-4 is currently awaiting its study at the House Finance Committee, which elected its chair, Liberal MP Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.), and vice-chairs, Conservative MP Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary East, Alta.) and Bloc Québécois MP Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, Que.), at its first meeting on June 16. As of the publishing deadline, no meeting had been scheduled to begin the bill's study.

Furthermore, while May said she has no doubt the Finance Committee would be more than equipped to study C-4's contents related to the excise or income tax changes, it is not the appropriate venue to study privacy laws and how the parties should or should not be required to abide by them.

The bill won't get a deep dive in the Senate as the Upper Chamber agreed on June 12 to a protracted pre-study of C-4.

CSG Senator Colin Deacon (Nova Scotia) told *The Hill Times* that since the Senate, sitting as Committee of the Whole, had already agreed to hear from Champagne as the only witness on June 16, he expects the legislation will pass through the Red Chamber on the merits of the tax relief measures alone.

Deacon said that while the majority of C-4 had come as no surprise—building on the Liberals' campaign promises on



## NEWS

# BOIE pushes discussion of NDP resources to future meeting as Bloc mulls ‘significant’ rule changes

Plus, the board approved a full carryforward for the House’s budget this year, with an extra \$4.9-million to be sought through the next supplementary estimates.

Continued from page 1

MPs, and as a result has not received funds to support leadership offices—including that of a party leader, House leader, whip, and caucus chair—or a research bureau. In 2024-25, when it had recognized status, the NDP received roughly \$2-million to support those offices, and almost \$1.4-million for its caucus research office.

Since the election, interim NDP Leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.) has been campaigning for his caucus to receive some degree of extra resources from the House, including through a letter to the Commons’ executive Board of Internal Economy (BOIE), and discussions with the Liberal, Conservative, and Bloc Québécois House leaders.

The matter was among the first topics of discussion at the BOIE’s first meeting of the new Parliament on June 12, with House Speaker Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.) flagging Davies’ letter, and calling for comments.

Responding to Conservative House Leader Andrew Scheer’s (Regina-Qu’Appelle, Sask.) subsequent request for a summary of the NDP’s ask, House Clerk Eric Janse said he followed up with Davies “further to his letter,” and was informed Davies is not looking to appear before the BOIE or make a specific submission, but that Davies noted he’s been speaking with each of the House leaders regarding his proposal, the specifics of which Janse said he is “not privy” to.

Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) said the Liberals are “willing to discuss an interim solution to the current situation,” but that he isn’t sure “talks have

## Board of Internal Economy

**CHAIR**



House Speaker  
Francis Scarpaleggia

**Liberals**



Government House Leader  
Steven MacKinnon



Chief Whip  
Mark Gerretsen



Deputy House Leader  
Arielle Kayabaga

**Conservatives**



Conservative House Leader  
Andrew Scheer



Conservative Whip  
Chris Warkentin

**Bloc Québécois**



Bloc Whip  
Yves Perron

advanced enough” for the BOIE to make a decision. Similarly, Scheer, who for now is concurrently serving as opposition leader in the House during Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre’s absence, said his party is “open to considering” the request, but suggested that with no specific proposal on the table, the board wasn’t “in a position to adopt something” that day.

Bloc Whip Yves Perron (Berthier-Maskinongé, Que.), however, gave notice that his caucus has started looking at possible “permanent amendments” to House rules “that would make it so this sort of situation does not reoccur,” but said he isn’t yet ready to present its proposals.

“We’ll have to come back to you; we might be proposing significant changes,” said Perron in French.

The Bloc had its own experience losing parliamentary resources as a result of failing to qualify for recognized status in the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliaments, during which it had similarly campaigned for additional resources. While its first push was turned down, its second attempt during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament led to the BOIE agreeing to allow Bloc MPs to pool their individual office budgets to instead fund caucus support activities for the duration of that Parliament.

## House spending tops \$740-million in 2024-25

The House administration presented its audited annual financial report for 2024-25 to the BOIE on June 12, indicating the Lower Chamber spent a total of \$740.4-million out of the roughly \$757.9-million in funds it had available for the fiscal year.

As noted by chief financial officer Paul St George, that \$757.9-million total includes both the \$665.1-million in funding approved for the House through the 2024-25 main and supplementary estimates, as well as “additional funds freed up through legislative means” and services received without charge.

Looking to the report itself, it was almost entirely the latter category—totalling \$114.3-million in services received without charge—that raised the House’s total available purse to \$757.9-million in 2024-25.

With \$740.4-million of that total spent as of March 31, the House is left with a surplus of \$17.5-million, which St George said could largely be attributed to “lower than expected spending under approved MP budgets” and reduced spending during prorogation.

House rules allow the Chamber to carry forward up to five per cent of the funding approved through the previous year’s main estimates, which works out to \$22.4-million this year. With the House’s surplus falling short, and with the administration having absorbed roughly \$9.4-million in “unfunded costs” resulting from board-approved initiatives—like upgrading constituency office technology, and transforming parliamentary proceedings to the new hybrid reality—according to St George, it requested a \$4.9-million top up to “carry forward” the maximum allowable amount.

St George noted the BOIE previously approved a full carryforward in 2019-20 when the House had a surplus of \$11.3-million, falling short of the allowed maximum of \$17.5-million.

MPs ultimately agreed to the ask, with the extra \$4.9-million to be sought through the next set of supplementary estimates for 2025-26.

Of the \$22.4-million carryforward, \$7.3-million will go towards MPs and House officers, and \$15.1-million to the administration.

## MPs, Senators to talk Confederation reno plans

The BOIE also got a presentation from its Long-term Vision and Plan (LTVP) MP working group—the sub-body through which MPs scrutinize Hill renovation plans—on June 12, which included a request to endorse the proposed guiding principles, framework, and House of Commons long-term requirements to be included in a forthcoming LTVP update.

The current LTVP plan dates to 2006—though it was published in 2007—and outlines the plans, framework, and general approach to Parliamentary Precinct renovations leading up to Centre Block’s overhaul, including the rehabilitation of the West Block, and the Wellington Building.

Aside from being generally outdated—reflecting some since-scraped plans like the proposed West Terrace Pavilion—LTVP work has advanced beyond the main goals of the initial plan, with Centre Block renovations now well underway and Block 2’s overhaul getting started.

The updated plan will set out the broad strokes and approach “over the next 50-year planning horizon,” explained Conservative MP Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, Alta.), the new chair of the MP working group.

After discussion about the level of parking to be maintained on Parliament Hill proper, and Conservative questions over the document’s reference to discussions over the future of Wellington Street and the inclusion of wording that the “design of open spaces should seek to avoid colonial references” in an attached background, BOIE members ultimately gave their OK to the updated plan.

Near on the LTVP horizon is the renovation of the Confederation Building, home to MP offices, which is expected to go under the hammer by the mid-2030s, as well as the full renovation of the East Block building, and the construction of both a new material handling facility west of the West Block and an underground tunnel network that will connect buildings on the Hill and Block 2 on the south side of Wellington Street, among other things.

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) said the next step is to get government approval of the plan, which it hopes to secure this fall, after which the updated LTVP will be posted online.

Continued on page 27

The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade and Stuart Benson



## COMMENT

# Carney's CAF spending spree



A bigger paycheck may cause some existing soldiers to stick around, but simply wearing a uniform does not provide relief for the burnt-out personnel who are trades qualified, and in high demand for operations, writes Scott Taylor. *DND photograph by Canadian Armed Forces Imagery Technician*

Unfortunately, the one resource which the military is critically lacking is something that cannot be easily bought: trained personnel.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence

OTTAWA—On June 9, in front of a backdrop of assembled reservists at the Fort York armoury in Toronto, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced that Canada would boost defence spending immediately.

Rather than wait until 2035, Carney now plans to spend the NATO alliance target of two per cent of gross domestic product on defence and security this current fiscal year. That means a whopping \$62.7-billion annually. To do that, Carney is providing the Department of National Defence with \$9.3-billion extra to spend before April 1, 2026. The rest of the increase comes from counting the money being spent on defence and security at the other federal departments.

Given that the Canadian Armed Forces is woefully short of everything, one would think that a short-term wild buying spree would be welcome news.

Unfortunately, the one resource which the CAF is critically lacking is something that cannot be easily bought, and that is trained personnel.

Defence Minister David McGuinty has announced a 20-per-cent across-the-board pay hike for service members with additional bonuses for training and exercises. That will help to retain some personnel who are considering release, and may attract more civilians into recruiting centres.

However, as the CAF's own numbers reveal, it is not a shortage of recruits that is leading to the personnel shortfall—it is the inability to provide these recruits with trades training once they're in uniform. Statistically, the highest proportion of those seeking release from the CAF are those who graduated from basic military training at the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que., and then sat idle for months, unable to get course loaded on trades training.

A bigger paycheck may cause some of them to grumble, and ultimately stick around. However, having them simply wearing a uniform does not provide relief for the burnt-out personnel who are trades qualified, and therefore in high demand for operations.

A recent internal Readiness Report showed that nearly half of all weapons platforms across all three branches of the CAF are unserviceable at any point in time. This is due to a combination of the advanced age of those platforms, a lack of spare parts in the system, and, most importantly, a shortage of trained specialists to keep them in working order.

Hefty re-signing bonuses to recently released skilled technicians might help in that regard, but I have yet to hear that idea being floated by the Liberal government.

Carney also announced that the new spending will include provisions for better accommodations on bases all across Canada. This, too, will be a boost to the morale of those currently serving.

No doubt the flurry of recent media stories—particularly in Halifax regarding homeless serving sailors couch surfing due to a lack of suitable housing—would have deterred more than a few would-be recruits in the past. However, given the housing crisis Canada faces nationwide, finding developers and construction companies to get shovels in the ground before next April will be a challenge.

When it comes to big-ticket items like fleets of fighter jets or warships, there is

Continued on page 12

# Conservatives could use some outside perspective

A third-party review could help the Conservatives present themselves as a responsible body, not a cult of personality.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak

OTTAWA—When *The Hill Times'* intrepid journalist Abbas Rana reports something, it is best to pay attention. He is good at his job, and always on to something interesting.

In the June 16 edition of this newspaper, Rana wrote about how Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is reaching out

to unsuccessful candidates to get their feedback. On the surface, that is a very wise thing for the seatless leader to do—particularly now that it has been announced he will face a leadership review vote in January.

While Poilievre undoubtedly still retains more support rather than less, in his quest to continue to hold his leadership position, the more personal connections he can build with those who went into battle with him before, the better. While Poilievre and his team have repeatedly stressed the data points about their historic second-place finish, it's hard to imagine Poilievre is going to have an easy, country-road ride to his review vote.

One major irritant for Conservatives is the fact that since their first post-election caucus meeting in May, not much has been said about the need for the party to have a prompt and thorough third-party review of the election. This has been done on many previous occasions when the Conservatives have failed to win.

Such reviews are standard fare in all serious organizations; they're normal, and part of good governance practices. While the reviews will surely produce aspects of critique, they are commissioned for that very reason. Any organization or individual who wants to grow and learn tends to

embrace these approaches—even if they can be uncomfortable reading.

Poilievre may indeed be getting some straightforward, direct, and instructive feedback from the people with whom he is speaking, but as Rana's reporting suggests, there is some cynicism about the outreach. Many view it as more of an exercise about Poilievre working to win a review vote than taking learnings onboard. To be fair to him, it can be both, but he and his leadership team would be better served by just having a transparent third-party review.

It is hard not to feel like the Conservative Party has lost its bearings a bit. Prime Minister Mark Carney seems less like the political neophyte they cast him to be, and more of a skilled operative who in his early days is comfortably governing like a Progressive Conservative.

On many issues, the Conservative Party has rendered itself mute, or, when they have popped up, offered dated critiques that have missed the mark. They just seem to be waiting for Carney's fortune to flag. Maybe that will bear fruit, but it isn't a

great recipe to win—particularly given that was the plan with former prime minister Justin Trudeau.

Nobody's calling for the entire reinvention of the Conservative Party, but a comprehensive review on an election campaign seems like a no-brainer that could produce valuable information. It need not be personal and vindictive, or a witch hunt.

An outside review could help the Conservatives present themselves as a responsible body, not a cult of personality as has been the criticism by some about Poilievre's style of leadership. It could demonstrate to

the broad public that Conservatives are serious about being serious. Seriousness about being serious is important.

Accountability also matters. In opposition, the Conservatives have rightly worked to hold the Liberals' feet to the fire on how and why they do things, and about how they spend taxpayers' money and why they do so.

Why can't the Conservatives now show some accountability of their own? Rip the Band-Aid off, and go for it.

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

*The Hill Times*



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre may be getting some instructive feedback from the people with whom he is speaking, but there is reportedly some cynicism about the outreach, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



## COMMENT

# Loophole Liberals making an ignominious power grab

Bill C-5 is environmental racism, which this current government has no problem with committing since it can steamroll any study or assessment that proves as much.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



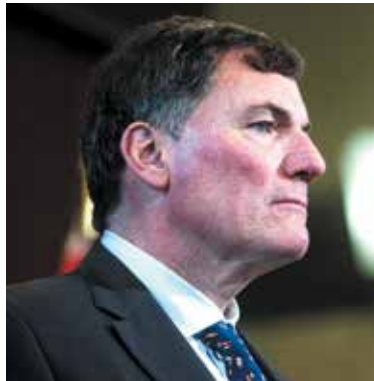
OTTAWA—Canada, we got played. We thought we elected Gavin Newsom, but we really elected Stephen Harper.

On June 6, the Carney government introduced yet another controversial piece of legislation after the god-awful Bill C-2, the Strong Borders Act. Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, is just as bad. The bill contains two parts:

An Act to Promote Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada, which aims to remove some inter-provincial barriers to trade; and the Building Canada Act, which attempts to “enhance Canada’s prosperity, national security, economic security, national defence and national autonomy by ensuring that projects that are in the national interest.” It is the governor-in-council who will render the opinion of whether a project is in the national interest. The Liberal government wants approvals done quickly, and shovels in the ground in two years for most major projects.

This is deregulation in a time of economic uncertainty. I’m sure the markets and shareholders of these projects are jumping for joy as their man stomps on environmental regulations and Indigenous rights.

Legislatively, the bill calls for consultation with the authority of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, which includes the duty to consult. Duty to consult recognizes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to protect Indigenous and treaty rights. Furthermore, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which Canada endorsed, is one that Carney intends to respect, CBC News confirmed.



Intergovernmental Affairs and One Canadian Economy Minister Dominic LeBlanc tabled Bill C-5 on June 6. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

However, in Article 32, subsection 2, UNDRIP demands that states “obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.” Bill C-5 references respecting UNDRIP, but only spells out a need to “consult,” not “free, prior, and informed consent,” which is a mechanism intended for Indigenous nations to have the power to shape decisions that affect their rights and livelihoods. The

Supreme Court still hasn’t fully and clearly defined Indigenous rights, and section 35 does not require free, prior, and informed consent. Basically, the government can consult Indigenous groups, but they don’t have veto power, which UNDRIP moves closer to correcting. Please note that Section 35 is not a Charter right.

Loopholes gonna loop, especially when cabinet—as laid out in Section 6 of the Building Canada Act—can proclaim every “determination and finding that has to be made and every opinion that has to be formed in order for an authorization to be granted in respect of a national interest project is deemed to be made or formed.” The government can determine that any study or assessment is a waste of time and ram through the project, regardless, “in favour of permitting the project to be carried out in whole or in part.” This condition is frighteningly anti-science, and allows the Liberals to choose projects with more nefarious incentives to be approved without scrutiny.

What an ignominious power grab, which is legislatively parallel to the power of American executive orders, especially from a man who used to be the UN special envoy on climate action and finance. Prime Minister Mark

Carney, who once called climate change “an existential threat,” has seemingly become indifferent. Climate change continues to be a critical issue; the negative externalities in terms of environmental destruction have been studied and published year after year. This is particularly true for the last few years, which have seen a series of treacherous wildfires resulting in a haze that can regularly be seen in Ottawa. The impact falls disproportionately on Indigenous Peoples. They are 30 per cent more likely to be affected by wildfires. As *The Narwhal* reports, “the percentage of people at risk in on-reserve First Nations communities is nearly three times higher, with 32.1 per cent of this population facing looming dangers as the climate crisis exacerbates natural disasters.” One could conclude that Bill C-5 represents a threat to Indigenous livelihood. This is environmental racism, which this current government has no problem with committing since it can steamroll any study or assessment that proves as much.

National safety and sovereignty will be the excuse for a lot of Carney’s upcoming state overreach excesses, and, unfortunately, we don’t have the Conservatives to oppose this bill as their function is to scrutinize government legislation. They’re becoming like the Democrats—no grit and no steel. We must fend for ourselves, Canada, since we would’ve gotten screwed either way. What does that say about our political system?

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

## The notwithstanding clause threatens our democracy

Nine Supreme Court judges will have to decide if the notwithstanding clause completely extinguishes the fundamental and legal rights of Canadians.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—Are Quebec’s anglophones and allophones Canada’s canaries in the constitutional coal mine? That thought struck me last week while chairing a remarkable webinar on Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights

and freedoms, otherwise known as the notwithstanding clause. The clause, you will remember, cancels out fundamental, equality, or legal rights detailed in sections 2 and 7 to 15 of the Charter.

In recent years, the Quebec government of Premier François Legault has used the clause extensively, most notably in the so-called “Secularism Law,” Bill 21, and the changes to the Charter of the French Language, Bill 96. This Quebec law bans people from working as teachers, lawyers, police officers, if they wear religious symbols or clothing.

In January, the Supreme Court of Canada agreed to hear an appeal of Bill 21, which has made its way through Quebec Superior Court and Quebec’s Court of Appeal. The focal point of the case will be the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clause. In both Quebec hearings, the judges said the notwithstanding clause prevented them from examining Bill 21.

As a result, the clause has been much in the news in Quebec,

and of great concern to non-francophones. The group I lead, the Task Force on Linguistic Policy, has applied to be an intervenor at the Supreme Court hearing. To promote dialogue, we hosted a two-hour webinar last week on the notwithstanding clause.

It began with a historical perspective from former journalist Graham Fraser. He took us back to the 1980s, when he covered the constitutional battles featuring then-prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the premiers, notably Parti Québécois leader René Lévesque. He revealed the initial deal on the Constitution was welcomed with cheers at Lévesque’s office in Quebec City, until they realized Quebec was shut out of the deal by the other provinces and Ottawa, in what was subsequently called “the Night of the Long Knives” in the province.

International law expert and McGill University professor Pearl Eliadis pointed out Canada signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which means the United Nations

Human Rights Committee could decide on the use of the clause. “The international framework for human rights is very clear... [you can’t] derogate from equality and non-discrimination rights—and those are precisely the ones that are being violated by laws like Bill 96 and Bill 21,” she said.

The discussion then moved to a panel, which included the chairman of the English Montreal School Board, Joe Ortona, who is one of the parties challenging Bill 21 on the grounds teachers should be hired for their abilities, not for what they wear.

Prominent Montreal lawyer Eric Maldoff has been involved in language rights issues since the 1970s. He was quite blunt: thanks to the notwithstanding clause, “we have a rule-of-law problem. Your rights don’t exist.” He suggested a courageous Supreme Court should declare the notwithstanding clause inappropriate, and if not, judges should clearly identify what rights have been taken away.

The Task Force’s lawyer, Michael Bergman, will be pleading against Bill 96. He outlined how rights existed in British and Canadian law before they were “codified” in the Charter. “The Charter did not give us rights; it simply provided guarantees of rights, so the Charter is not necessarily the last word on rights.”

Lawyer Marion Sandilands clerked at the Supreme Court, and has been involved in several high-profile cases. In the Bill 21 case, she said the Court has many options, including reviewing the use of section 33, and striking down Bill 21 on the basis of two sections outside the purview of the clause, sections 23 (minority language rights) and 28 (gender equality).

The Bill 21 case has already attracted almost 30 intervenors; the nine Supreme Court judges will have to decide if the notwithstanding clause completely extinguishes the fundamental and legal rights of Canadians.

If that is the case, as Brian Mulroney once said, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms “is not worth the price of the paper it’s written on.” The rights of Canadians to peaceful assembly and elections, protection from illegal search and seizure, a fair trial, and so many aspects of our democracy could be wiped out by any government with the use of the notwithstanding clause.

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

*The Hill Times*



# Get the **Insider Details** on Canada's New Government

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE HILL TIMES**







Editor: Kate Malloy  
Managing Editor: Charelle Evelyn  
Digital Editor: Samantha Wright Allen  
Executive Editor: Peter Mazereeuw  
Deputy Editors: Laura Ryckewaert, Tessie Sanci  
Deputy Digital Editor: Marlo Glass  
Assistant Deputy Editor: Abbas Rana  
Publishers: Anne Marie Creskey, Jim Creskey, Leslie Dickson, Ross Dickson  
General Manager, CFO: Andrew Morrow

- EDITORIAL**  
**NEWS REPORTERS**  
Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Riddhi Kachhela, Irem Koca, Neil Moss, and Eleanor Wand  
**ENGAGEMENT EDITOR**  
Christina Leadlay  
**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Sam Garcia, Andrew Meade, and Cynthia Münster  
**EDITORIAL CARTOONIST**  
Michael de Adder  
**COLUMNISTS**  
Andrew Caddell, John Chenier, Sheila Copps, David Crane, Jim Creskey, Gwynne Dyer, Matt Gurney, Michael Harris, Erica Ifill, Joe Jordan, Rose LeMay, Alex Marland, Arthur Milnes, Tim Powers, Susan Riley, Ken Rubin, Josie Sabatino, Bhagwant Sandhu, Evan Sotiropoulos, Scott Taylor, Lori Turnbull, Nelson Wiseman, and Les Whittington
- ADVERTISING**  
**VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND MULTIMEDIA SALES**  
Steve MacDonald  
**DIRECTORS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**  
Ulle Baum, Craig Caldbick, Erveina Gosalci, and Martin Reaume
- DIGITAL AND DESIGN**  
**CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER**  
David Little  
**SENIOR WEB DEVELOPER**  
Nick Vakulenko  
**DIGITAL AND PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
Joey Sabourin  
**SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Neena Singhal  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Naomi Wildeboer
- ADMINISTRATION**  
**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**  
Tracey Wale
- SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
**MARKETING DIRECTOR**  
Chris Rivoire  
**LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER**  
Melanie Grant  
**OFFICE AND CIRCULATION MANAGER**  
Irma Guarneros  
**SALES CONSULTANT**  
Puran Guram
- DELIVERY INQUIRIES**  
circulation@hilltimes.com  
613-688-8821

Published every Monday and Wednesday by Hill Times Publishing Inc.  
246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4  
(613) 232-5952  
Fax (613) 232-9055  
Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926  
www.hilltimes.com

Please send letters to the editor to the above street address or e-mail to news@hilltimes.com. Deadline is Wednesday at noon, Ottawa time, for the Monday edition and Friday at noon for the Wednesday edition. Please include your full name, address and daytime phone number. The Hill Times reserves the right to edit letters. Letters do not reflect the views of The Hill Times. Thank you.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926  
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: CIRCULATION DEPT.  
246 Queen Street Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E4



# Editorial

## Editorial

### ‘Elbows up’ shouldn’t mean Parliaments hands are tied

There are many people who are quite pleased with the speed at which Prime Minister Mark Carney’s version of Liberal government is moving. As someone who is familiar with both the federal bureaucracy and the private sector, Carney isn’t naive to the culture differences between the two spheres. Instead, he’s deliberately pushing to remove the multiple layers of mediation, consideration, and duplication that often slow government work in the bid to set up a new process to approve “national interest” projects. There’s something to be said for accelerating the speed of government. It’s notoriously slow, often to the detriment of the most vulnerable people who are left waiting for years—if not decades—for progress on key initiatives. Ironically, it’s also many of those same vulnerable or marginalized communities who will bear the brunt of expediting government processes. And it’s one thing to speed up the pace of bureaucracy, but running roughshod over the role of Parliament to get there is a bad start. The majority of parliamentarians have agreed to let the Liberals move legislation at a break-neck pace in these past couple of weeks before the summer recess. Co-operation and collaboration are always welcome in Parliament, which so quickly devolves into an ego-driven bottleneck. But that spirit of working together should be used for enhancing, not ignoring, legislation. Carney has repeatedly referenced the “mandate” he received from the Canadian people in the recent election to do what needs to be done to counter

the threats coming from south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. But that mandate resulted in a minority Parliament, which means there should be adequate checks and balances. “Elbows up” doesn’t have to also mean “hands thrown up in resignation.” That’s not to say there isn’t push-back. Liberal MP Nate Erskine-Smith recently called out his own party during debate on Bill C-5, the One Canadian Economy Act. “Against the economic threat posed by [U.S.] President [Donald] Trump, Canadian politicians have rightly renewed calls to build up our country. I am one of them. It is a nation-building moment. A strong and resilient domestic economy is a priority,” he said on June 16. “However, under the guise of responding to the threat posed by Trump, we are sacrificing other important values. We are not thinking about unintended consequences, and we are actively undermining our parliamentary democracy.” Erskine-Smith contrasted the federal legislation with a similar Ontario government Bill 5, saying that, as the province did, “the federal government is proposing to shut down democratic debate, curtail committee scrutiny, and jam the bill through the legislature. It would all actually make [former prime minister Stephen] Harper blush. Liberals would rightly scream if a federal Conservative government attempted the same.” If the Liberals won’t listen to opposition voices or those of Indigenous leaders who’ve repeatedly raised the alarm about these moves, it’s probably too much to expect they’ll answer a call from inside the house. But they should.

The Hill Times



## Letters to the Editor

### Making the G7 Summit in Canada significant



Canada has the chance to influence how the world’s advanced economies push forward innovative financing towards education in low-income countries, writes Adeolu Adekola. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada’s 2025 presidency of the G7 countries comes at a pivotal moment in history as the summit marks its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Global issues such as tuberculosis, malaria, and access to quality education require immediate attention and action because the world’s journey toward greater equity and health is shaky and inconsistent. Canada’s G7 presidency has already set the right tone with the leaders’ summit based on its three-point agenda, namely: protecting our communities and the world, building energy security and accelerating the digital transition, and securing the partnerships of the future. Now is the time to set aside individual country agendas, tariff wars, and the like to take decisive action on serious global issues, especially around conflict. Access to education remains the most potent tool in the long term to end conflict and insecurity globally because, according to UNESCO, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. According to UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report released in October 2024, 251 million children and youth are still out of school, showing signs that Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 is shaky nearly 10 years after it was adopted by world leaders. With just five years to the target year, Canada has the chance to influence how the world’s advanced economies push forward innovative financing towards education in low-income countries. Seven years ago, Canada made history by leading the G7 to deliver game-changing investment in education for women and girls in crisis and conflict settings through the Charlevoix Declaration. As Canada once again hosts the G7, we have a powerful opportunity to build on the 2018 legacy that marked a turning point in global leadership on education by leveraging more than \$3.8-billion. It helped millions of girls and young women access the education they need to thrive, even in the most challenging contexts and crises. With the severance of collaboration by the United States in the international community, now is the time to rally around, mend fences, and ensure a vacuum is not created. The G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., was the first major opportunity for the leaders to converge at the same time since major elections and transitions happened in the last 12 months in five of the seven countries namely: the United Kingdom, Japan, the U.S., Canada, and Germany. It, therefore, provided an avenue to make a strong statement about global cohesion and international development, irrespective of differences and in-country agendas. With more children out of school due to conflict than at any point since the Second World War, Canada must lead again with a bold new commitment. Education is about more than the curriculum—it fosters peace, security, and gender equality.

Adeolu Adekola  
Saskatoon, Sask.



## COMMENT

# Carney's move-fast-and-break-things agenda requires a fiscal reality check

Change cannot come at the expense of transparency and accountability, and the new government would do well to remember that before it finds itself becoming the headline.

Josie Sabatino

Beyond the Headlines



OTTAWA—Prime Minister Mark Carney sold Canadians on a “move fast and break things” mentality during the federal election, and it appears in the early weeks of governing that he is making good on the promise to shake up how Ottawa does business. Instead of using

the shortened parliamentary window as an excuse to slow roll big-ticket legislative items, Carney and his government have moved quickly to make good on delivering a change mandate focused on kickstarting the economy after nearly a decade of Justin Trudeau-era progressive social policies.

From legislation aimed at dismantling federal barriers to interprovincial trade, to measures designed to accelerate the approval of nation-building natural resource projects, the government is showing no shortage of ambition.

Last week, the prime minister also committed to expediting Canada's timeline for meeting its two-per-cent defence target ahead of a crucial NATO summit later this month—an event that could significantly shift the goalposts on future spending. This pledge was accompanied by a promise to deliver a refreshed defence policy update, which will serve as the roadmap for future defence and procurement investments.

As for Canadians seeking pocketbook relief amid the sea of broad, big-picture economic

legislation, the government also introduced a bill to implement its signature middle-class tax policy that was promised on the campaign trail as part of the prime minister's affordability pitch.

The goal is clear: reshape the Canadian economy, restore the country's reputation as a premier destination for business investment, and deliver relief to cash-strapped Canadians who have borne the brunt of the inflation and housing crises that have driven prices up in recent years.

With momentum building in the early weeks of the new government, and optimism about the direction of the country reaching a three-year high, the only missing piece now is the details on how these big-ticket spending items fit within Canada's fiscal framework.

Rather than tabling a spring federal budget that would outline near-term spending initiatives, along with debt and fiscal projections, the Carney government opted to bypass the typical spring timeframe and focus on legislative priorities that can be promoted in discussions

with world leaders, and on the summer barbecue circuit with constituents.

Few would dispute that the policies being fast-tracked through Parliament are urgently needed to ensure Canada remains competitive, and has a voice during security and defence discussions with allied countries. But that urgency shouldn't come at the expense of transparency and fiscal oversight, especially as major spending decisions are made without a clear accounting of the country's financial position. It's an early signal that the new government may be willing to sidestep key accountability mechanisms that are essential to responsible governance.

For the Conservative Party, this presents an opportunity to craft a clear message and hold the government accountable, especially at a time when there is broad agreement on key policy goals, such as approving natural resource projects and enhancing competitiveness by dismantling interprovincial trade barriers. With more time before the next federal election and less pressure to

present themselves as a government-in-waiting, the Conservatives can now fully embrace their role as watchdog, scrutinizing how the Liberals fund and deliver on their electoral commitments.

Major policy change is notoriously difficult to achieve in Canada for reasons that are well understood and deeply entrenched. Add to that the constraints of a minority Parliament and the pressing need to engage the United States on a renewed cross-border economic and security pact, and it's clear that delivering on Carney's big promises will require nothing short of a herculean effort.

Too often, governments hit a wall before they can meaningfully implement the bold visions they were elected to pursue. That's why leaders who are willing to move mountains in the name of real change deserve recognition. But change cannot come at the expense of transparency and accountability, and the new government would do well to remember that before it finds itself becoming the headline.

Josie Sabatino is a senior consultant at Summa Strategies. Prior to joining Summa, Sabatino spent nearly a decade as a Conservative political staffer, providing communications and issues management advice to Members of Parliament and the leader of the official opposition.

The Hill Times

# Carney's moment to step up on reforming the Access to Information Act

It's Prime Minister Mark Carney's time to show whether he will make serious changes to improve government transparency, or if he'll be the latest to continue the *status quo*.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



OTTAWA—Prime Minister Mark Carney wants to fast-track building things “nationally,” and making Canada an energy superpower with the help of artificial intelligence.

But building an open government where disclosures are a day-

by-day occurrence is hardly on Carney's agenda for revitalizing this country's economic future. There appears to be no desire to reveal just how much further away from continuing dependency on the United States the Carney government intends to be.

So, when a small push comes Carney's way to review Canada's secrecy practices and ask Treasury Board to continue as the designated ministry and standard-bearer of managing and reviewing the Access to Information Act's future—but to also somewhat step aside—how will Carney react?

The idea of an independent, “genuine” review not led internally by Treasury Board is being advocated in a June 9 letter released by some academics and NGOs led by Toby Mendel of the Centre for Law and Democracy and Matt Malone of the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic.

Their plea for a more independent review of the Access to Information Act is directed at both Carney and Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali, and hinges on the agreement of the two politicians.

The letter notes that the act is due for a review beginning this month. It suggests “broad” draft terms of reference for the review, and tells the prime minister that “while you may want to tweak the specific language of the draft Terms of Reference, we believe that the core principles it reflects should be preserved in the final version.”

They want broad consultations and a comprehensive assessment, but propose no deadlines and no requirement on the review panel to draft and propose a progressive model for right-to-information legislation—even though right now the release of information is getting slower, with even more redactions being applied.

Their lobbying effort—given what they see as Treasury Board's “conflict of interest” and past stifling of access-to-information reform—is well-intentioned. It would see, as reported by the Canadian Press, “the coming federal review of the Access to Information Act ... overseen by an independent panel, not the government, to avoid the pitfalls of the last such exercise.”

But it comes at a time when commentators are expressing concerns over Carney's secret

conversations with U.S. President Donald Trump, and when Carney's government bills are introducing increasingly intrusive powers for the government and less accountability.

Carney's agenda is not one of people power as he grants more invasive powers to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, curbs immigration and asylum claims, downplays environment and climate protection, and pays lip service to Indigenous consultations.

Having spent a lifetime trying to open records and codes of silence, I am none too optimistic that a call for an independent review still involving Treasury Board and dependent on Carney will take off and end up fast-tracking greater information disclosures.

My first submission 50 years ago was directed at what was then the federal Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments. It called for the replacement of the Official Secrets Act and secrecy classifications with a freedom of information act.

My brief was based on my previous decade of action research work going after consumer, tenant, and neighbourhood information at both the federal and provincial levels, and coming up against data denials.

The year of my submission—1975—was when I joined ACCESS, a group formed to lobby for freedom-of-information legislation.

A research project that I undertook with ACCESS to convince the government to adopt FOI legisla-

tion was a survey of Members of Parliament, Senators, and ministers on their views on gaining access to federal records. My research report included examples where parliamentarians had difficulty getting data on matters like employment insurance changes and nuclear reactor sales abroad.

Though then-prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau wrote the ACCESS group to laud the study's findings and promised his officials would examine the material on such a “difficult” topic “with care,” not much changed. Instead, much data under the 1982 Access to Information Act's many exemptions and exclusions was cut off—a situation that largely remains today.

Now, after more than a dozen reviews of the Access to Information Act and amendments that deepened secrecy, having yet another review that goes nowhere—especially one primarily dependent on and controlled by government—would be most discouraging.

With a statutory review of the Access to Information Act scheduled by law to begin this June, it is better to find out right away how serious Carney is about having an “objective” review that reboots—or doesn't—Canada's secrecy practices.

Pushing for greater information access is easier said than done, especially with the strong arm of the prime minister's team becoming more apparent.

Ken Rubin writes about transparency matters and is reachable via [kenrubin.ca](mailto:kenrubin.ca).

The Hill Times



## COMMENT

## That's what dictators do



Only five months into his new term, U.S. President Donald Trump has indeed moved quite a ways down the road to his own version of one-man rule, writes Les Whittington. *White House photograph by Daniel Torok*

## Netanyahu's wars

The Israeli PM has broken his lifelong rule, and attacked Iran without America's full support because he cannot bear to miss the chance to attack his enemies when they are weaker than ever before.

Gwynne Dyer



Global Affairs

**L**ONDON, U.K.—Israel's war with Iran is definitely the war that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has wanted all along, but he may have bitten off more than he can chew.

In the past three months, Israel has bombed Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and now Iran. It has an open-ended war involving tens of thousands of Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip, and a lower-intensity counter-insurgency war in the occupied West Bank that also soaks up lots of Israeli troops. And now it is also at war with Iran, a country of 90 million people.

This is less of a burden on the 7.5 million Jewish Israelis than it would seem since geography decrees that the wars with Iran and Yemen do not require ground troops. (Neither country has a land border with Israel.) However, the air wars will hurt Israel's population and damage its infrastructure, and its reservist soldiers are already exhausted by 20 months of war.

So is the civilian population of Israel, which is emotionally drained by the long-running drama of the hostages. It is also deeply divided by Netanyahu's decision to use this moment of maximum Israeli power to try to wipe out every potential challenge to the country's status as the Middle East's dwarf superpower.

Netanyahu has declared that Iran is on the brink of getting nuclear weapons half a dozen times in the past 20 years, always in the hope that he could get the United States military to do the heavy lifting in a war to "disarm" it. And each time, after the U.S. president of the day declined to do so, the Iranian "threat" magically receded—only to be revived for the next president.

Netanyahu made some headway with Trump in his first term, convincing the latter that he should pull out of the treaty putting strict controls on Tehran's

This plunge into totalitarian-style histrionics is just a minor manifestation of the upheaval in public norms radiating across the U.S. from Trump's White House.

Les Whittington



Need to Know

**O**TTAWA—Anyone who has watched Donald Trump's daily talk-show version of United States governance in the Oval Office can't help but have noticed the performances of the senior officials arrayed around the president.

As if they are doing a take-off on North Korea, the president will pick one of his cabinet ministers to describe the state of a new or high-profile government initiative. And the designated minister invariably stands up and goes into a long song and dance about how said program reflects the brilliance, foresight, and perseverance of their onlooking beloved leader. This plunge into totalitarian-style histrionics is, of course, just a minor manifestation of the upheaval in public norms

radiating across the U.S. from Trump's White House.

Unfortunately, the theme of this past weekend's national protests—"No Kings"—says it all. Americans now find themselves starting from way behind in a belated rear-guard action aimed at slowing the country's slide toward what many fear is something along the lines of a military dictatorship.

Only five months into his new term, the president has indeed moved quite a ways down the road to his own version of one-man rule. While Russia's criminal invasion of Ukraine grinds on, and millions of people worry about a world war erupting out of the Middle East after Israel's attack on Iran, the U.S. leader was focused on a flag-waving mega-event in Washington, D.C., to glorify his own birthday. The 150-vehicle, 6,000-soldier parade—which more than anything else was reminiscent of evocations of armed might in parades in Moscow and Pyongyang—took place in the context of Trump's militarization of U.S. domestic affairs.

Last week, as crowds of protesters in Los Angeles reacted angrily to the brutal Trump-ordered deportation roundups of undocumented immigrants, the president took a step not seen in 50 years by federalizing 5,000 National Guard troops and sending them into the city against the wishes of California Governor Gavin Newsom.

U.S. cities could regularly find the army on their streets now. The president appears to be relishing the opportunity to crack down on

dissent, a move in keeping with his oft-stated view that America's worst enemies can be found within, meaning Democrats and the left in general. Among other things, it's a guaranteed winner with his law-and-order-minded base.

At a speech to the military at Fort Bragg, N.C., Trump scoffed at his critics. "They say, oh, that's not nice," the president said of those who accuse him of over-reacting to the L.A. demonstrations for his own political purposes. "Well, if we didn't do it, there wouldn't be a Los Angeles."

As with most matters of principle, Trump apparently has no time for the idea of an independent, non-political military service—a crucial concept at the heart of American democracy. As president in 2020, Trump was intent on calling in active-duty troops in response to the violent protests in U.S. cities over the murder of George Floyd. He was reportedly only dissuaded by his defence aides and Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has also famously expressed his desire to have the kind of generals Adolf Hitler had, according to John Kelly, the retired general who served as Trump's chief of staff (although Trump denied saying it).

On June 14, as Trump was enthralled with his long-awaited army parade on his birthday, Americans staged what has to be the largest protest yet against the Republican leader's agenda, with demonstrations in about 2,000 towns and cities across the country.

The "No Kings" campaign is the child of the 50501 Move-

ment, a grassroots organization dedicated to protecting democracy and opposing what it calls Trump's authoritarian approach to government. The name 50501 represents the idea of 50 states, 50 protests, and one movement. "They've defied our courts, deported Americans, disappeared people off the streets, attacked our civil rights, and slashed our services," the organization says on its website in a reference to the current administration.

Millions of Americans were said to have taken part in the No Kings protest, which followed on other demonstrations in recent months. And the size of the June 14 turnout led some to venture that this outcry—particularly the furor over the ugly, systematic hunt-down and deportation of migrants who lack papers—might indicate some kind of turning point in Americans' attitude toward the president.

But, having neutralized the other arms of the U.S. government, and with the Democrats lost in the wilderness, Trump for now appears largely beyond control. And the president's view of his own omnificence—as seen in the military extravaganza on his birthday—would seem to know no bounds. It's worth remembering that Trump was clearly unfazed when, as the president was trying to set up a grand military parade during his first term, one of his generals said it should be ruled out because "that's what dictators do."

*Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.*

*The Hill Times*

Continued on page 13



## OPINION



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy speak to reporters on May 17 in Rome. Screenshot courtesy of CPAC

# Canada's hinge moment: a time to lead for Ukraine and the world

We're the only country that can replace Russian exports, the only country with the political will to seize Russian assets, and the only country hosting the G7 this month.

Michael Cholod  
& Geoffrey Goodell

Opinion



Canada has always stood up when the world's democratic values were under siege. Whether in the First and Second World Wars, during the Cold War, or in countless peacekeeping missions, our country has answered the call to support freedom and international order. Today, we face another such moment—a hinge moment—where the decisions we make will reverberate far beyond our borders. The war in Ukraine, the global struggle against authoritarianism, and an urgent

need to reorient Canada's role in the world all converge in this critical period.

Ukraine is at the heart of this turning point. As the European Union approaches a pivotal vote on renewing sanctions against Russia, there is a real risk that hesitation and division could provide the Kremlin with a massive financial windfall. If sanctions lapse, Russia stands to gain 212 billion euros—money that will fuel more violence and prolong suffering in Ukraine. If that happens, and if major allies retreat from their commitments, the burden of supporting Ukraine—militarily, financially, and morally—may fall to those nations still willing to lead. Canada must be one of them.

At the same time, Canada faces the strategic imperative of diversifying its global trade relationships. Europe and Asia need reliable, lawful, and sustainable sources of essential goods—including food, fertilizer, energy, and critical minerals. Russia's invasion has made many countries wary of dependence on authoritarian suppliers. This presents Canada with an extraordinary opportunity to meet that need. By becoming a trusted supplier and partner, we can displace Russian influence in global markets and help our allies make bold policy decisions that isolate Moscow.

The foundation of this strategy must be a rapid expansion

of Canada's trade-enabling infrastructure. Pipelines, ports, and rail lines must be built or upgraded to connect Canadian producers with global buyers. The federal government has committed to moving with urgency on this front, and rightly so. This is not just about boosting exports—it's about enabling others to act. If European and Asian nations know that Canada can fill the gap left by Russian commodities, they will be more likely to extend sanctions and reduce their exposure to authoritarian regimes.

With Canada having assumed the G7 presidency this year, our leadership will be tested on the global stage. World leaders gathered in Alberta just days ago to chart the course of the world's most powerful democracies over the next year. Canada must set the tone—not just through rhetoric, but through action. One of the clearest actions we can take is to identify and freeze all Russian assets held in Canadian financial institutions. These are assets already sanctioned, clearly linked to the Russian state or its proxies. Freezing them sends a signal of integrity and resolve. Moreover, by assuming the liability for the 23 billion euros in Russian Euroclear funds, Canada can embolden allies to take similar steps, even if their own domestic politics make direct seizure more difficult.

Canada has the resources, governance, and global reputa-

tion to lead this transition. We can replace Russian oil, gas, grain, potash, and rare earth minerals with Canadian exports backed by democratic values and environmental standards. We can become the supplier of choice for countries seeking reliability and rule-of-law protections in a fractured world. But to achieve this, we must act quickly and decisively.

This is not merely a matter of opportunity; it is a moral obligation. The stakes in Ukraine are existential. Every delay, every hesitation, costs lives. Canada has pledged to support Ukraine through military assistance, financial aid, and humanitarian support. But our credibility depends on backing that pledge with bold steps. Freezing assets, building infrastructure, and mobilizing our trade potential are tangible expressions of that commitment.

Meanwhile, Canadians are demonstrating their own solidarity: buying domestic products, standing with Ukraine, and demanding that our government do more to confront authoritarian aggression. These civic actions are more than symbolic. They reflect the spirit of unity and resolve that has always defined our national character in moments of global crisis.

As the prime minister has said, we are at a hinge moment—a rare juncture when the world's direction hangs in the balance, and when countries like Canada must

rise to the challenge. In doing so, we not only protect our interests and allies, but we also shape a future defined by values we hold dear: peace, freedom, justice, and accountability.

Now is the time to lead. Now is the time to build. And now is the time for Canada to seize its role as a global force for good. Canada is the only country that can replace Russian exports, the only country with the political will to seize Russian assets, and the only country hosting the G7 this month. If we act with urgency and clarity, we can tip the balance toward a more stable and democratic world, and ensure that Ukraine lives to fight another day.

Michael Cholod is executive director of The Peace Coalition, an international, non-profit association of NGOs, academic institutions and independent experts in housing, land, and property restitution. Cholod is currently co-ordinating with local and international experts and organizations on a variety of initiatives aimed at using the recovery of Ukraine to pilot a self-funding and sustainable roadmap to recovery for victims of the global crime of aggression.

Geoffrey Goodell is a lecturer in financial computing at University College London whose work focuses on socio-technical systems in financial services. He is a member of the Bank of England CBDC Technology Forum, and an associate of the Systemic Risk Centre at the London School of Economics. He serves on the steering committee of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Central Bank Digital Currency, and the product advisory committee of the Digital Token Identifier Foundation.

The Hill Times



# OPINION

# Will Canada miss the boat on human rights?

Canada must treat the seizure of the *Madleen* as a blatant violation of international maritime norms that deserves real diplomatic consequences.

Nimao Ali

Opinion



Foreign Minister Anita Anand. Canada must join the growing global call for a permanent ceasefire and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, writes Nimao Ali. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Fifteen years ago, Israel intercepted the *Mavi Marmara* and Gaza Flotilla, civilian activist ships carrying humanitarian aid and construction materials, and intending to break the Israeli naval blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli military boarded the ship in international waters and opened fire, ultimately killing 10 unarmed civilian activists and injuring many more. The outrage was immediate. Condemnations echoed from capitals around the world, demanding a full investigation. Turkey expelled Israel's ambassador. United Nations inquiries were launched. Some European Union members—like Spain, Ireland, Sweden, and Greece—issued strong statements condemning the use of force. The message, at least rhetorically, was clear: the international community would not tolerate such an action.

Today, a similar crime has been repeated, and this time,

Canadians are watching, waiting to see our government's response.

On June 1, the *Madleen*, a vessel launched by the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, set sail with the same goal: to bring aid to starving Palestinians in Gaza, and to challenge an inhumane and illegal blockade. This is in the context of an ongoing military campaign that has already killed more than 62,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, and subjected Gaza to almost three months of starvation by obstructing humanitarian aid—a deliberate starvation tactic and a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

In the early morning hours of June 9, Israeli forces intercepted the *Madleen* in international waters, more than 100 nautical miles from the shore, in flagrant violation of international law. Among the 12 activists on board was climate advocate Greta Thunberg. All were detained and

taken to Israel. Their “crime”? Attempting to bring food and medical supplies to a population being systematically starved. The international response? Silence.

While four activists were released quickly, eight remained detained unlawfully in Israel until their deportation at the end of last week.

Let's be clear: the *Madleen* was stopped in international waters, which is unlawful detention, and an act that breached international law. UN special rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories Francesca Albanese has clearly stated that it was carrying humanitarian aid, not weapons. It posed no threat.

In a recent statement, Amnesty International called out the global community for its inaction in the face of Israel's consistent violation of humanitarian law.

“During its voyage over the past few days the *Madleen's* mission emerged as a power-

ful symbol of solidarity with besieged, starved and suffering Palestinians amid persistent international inaction... This very mission is also an indictment of the international community's failure... States must act now or risk complicity in Israel's grave violations... They must press Israel to lift its suffocating blockade and allow aid to be delivered through all crossings into Gaza now,” wrote Secretary General Agnès Callamard.

Amnesty had called on states to denounce the interception of the *Madleen*, to demand the release of the activists, and to confront the Israeli government over its sustained, illegal blockade and starvation policy. There is a redeeming opportunity for Canada to lead this charge by condemning these actions and demanding a stop to Israeli aggression.

Over the past month, Europe's tone has shifted in recogniz-

ing Israel's attacks on civilians, demanding a ceasefire and an openness to support efforts for international accountability. Canada must join these shifting stances on international justice, and reaffirm its role as a principled actor in international law and humanitarian response. It must recognize that humanitarian access cannot be conditional on the approval of the very regime responsible for the crisis. It must push for full, independent access to all of Gaza for neutral humanitarian agencies, not corridors filtered and controlled by the Israeli military. It must support independent investigations into whether aid operations are being manipulated to facilitate forced displacement, or worse, to mask war crimes. And it must treat the seizure of the *Madleen* for what it is: a blatant violation of international maritime norms that deserves not just rebuke, but also real diplomatic consequences and a meaningful diplomatic response.

Most urgently, Canada must join the growing global call for a permanent ceasefire and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. This is not a radical demand, but rather a necessary condition for any hope of peace. And peace cannot be built without justice, which means finally affirming Palestinian statehood and the right of Palestinians to live in freedom and dignity on their own land.

The *Madleen* Flotilla did not carry weapons or fighters. It carried food and aid. It carried hope. That was enough to make it a target. And that alone should tell us how far we've fallen, and how urgently Canada needs to reconsider its position in support of human rights and humanitarian access.

As per the words of Thunberg: “People in Gaza don't need anyone to come and save them. They need us to amplify and support their struggle for justice, that we end our complicity, put pressure and cut ties with those committing human rights violations.”

*Nimao Ali is an educator, social justice activist, and board member of the Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council.*

*The Hill Times*

# COMMENT

# Carney's CAF spending spree

Continued from page 5

no such thing as truly “off the shelf.” No defence company makes sophisticated weapons platforms on speculation that they might find a buyer.

If Canada were to seek an “instant” solution to acquire a much-needed combat capability like low-level air defence, or first-person-view (a.k.a. FPV) drones,

this would have to be a government-to-government exchange.

This was the case when Canada acquired the four used and mothballed British Upholder-class submarines (renamed the *Victoria* class in current Canadian service). This was also the case when Canada acquired M-777 howitzers from the United States Marine Corps, six Chinook heavy-lift helicopters from the

U.S. air force, and 20 Leopard II main battle tanks from the German army.

Of course, those were necessary acquisitions due to the level of conflict in Afghanistan. It would be difficult for Carney to justify sidestepping Canada's tangle of procurement red tape just to get money out the door before the now-magical date of April 1, 2026.

Carney has said that he hopes to have a deal signed to include Canada in a new European-centric defence pact, and to decrease our nearly 75-per-cent reliance on U.S.-built weapons systems. All of this comes in advance of the NATO leaders summit in the Netherlands at the end of June.

Which makes all of Carney's recent spending announcements seem like they are “a day late and

a buck short.” After the recent ministers' summit in Brussels, Belgium, the NATO secretary-general announced that the alliance intends to raise the spending objective to a whopping five per cent of GDP by 2032 or possibly 2035. Given Canada's lucrative GDP, that would mean tripling the current budget to more than \$150-billion annually.

No matter how you slice it, that is a lot of cheese.

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

*The Hill Times*



## OPINION

# What we choose to build

For Canada to compete in a more precarious world, we need to stop treating our post-secondary institutions as credential vending machines.

Valerie Walker  
& Matt  
McKean

Opinion



Post-secondary education isn't just about credentials. It's how we build skills, foster trust, solve complex problems, and help people find meaning.

That makes it more than an education policy issue. It's a strategy for national resilience. An urgent one. As Prime Minister Mark Carney said to his caucus before the new session of Parliament, "we're going to have to do things previously thought impossible, at speeds not seen in generations."

Right now, Canada faces a convergence of pressures: stagnant productivity, affordability anxiety, demographic shifts, rising polarization, and declining trust in institutions. In this context, education is infrastructure for adaptation.



If we continue to underutilize our higher-education systems, we'll leave talent on the table, ideas in the lab, opportunity on the margins, and trust in institutions, further eroded, write Val Walker and Matt McKean. *Unsplash photograph by Mikael Kristenson*

Post-secondary institutions are uniquely positioned to respond. They're embedded in communities, connected to employers, and capable of helping people make sense of complexity, through technical skills development, but also by fostering the critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, social capacity, and solutions that modern economies and democracies need. At their best, our institutions not only help people earn a living, but also build a life.

Philosophically, there's no scenario in which we want a less educated citizenry. Practically, there's no scenario in which one is better off economically with less education. College dropout billionaires are the exception, not the rule.

And yet, too often in Canada, we treat our post-secondary systems like side files: important, but rarely urgent.

We debate stagnant funding and decade-old tuition caps. These choices have kept costs relatively low for students, but they've also left institutions scrambling to do more with less.

Can post-secondary institutions adapt? Of course. Should they? Also yes.

But expecting institutions to transform without changing how we fund, run, or measure them is wishful thinking. Systems respond to signals and right now, the signals are mixed at best.

We don't need more vague, duplicative national strategies or frameworks. We need to scale what's already working, and create the conditions for more of it to succeed. That means aligning funding with outcomes, investing in research and innovation, and recognizing that different institutions have different strengths to offer.

What's missing isn't ideas. It's follow-through and the policy courage to reward institutions that lean into what they do best, and others for doing things differently, not more of the same.

In contrast, many of our Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development peers are having bolder, more public debates about the future of higher education. The United Kingdom is reckoning with the financial viability of its universities. Australia is overhauling its funding architecture through its Universities Accord. Even countries with tuition-free models like Germany and Norway are re-examining sustainability.

Canada, by comparison, has lacked a clear conversation about how to fund systems expected to drive innovation, anchor immigration, develop talent, and strengthen regions. The result isn't only underinvestment. It's incoherence.

In our recent report with RBC Thought Leadership, *A Smarter Path*, we argue that education should be treated more like infrastructure: planned, resourced, and maintained with the same seriousness as transit or broadband. That means investing in access and relevance. In institutions and the connections between them. In foundational knowledge and the capacity to build and use it.

The good news? We already know what's possible.

Across the country, work-integrated learning is giving students a foothold in the real world. Microcredentials are helping workers adapt in real time. Colleges are building regional

talent pipelines. Polytechnics are bridging gaps between theory and practice. And our research-intensive universities are driving innovation and solving complex problems through world-class research.

These aren't experiments. They're signals of where our systems are already moving. Imagine how much more could be achieved with the right public policy, investment, and incentives for performance-based differentiation and stronger collaboration between business and higher education.

For Canada to compete in a more precarious world, we need to stop treating our post-secondary institutions as credential vending machines and start treating them as systems that deliver resilience. They remain one of the few shared institutions still capable of anchoring people to community, contribution, and long-term thinking.

The risk of inaction isn't just economic. It's generational. If we continue to underutilize our higher-education systems—to treat them as background infrastructure rather than levers of national renewal—we'll leave talent on the table, ideas in the lab, opportunity on the margins, and trust in institutions, further eroded.

New global order. New economy. New federal government. New urgency and commitment by Carney "to seize this moment for Canadians, to build big, to build bold, to build together, to build now."

The question isn't what comes next. It's what we choose to build.

Val Walker is CEO and Matt McKean is chief R&D officer at *The Business + Higher Education Roundtable*, a national nonprofit that connects business and post-secondary leaders.

*The Hill Times*

## COMMENT

# Netanyahu's wars

Continued from page 10

nuclear activities that then-U.S. president Barack Obama had signed with Iran in 2015. But it turned out that Trump wasn't up for an actual war with Iran; he was just on a mission to destroy all the achievements of his predecessor.

Nobody could have been more pro-Israeli than former president Joe Biden, but he wouldn't go to war with Iran for Netanyahu, either. Initially, the Israeli prime minister thought that he was making more headway with Trump 2.0, but Trump's promises are as empty as his threats; by May, Trump was negotiating with Iran for a thinly disguised return to the treaty he had cancelled in 2018.

At this point, Netanyahu took the decision he had probably always promised himself never to

make: he gave the order to attack Iran without a guarantee of full American support. He forgot that Trump, almost uniquely among post-1945 U.S. presidents, has never committed his country to a war overseas.

True to form, Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that "The U.S. had nothing to do with the attack on Iran tonight." That may not be strictly true in the sense that he certainly must have known Netanyahu's plans, but it's accurate in the sense that he did not approve of them. Indeed, Netanyahu was deliberately pre-empting a possible revival of the 2018 treaty.

Saving face always comes first with Trump, so he was soon trumpeting, "If we are attacked in any way, shape or form by Iran, the full strength and might of the U.S. Armed Forces will come down on

you at levels never seen before." But he says that every time, to any country he disagrees with, and they are all still here. TACO.

The reality is that Netanyahu has broken his lifelong rule, and attacked Iran without Washington's full support because he cannot bear to miss this opportunity to attack his enemies when they are all far weaker than ever before. He cannot actually lose this war he has begun with Iran, but he may find it almost impossible to end in a satisfactory manner.

There are three problems for which he has no apparent solution. One is that he lacks the specialized bombs that would enable him to destroy the Iranian centrifuges, labs, and enriched uranium that are buried deep inside mountainsides. Trump would have to give them to him.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared that Iran is on the brink of getting nuclear weapons half a dozen times in the past 20 years, writes Gwynne Dyer. *UN photograph by Loey Felipe*

The second is that Trump is extremely petty and vindictive when defied or "disrespected." If he decides that he no longer wants to deal with Netanyahu, he holds such power over the country's fate that a different prime minister would be found to replace him.

Finally, Iran has a "nuclear option" that has nothing whatever to do with nuclear weapons. It

can cut the world's oil supply by 20 per cent, and cause a global recession simply by closing the Strait of Hormuz. And a recession is what Trump fears above all else.

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

## The markets are hungry for Canadian cod. Will we deliver?

With a decision from the fisheries minister expected any day now, the global and local realities of northern cod are aligning to create a well-timed economic opportunity.

Sylvie Lapointe

Opinion



As governments across Canada work to lessen the impact of trade uncertainty with the United States, every industry across the country must dig deep to maximize its own contribution to the economic stability Canadians need. While doing so, there is an expectation the Government of Canada will take every reasonable opportunity to allow industries to do their part.

An early litmus test of Prime Minister Mark Carney's economic

agenda for coastal communities—and one of his government's earliest occasions to demonstrate whether it will capitalize on every opportunity to strengthen the economy—is the upcoming decision on the cod fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The collapse of northern cod a generation ago was the impetus for global sustainability certification labels like the Marine Stewardship Council's famous blue checkmark. The iconic fishery has been closely followed around the world ever since, and even more intently since government ended the moratorium and reopened the commercial fishery last June.

With a decision from the fisheries minister expected any day now, the global and local realities of northern cod are aligning to create a well-timed economic opportunity.

The minimum price for local harvesters is at a generational high, up 12 per cent from last year, and 48 per cent since 2021.

This is because markets are hungrier than ever for Canadian cod. With decline in Barents Sea and Icelandic cod, worldwide supply is at the lowest point in more than 30 years.

Northern cod is now the second-largest cod stock in the world, and the only one of the



Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson could almost triple last year's catch level while maintaining sustainable harvesting levels to allow Newfoundland and Labrador to seize the market opportunity knocking on its door, writes Sylvie Lapointe. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

top three that is growing. At the global seafood expo in Barcelona, Spain, last month, the interest and excitement regarding Canadian cod was reverberating.

In a moment of poetic justice for the once-failed fishery, the niche markets courting Canadian cod are primarily in the United Kingdom and France, two key jurisdictions on Canadians' minds as the country looks to—as per Carney's mandate letter to cabinet—strengthen collaboration with reliable trading partners and allies around the world.

Canada's most well-known cod processor—Icewater Seafoods in Arnold's Cove, N.L.—has maintained relationships with customers throughout the moratorium. Last year, they processed 100 per cent Canadian cod for the first time since 1992, and the vast majority of cod processed by their local workers is exported to premium customers in the U.K. and France.

These customers, such as international retailer Marks & Spencer, have rigid sustainability standards. The latest science assessment of northern cod easily meets those standards, feeding global optimism that Canadian cod will fill crucial supply gaps.

For industry experts, the 2025 science provides further cause for optimism. Jim Cannon, CEO and founder of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership, noted in Barcelona last month, "We now have scientific confirmation the Government of Canada made the right decision when they ended the moratorium and reopened the commercial fishery last year."

The question now is whether government will have the courage and vision to make the right decision again in 2025.

With a healthy and growing stock, record local prices, premium markets in ally coun-

tries looking to Canada to fulfill their year-round supply needs, the opportunity is palpable. As a one-year decision and setting a harvest level that is more conservative than Fisheries and Oceans Canada's own precautionary approach calls for, the minister could almost triple last year's catch level while maintaining sustainable harvesting levels to allow Newfoundland and Labrador to seize the market opportunity knocking on its door. This one decision could inject hundreds of millions more dollars into the rural economy in one year. Beyond 2025, gaining market share through its local inshore and offshore fisheries as global supply shrinks is a tremendous, longer term economic opportunity for workers, businesses, and communities in Canada's youngest province.

The opportunity is ripe for the Government of Canada to get its "elbows up," and reassure Canadians that no stone will be left unturned on its commitment to optimize every single reasonable opportunity to ensure economic stability through uncertain times.

*Sylvie Lapointe is the president of the Atlantic Groundfish Council. Previously, she spent 26 years working for the Government of Canada, including two decades at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. She managed fisheries across Canada, chaired high-profile advisory committees in the Atlantic, and held many positions within DFO, including assistant deputy minister of fisheries and harbour management.*

*The Hill Times*

## Canada must lead in the age of AI

With its pioneering AI history and commitment to global leadership, Canada must help chart a course for much needed, practical governance.

Stephen J. Toope & Mark Daley

Opinion



Artificial intelligence is out of the bottle, and it isn't going back in. The rapid global diffusion of powerful artificial intelligence models underscores a new reality: any attempt to "control" AI through conventional national or international regulation—or proprietary secrecy—is futile. The global proliferation of advanced AI is inevitable. Canada, with its pioneering AI history and commitment to global

leadership, must help chart a course for much needed, practical governance.

By governance, we mean a constellation of systems, institutions, and processes that serve to shape how a society—and in this case a technology with enormous societal effects—can be safely directed. Formal legal regulation may have a limited role to play, but effective governance usually requires the co-ordination of societal norms and practices along with the engagement of stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, experts with specialized knowledge and insight, and even concerned citizens.

The view that AI proliferation could, and should, be tightly controlled borders on fantasy. DeepSeek-R1 was a wake-up call. A model that nearly matched the capabilities of OpenAI's most advanced system had emerged not from Silicon Valley, but from a well-funded Chinese lab as a mere side project—and was freely distributed to the world.

Teams around the world have the knowledge, computing power, and relentless drive to replicate cutting-edge breakthroughs faster than ever. Information, after all, is inherently leaky. Once a

method is published or a capability demonstrated, containment is impossible. The accelerating cycle between proprietary breakthroughs and open-source equivalents has shrunk dramatically. In the arena of AI, regulation by secrecy or exclusive patents has reached its twilight.

Rather than trying to impose top-down controls on technology destined to proliferate, we must build governance that matches reality: distributed, flexible, and adaptable. National regulation alone cannot be effective when AI is a global, massively dispersed phenomenon. We need a realistic and practical approach in which multiple centres of power, influence, and expertise co-ordinate through shared standards, norms, and best practices.

Canada is uniquely positioned to spearhead this new approach. From Geoffrey Hinton's groundbreaking work on neural networks—supported by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council—to today's vibrant Canadian AI ecosystem—including frontier companies like Cohere—Canada has consistently punched above its weight in AI research and policy leadership. In 2023, the

Canadian government launched a Voluntary Code of Conduct on Generative AI, which informed the AI discussions of the G7. More recently, the federal government established the Canadian AI Safety Institute to lead our participation in an international network of AI Safety Institutes. Now, as the global AI landscape grows increasingly porous, Canada can leverage its respected position to convene a network of flexible alliances and agile institutions.

What could AI governance look like in practice? "Minilateral" compacts between like-minded nations—or coalitions of the willing—could swiftly establish shared safety standards. Agile, industry-led bodies like the International Standards Organization or new coalitions like the Coalition for Secure AI could promulgate and adapt technical guidelines faster than any slow-moving treaty negotiations. One model is the global work to create harmonized standards—but not a treaty—for quality control in medical devices. Multi-stakeholder platforms, incorporating voices from academia, industry, and civil society, like the World Economic Forum's AI Governance Alliance, could foster global alignment on critical

ethical and safety issues without waiting for a universal consensus that is unlikely any time soon. Let's be clear: in the current state of geopolitics, the United States and China are not about to agree on a shared approach to AI governance. Working through formal intergovernmental bodies like the United Nations simply won't produce action quickly enough. But we can't give up and allow a handful of corporate giants to run amok.

The clock is ticking. AI models and their underlying methodologies will soon permeate every aspect of society. Ensuring that this technology serves humanity will require acknowledging that the future of AI governance must match the decentralized, fast-paced nature of technological diffusion.

Canada's moment to lead is now. With its rich AI legacy, commitment to models of cross-border governance that have served us well, and a one-time strong diplomatic standing that can be reclaimed, Canada must seize this critical opportunity. We don't have much time—but with clear-eyed vision and leadership, Canada can set the stage for a safer, fairer, and more equitable AI-powered future.

*Stephen J. Toope is president and CEO of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. Mark Daley is chief AI officer at Western University.*

*The Hill Times*





The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

# INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

THE HILL TIMES POLICY BRIEFING • JUNE 18, 2025

**What do we stand to gain?**

p. 17

**How to optimize economic reconciliation through natural resource investment and beyond? Create an Indigenous Development Bank**

p. 18

**Working with First Nations on an Indigenous fire stewardship protocol could go a long way**

p. 19

**Reconciliation or repetition? Carney's first moves on Indigenous rights face scrutiny**

p. 19

**Reconciliation is action, not just words**

p. 20



INDIGENOUS RELATIONS Policy Briefing

With Indigenous relations taking on an economic lens, consultation will be key, say academics, orgs

Indigenous Peoples have understandable concerns about whether the hunger for natural resources could be used as an excuse by the federal government to circumvent its duty to consult, says professor Gabriel Maracle.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty’s lived experience in the North and with resource development may serve her well in the current Liberal government, which is showing a shift towards a more economic focus when it comes to Indigenous relations, according to political science academics.

“The previous [Justin Trudeau government] was focused on addressing long-standing historic issues—Indian residential schools, and things like that—where the current tone has been more focused on economic reconciliation, economic development, community development, and a lot of that is oriented around resource development,” said Gabriel Maracle, a Carleton University assistant professor of political science with a focus on Indigenous governance in Canada. “I think most First Nations, most Indigenous leaders and Indigenous communities are going



Carleton University professor Gabriel Maracle says the feds’ messaging ‘has been more explicit about focusing on natural resource development ... in part because of the pressures of having a less stable trading partner with the United States.’ Photograph courtesy of Gabriel Maracle

to be interested in seeing what the message and tone is going to be from Crown-Indigenous Relations around resource extraction and resource development.”

Alty (Northwest Territories) took on her current portfolio in the cabinet of Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) on May 13. Born and raised in Yellowknife, she previously served as a city councillor for the community between 2012 and 2018, and then as mayor from 2018 to 2025.

Alty is the first federal minister from the Northwest Territories in almost two decades, with the previous being then-Liberal MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew who served as minister of state for northern development between 2004 to 2006. Carney himself was also born in the territory.

Maracle is a member of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, also known as Tyendinaga. His father was born in Tyendinaga, and his non-Indigenous mother is originally from Guelph, Ont.

He told *The Hill Times* that Alty comes to her new role with experience working with First Nations communities around resource development, pointing to her background as manager of communications and community relations for the Diavik Diamond Mines, which she held from 2016 to 2018.

“This government’s messaging has been more explicit about focusing on natural resource development and things of that nature, in part because of the pressures of having a less-stable trading partner with the United States, and the need to be more reliant on the global economy,” said Maracle. “The global markets are really, really hungry for natural resources.”

Indigenous people comprise almost half of the population in the Northwest Territories, and the territory is home to Métis, Inuit, and First Nations people including Dene.

Maracle said that Indigenous Peoples have understandable concerns about whether the current hunger for natural resources could be used as an excuse by the federal government to circumvent its duty to engage in consultations before embarking on major projects.

“Are they willing to push through these economic and resource development opportunities at the expense of Indigenous rights? Historically, the federal government has been very, very comfortable with doing that,” said Maracle. “There’s a very, very small window to be able to build things. I think [Alty’s] going to be bringing in a unique perspective on Indigenous issues and how the federal government interacts with Indigenous Peoples.”

Chadwick Cowie, an assistant professor in the department of political science at the University of Toronto Scarborough, told *The Hill Times* that Alty may under-

stand the diversity in the North, adding that not all Indigenous people are the same.

“They don’t all have the same history, nor do they have the same relationships or allyship with certain parts of Canada because of the history that exists there and because of the approach that some provinces have taken. There’s a lot of work to be done there,” said Cowie. “The Trudeau government ended up focusing on policy administration. They kept trying to do what they thought was the way forward, and if they want to figure out a way to go forward, then there is some potential by having northern representation in that cabinet, because the North is a very unique, specific place.”

To help streamline the federal regulatory processes for major projects, the Carney government’s “One Canadian Economy Act,” or Bill C-5, was tabled on June 6. The bill seeks to accelerate the regulatory process for infrastructure projects that the federal government designates as being in the “national interest.”

Cowie is from the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg community of Pami-taashkodeyong (also referred to as Hiawatha First Nation) and is of the Atik (Caribou) Dodem (Clan). He said that an important concern for Crown-Indigenous relations going forward includes legislation such as Bill C-5, or Ontario’s Bill 5, which also seeks to fast-track project development with the goal of unleashing the province’s economic potential.

Cowie said he understands why major projects could be important, but there needs to be proper duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples.

“We can’t move forward hand in hand and move through reconciliation if it’s going to be a top-down approach, and that’s a concern



UofT Scarborough professor Chadwick Cowie says Indigenous people ‘don’t all have the same history, nor do they have the same relationships or allyship with certain parts of Canada because of the history that exists there and because of the approach that some provinces have taken.’ Photograph courtesy of Chadwick Cowie



Rebecca Alty was sworn in as Crown-Indigenous relations minister at Rideau Hall on May 13. The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

that I have of how they’re going to do this,” he said. “It’s not so much about stopping development ... It’s about making sure that the people who are the stewards of these territories have that ability to voice and be a part of the discussion because that is part of what Crown-Indigenous relations is supposed to be about.”

*The Hill Times* reached out to the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to ask about Alty’s appointment and about possible priorities for her office going forward, but did not receive a response before deadline. National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak said in a May 13 press release that she and her organization look forward to working with the Carney cabinet to advance priorities put forward by the AFN during the federal election. In the *Prosperity for All* list of election priorities, the AFN included a call for economic reconciliation, which the organization argued begins with ensuring First Nations voices are at the table of national discussions.

Stephanie Scott, executive director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on June 11 that Alty will be facing the profound challenge of addressing the enduring legacy of the residential school system.

It is estimated that more than 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children between the ages of four and 16 years attended federally funded and church-run residential schools in Canada between the late 1800s and the 1990s. Many Indigenous children in these schools spent long periods of time away from their home communities where they received little to no education, suffered from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, and experienced poor health care, chronic hunger, and malnutrition,

according to a 2023 report released by the Senate’s Indigenous Peoples Committee. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada found that children at residential schools died at a far higher rate than non-Indigenous children, and about one-third of student deaths were not recorded by government or school administrators, according to the report.

Scott called residential schools “instruments of genocide” designed to destroy Indigenous societies by forcibly assimilating children.

“The trauma and impacts of this system continue to ripple through our families and communities today,” said Scott in the email. “At the NCTR, we confront this difficult and heartbreaking work daily, striving to find missing children amidst increasing demands on our limited resources. We also contend with persistent denialism and those who refuse to acknowledge this country’s past and the truths of Survivors.”

The TRC presented a list of 94 Calls to Action in June 2015, intended to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples.

Scott said progress on implementing the Calls to Action has been slow, adding that federal leaders need to take concrete, sustained action.

“The minister’s immediate priority should be to secure adequate, enduring funding for vital initiatives dedicated to locating missing and disappeared children and accelerating the fulfillment of the Calls to Action. Without this support, these initiatives risk discontinuation, significantly hindering our collective journey towards healing and reconciliation,” she said in the email. “The minister must demonstrate an unwavering commitment to listening directly to Survivors, their families, and

excluded and we look forward to meaningful dialogue and collaboration,” said Moore in the email.

The challenges ahead for Alty are “significant and urgent,” according to Moore. As an example, he cited the 2016 Supreme Court decision in *Daniels v. Canada*, which affirmed that Métis and non-status Indians are “Indians” for the purpose of section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867, which establishes federal jurisdiction over First Nations peoples and their traditional lands.

Since that ruling, policy reforms have been “slow, underfunded, and disconnected from the lived realities of the people we represent,” Moore argued. In 2018, the CAP-Canada Political Accord was signed, which promised to build a renewed relationship between CAP and the Crown, but, in the six years since its signing, not a single ministerial-level meeting has taken place, he said.

“Indigenous communities have held up their end of the bargain through detailed policy proposals, national action plans, and continuous engagement, but the government has not,” said Moore. “If Minister Alty is to advance reconciliation, she needs to ensure agreements are followed and actions are taken. We can’t keep being invited to talk while decisions are made without us.”

Catherine Martin, director of Indigenous Community Engagement with Dalhousie University and a member of the Millbrook Mi’kmaq Band, told *The Hill Times* that an important priority for Alty could include address-

Indigenous Peoples in Canada statistics



- According to the 2021 Census, there were 1.8 million Indigenous people, representing five per cent of the total Canadian population, up from 4.9 per cent in 2016.
- However, this growth was not as fast as in previous years. For example, from 2011 to 2016, the Indigenous population grew by 18.9 per cent, more than double the general 2021 growth rate. For the first time, the Census enumerated more than one million (1,048,405) First Nations people living in Canada.
- Population projections for First Nations people, Métis, and Inuit suggest that the Indigenous population in Canada could reach between 2.5 million and 3.2 million over the next 20 years.
- While more than half (55.5 per cent) of all First Nations people were living in Western Canada in 2021, Ontario (251,030) was the province with the highest number of First Nations people, representing nearly one-quarter (23.9 per cent) of the First Nations population in Canada. Meanwhile, around one in nine (11.1 per cent) First Nations people were living in Quebec, and 7.6 per cent were living in Atlantic Canada. The remaining 1.9 per cent of First Nations people lived in the territories.

—Source: Statistics Canada data released on June 21, 2023

Policy Briefing INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

What do we stand to gain?



The federal and provincial governments stand to gain from traditional knowledge when it comes to mitigating environmental threats from fire, flooding, and growing wind velocity, writes Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux. Unsplash photograph by Kalen Emsley

When Canada stops seeing Indigenous Peoples in the negative and begins to understand and appreciate their strengths, values, cultural knowledge, and ceremonial practices, acceptance and respect can grow.

Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux

Opinion



We, as a country, stand to gain everything and lose nothing if we have the courage to stand together as one nation. Indigenous Peoples are already gaining through social, political, and judicial changes generated over the past several decades. Our women and our youth are rising, our elders are teaching and supporting, and our men are reclaiming their birthright. Even though it may appear to those looking from a distance that systemic challenges are winning, they are not. Those of us who have been incessantly challenging oppressive western systems—where everything given with one hand is taken away with the other—know that despite this unfortunate reality, we are tracking in the positive.

If you flip the script and turn incessantly negative numbers upside down, the picture of disparities shifts, and we begin to see positives. Instead of 60 per cent of something negative, we get 40 per cent of something positive and mindsets will adjust to a different reality. We can call it a mind trick, but when Canada stops seeing Indigenous Peoples in the negative and begins to understand and appreciate their strengths, values, cultural knowledge, and ceremonial practices, acceptance and respect can grow.

The federal government has failed at addressing seemingly intractable issues because it has not directly experienced the very challenges it seeks to resolve. The answers lie firmly in the hands and hearts of the people. Indigenous leaders are standing hard against the violence of benevolence, a societal injustice that feeds upon the guise of helping and only brings “words” without concrete action. Our

leaders are not waiting, they are moving forward with what needs to be done.

Those who have not yet learned to respect and hear the ones who hold answers cannot, and likely will not, until “frontier” fear and disdain dissipates. Until then, we cannot move forward together as an entire country, and impasses will remain impossible to “address” by any government outside of our own unless we can see and hear each other unfettered by dire historic realities. We must clear our eyes and our minds, to truly see each other and begin the necessary work.

Former prime minister Justin Trudeau made a commitment to truth and reconciliation, and current Prime Minister Mark Carney has indicated Indigenous “issues” are on his agenda as well.

However, there is no possibility of change on the horizon without a firm commitment to ensuring seats at every table that contemplates an invasion of traditional territories for development across Canada. Not those postage stamps called “reserves”—we mean the lands and resources held in the hands of Indigenous Peoples from time immemorial. The fear that acknowledging truths and providing those seats for Indigenous leadership will change the face of Canada is correct—the challenge is accepting that this change will be to the benefit of all. The fear Canada will lose something must go; it will gain, and so will Indigenous Peoples and every citizen who calls this country home. Oppression and marginalization have never created a strong society—it takes courage, inclusion, and reciprocity to build a truly thriving nation.

Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the federal and provincial governments stand to gain from traditional knowledge when it comes to mitigating environmental threats from fire, flooding, and growing wind velocity. Blending our sciences is becoming essential to protecting the future health of this country. Blending our strengths is critical to facing down the political quagmire brewing in the United States. Blending our knowledge is the only way we can fully and courageously address the many truths that are holding us back, and build a mutual road leading to a sustainable process of reconciliation.

Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux was appointed in 2016 as the first Indigenous Chair for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada for Lakehead University in Orillia, Ont., and is a TRC honorary witness, and chair of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Governing Circle. She is a member and resident of the Chippewa of Georgina Island First Nation in Ontario, and has dedicated her life to building bridges of understanding between peoples.

The Hill Times



# INDIGENOUS RELATIONS Policy Briefing



Making it possible for Indigenous Peoples to take a direct financial interest in resource development and specific projects will require helping them gain access to financing on acceptable terms, writes Glen Hodgson. *Unsplash photograph by Jakub Zerdzicki*

## How to optimize economic reconciliation through natural resource investment and beyond? Create an Indigenous Development Bank

A new pathway is required, shifting away from heavy reliance on budgetary funding and subsidies, and toward more innovative resource mobilization and access to capital.

Glen Hodgson

Opinion



The Carney government has committed to accelerating and strengthening investment across the economy as part of its plan to boost domestic sources

of economic growth, and reduce Canadian economic dependence on the United States. Greater investment in energy and other natural resource development is central to this commitment.

The recent Speech from the Throne indicated the federal government intends to create a new Major Federal Project Office charged with championing projects that build the national economy, with the goal of reducing project approval time from five years to two. The Office is also expected to meet high environmental standards and fully respect the government's constitutional obligations to Indigenous Peoples.

Respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and ensuring high environmental standards are the minimum necessary conditions today for building public trust, and guiding the successful approval and implementation of major resource investment projects. This means that securing informed, prior consent from

affected Indigenous nations and communities will be a fundamental task for the Office. If projects are treated as a national priority and are actively managed, there is no obvious reason why a final decision could not be reached within a two-year time frame.

But that's just a start. It's time to advance from what is necessary for Indigenous engagement, to exploring what is sufficient—the best way to accelerate direct Indigenous engagement and investment in resource development and other projects that build economic reconciliation. Making Indigenous nations, communities, and people direct stakeholders in sustainable resource development would generate the widest possible economic and social benefits and help to ensure project success. This means making it possible for Indigenous Peoples to take a direct financial interest in resource development and specific projects, which in turn will require helping them gain access to financing on acceptable terms.

Here, the Speech from the Throne emphasized the federal government would uphold its fundamental commitment to advancing reconciliation, which means a commitment to the creation of long-term wealth and prosperity for Indigenous Peoples. The federal government thus plans to double the recently created Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program from \$5-billion to \$10-billion, enabling more Indigenous communities to become owners of major projects.

While this commitment to supporting Indigenous investment in resource projects is important, it still falls well short of the scale and breadth of financing needed to make meaningful progress on sustained economic reconciliation. The overall Indigenous economy faces a significant financing gap—the difference between identified demand, and available financing on commercial terms and conditions comparable to those faced by non-Indigenous borrowers. Our recent research

for the First Nations Financial Management Board estimated the Indigenous financing market gap to be \$50-billion or higher.

There are legal, financial, and cultural barriers to Indigenous access to financing. Restrictions on asset ownership under the Indian Act limit the ability of Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs to leverage on-reserve assets. There are fundamental creditworthiness barriers, such as a limited financial track record for prospective Indigenous borrowers. And historical and cultural barriers translate into Indigenous clients not receiving fair and unbiased treatment from non-Indigenous financial institutions. While there are numerous Indigenous financial institutions scattered across the country, they generally have small capital bases and limited scope of regional and product coverage.

To fill the significant market gap, a new pathway is required, shifting away from heavy reliance on budgetary funding and subsidies, and toward more innovative resource mobilization and access to capital. Loan guarantees are useful, but the best approach would be for the federal government to establish an Indigenous Development Bank (IDB), modelled on effective national development banks in many countries.

The Indigenous economy has financing needs beyond resource development. Indigenous businesses are able to access less than a tenth of market-based financing compared to comparable Canadian non-Indigenous firms. They need better access to basic business financing such as investment funding, working capital, and bonding. Enhanced financial access is also needed for Indigenous nations, communities, on-reserve infrastructure, and housing.

An IDB, operating on broad commercial principles, could mobilize financing for overall Indigenous economic development. It could provide financing for Indigenous investment in resource and infrastructure projects, and for business startups; firm operations and expansion; development of value chains; and financing for Indigenous Nations, communities, infrastructure, and housing. It could provide an array of financing options including loans, loan guarantees, equity investments, and project bonding.

To be credible, the IDB should be an Indigenous-led institution, with Indigenous leaders playing a central role in its governance and within management. Ideally, the Bank would build overall Indigenous financing capacity by working with the existing commercial financial system, complementing and mobilizing other sources of financing through guarantees and other risk-sharing arrangements, and not simply be a lender of last resort or a market competitor.

If Indigenous Peoples are to play a meaningful role in Canada's domestic growth and investment strategy, now is the time for bold action. Establishing an Indigenous Development Bank is the best policy option.

Glen Hodgson is a senior fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute.  
The Hill Times



# Policy Briefing **INDIGENOUS RELATIONS**

## Reconciliation or repetition? Carney's first moves on Indigenous rights face scrutiny

Whether the prime minister's early steps mark a genuine shift or simply another cycle of political performance will define Mark Carney's reconciliation legacy.

Jackson Pind

Opinion



On June 1, just six days after the opening of the 45<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Prime Minister Mark Carney issued a statement for National Indigenous History Month reaffirming his government's commitment to reconciliation.

He emphasized that Indigenous leadership would guide federal priorities, including self-determination, modern treaties, and distinctions-based approaches. The statement also announced an expansion of the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program to \$10-billion, broadening its scope beyond energy to support infrastructure and trade. Carney committed to working in full partnership with Indigenous Peoples on key areas such as health, housing, education, and climate action. Framed as a forward-looking gesture, the statement was positioned as part of a broader "reset" on the federal approach to Indigenous relations.

In many ways, however, this crafted statement ticked all the reconciliation "checkboxes" that have been constantly repeated with little action since the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report in 2015, and the 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice. So far, the record for the federal government is dismal, with only 13 of the 94 Calls to Action completed, and just two of the 231 Calls to Justice implemented. Understandably, Indigenous nations are reluctant to believe the common buzzwords of reconciliation that are often thrown around in June and on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in September.

These doubts are heightened this year as tensions rise between Indigenous Peoples and governments, fuelled by slogans like "nation building" and "national interest." The introduction of Bill C-5, An Act to enact the Free Trade and Labour Mobility in Canada Act and the Building Canada Act, on June 6 again hit the reconciliation checkboxes as the federal government claimed it would follow free, prior, and

informed consent, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. However, the bill allows for the government to bypass the 2019 Impact Assessment Act on certain projects that it deems to be in the "national interest." This new legislation presents a general statement of respect for Indigenous rights, yet undermines that respect through restrictive provisions embedded in the fine print. The legislation was also introduced the same week that Justice Minister Sean Fraser opined that Indigenous nations' rights stop short of a "veto" on projects with the federal government—a statement that angered Indigenous leaders who view free, prior, and informed consent as a fundamental right, not a conditional privilege, under both Canadian and international law. After a phone call with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak, Fraser apologized for his comments, saying they could erode "a very precarious trust." Time will tell if this is the last apology the new government must issue over Indigenous rights.

Amid these tensions, there are signs of movement. The Carney-led government is acting quickly on making amendments to the Indian Act regarding enfranchisement and gender discrimination. Bill S-2, introduced in the Senate on May 29, marks a renewed effort by the federal government to address long-standing inequities in the Indian Act's registration and band membership provisions. Replacing the stalled Bill C-38, which had advanced to the committee stage before the dissolution of the last Parliament, this legislation seeks to eliminate forms of gender-based discrimination and enfranchisement that have denied status and rights to many First Nations individuals and their descendants.

Sponsored by Senator Marc Gold and announced by Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty (the first Indigenous person in this role), Bill S-2 proposes changes in enfranchisement, deregistration, band reaffiliation, and outdated language. Responding to Charter challenges like *Nicholas v. Canada*, it was shaped by more than 50 engagement sessions with Indigenous communities and organizations. If passed, an estimated 3,500 people could gain Indigenous status within five years. Introduced early in the session, the bill signals renewed commitment to reconciliation and redress for fragmented Indigenous families and communities.

Whether these early steps mark a genuine shift or simply another cycle of political performance will define Carney's reconciliation legacy. Indigenous nations are watching, engaged, and prepared to uphold their rights.

*Dr. Jackson Pind is an assistant professor of Indigenous methodologies at the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies at Trent University.*

*The Hill Times*

## Working with First Nations on an Indigenous fire stewardship protocol could go a long way

Practices like prescribed burns must be incorporated within federal and provincial strategies and leveraged not only for First Nations, but also for land across the country.

Karen Restoule

Opinion



Practices like prescribed burns must be incorporated within federal and provincial strategies and leveraged not only for First Nations, but also for land across the country, writes Karen Restoule. *DND photograph by Corporal Marc-André Leclerc*

What does that look like? It starts with long-term funding for First Nations-led emergency preparedness and response. It means ensuring that federal resources are flowing directly to First Nations who carry the expertise to leverage long-standing climate mitigation and adaptation practices—ones that have proven to deliver results when it comes to reducing fires.

Governments should pass legislation to recognize First Nations jurisdiction on these matters. Practices like prescribed burns must be incorporated within federal and provincial strategies and leveraged not only for First Nations, but also for land across the country. Working with First Nations to develop and implement an Indigenous fire stewardship protocol could go a long way not only towards real reconciliation, but also to safeguarding our lands and resources from these growing wildfires.

Ottawa should also expand climate mitigation and adaptation responsibilities to First Nations through the guardians program, co-ordinated by the Indigenous Leadership Initiative (ILI). The guardians are known for their work monitoring and managing ecosystems within their respective territories. The ILI trains and supports First Nations experts to leverage both Indigenous knowledge and western science to oversee their territories, and manage and monitor wildlife, ecosystems, plants, cultural sites, and more. Doing so could reposition the climate management approach to one that is proactive, rather than reactive—ensuring that First Nations are leading, or at least a part of, the strategy development rather than being invited to react to climate crises after they've already struck.

After so much talk about resilience in the past five years, this is an opportunity to let those who carry the knowledge and expertise lead the country on land management and emergency response with the jurisdiction, tools, and resources they need to take on these big challenges.

*Karen Restoule is director of Indigenous affairs and a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, strategic adviser on complex public affairs issues, and Ojibwe from Dokis First Nation.*

*The Hill Times*

As wildfires burning across northern Canada reach record-breaking levels, more than 25,000 people—many of whom are First Nations—have been evacuated from their homes. Wildfire emergencies are increasingly becoming a regular occurrence, year after year.

As of June 12, there were 33 First Nations evacuated due to the ongoing risk of wildfires in provinces from British Columbia through to Ontario. Northern Manitoba alone saw more than 17,000 people evacuated, many of whom are from First Nations across the region whose citizens are now far from their homes and placed in crowded hotels, temporary shelters, and the like, waiting to learn more about the degree of impact on their communities. It has been described as one of the largest evacuations in Manitoba's history, a province that has records dating back more than 100 years showing wildfires annually.

Wildfires, and other climate change events like heat, drought, and flooding have severely affected First Nations over the years including impacts to hunting, fishing, and harvesting—a way of life that is constitutionally protected yet increasingly at risk.

First Nations have traditionally managed land and water through methods that served them well for centuries. Practices like prescribed burns, land-based monitoring, and adaptive stewardship are still implemented in many regions today. These methods are well-aligned with climate adaptation science. However, many First Nations are without the jurisdiction and resources to implement these vital strategies.

Many of the resources available to First Nations for climate mitigation and adaptation are still accessed through the federal government's Indigenous Services department based in Gatineau, Que. It's a bureaucracy that struggles to be responsive, and is slow to match policy priorities with actual needs on the ground.

If the federal government is serious about its commitments to both climate and reconciliation, it will reposition itself, and allow First Nations to restore jurisdiction on matters related to climate mitigation and adaptation.



# INDIGENOUS RELATIONS Policy Briefing

## Reconciliation is action, not just words



Indigenous leadership regularly engages with businesses and governments with solutions to infrastructure needs, which are regularly disregarded, writes Michelle Robinson. *Unsplash photograph by Tim Foster*

Closing the infrastructure gap requires more than land acknowledgements that don't address truth, Treaties, or commitments.

Michelle Robinson

Opinion



Indigenous Peoples in Canada have fought for the Crown against Americans since 1812. It seems today, the American threats are pushing Canadians to look towards a new nation-building strategy, yet much is missing on the topic of how Indigenous inclusion—in a time of reconciliation—is part of this new vision for Canada when we know there is a massive gap in infrastructure between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

When John A. Macdonald spoke about nation building, money was invested into the North-West Mounted Police, separating Indigenous people from the railways, creating Indian residential schools, as well as creating settler schools, provincial governments, settler infrastructure, and more. Obviously, these were economies in the form of jobs, for some. The country and



June 3 was the sixth anniversary of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' final report, yet we see demands for action and political accountability as so little has been done, writes Michelle Robinson. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

economy began to grow in Canadian colonies.

Most educated people are very aware of the current infrastructure gaps between Indigenous people and Canadians in this country. However, there have been many assumptions by Canadians about the federal government taking care of the infrastructure gaps.

Many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit live in poverty, and the numbers are startling. Poverty has become a determinant of health for Indigenous people nationally, yet—ironically—Canada is seen internationally as one of the best and safest places to live with human rights. Indigenous people are overrepresented in the worst ways while underserved in ways

most Canadians take for granted. This was done through Macdonald's nation-building vision via the Indian Act of 1876. Today's poverty and segregation was by design, and not one that successive governments have aimed to fix through investment or dollar-for-dollar funding. Canadians need to abandon the assumption the federal government will fix this alone, and look deeper.

June 2 was the 10-year anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. June 3 was the sixth anniversary of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' final report. Yet we see the Native Women's Association of Canada demanding action and political

accountability as so little has been done.

The National Indigenous Economic Strategy created the Pathways to Socioeconomic Parity for Indigenous Peoples in a publicly available document including the very infrastructure investment needed. It contains 107 Calls to Economic Prosperity with numbers 59-82 directly focused on infrastructure investment—or, in other words, the necessary nation-building investment. This report has been given to many orders of government and business just to be met with silence. Why aren't the economic development boards, governments, and businesses working on these

solutions? Like it or not, they are sending a loud, strong message that they don't care about reconciliation or equity. If they did, those very Calls would have been on the premiers' wish lists given to the prime minister as part of this new nation-building 2.0 project. Every municipality would be pushing it, but the word "Indigenous" wasn't even included in the main page for the recent Federation of Canadian Municipalities annual conference and trade show, let alone meaningful action.

Canadians need to be realistic about reconciliation. It's action, not just words in land acknowledgements that don't address truth, Treaties, or commitments. Indigenous leadership regularly engages with businesses and governments with solutions to infrastructure needs, which are regularly disregarded. If we don't invest in the solutions, how can we have equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and, therefore, reconciliation? If businesses look down on diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and have poor, exclusionary hiring practices, how can we have reconciliation? If the municipalities, provinces, and federal government aren't investing, and are also looking down on DEI, again, how can we have reconciliation? We cannot. We need Canadians—who are starting to learn about the truth of these lands—and their governments to push themselves, in all sectors, on this issue. I want to see everyone working on dismantling the barriers the Indian Act created as part

“  
IF WE DON'T INVEST  
IN THE SOLUTIONS,  
HOW CAN WE HAVE  
EQUALITY  
BETWEEN  
INDIGENOUS AND  
NON-INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLE, AND,  
THEREFORE,  
RECONCILIATION?

of meaningful nation building and reconciliation. That should be the task of Prime Minister Mark Carney and all elected MPs without partisan games, as they are supposed to honour the Crown, not the petty parties. Indigenous people signed internationally respected Treaties with the

Crown. Honour the Treaties like we did in 1812 to protect ourselves from American overreach.

Michelle Robinson is Sahtu Dene, a member of Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and host of the Native Calgarian podcast. They are a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal (Alberta) recipient, former for municipal and provincial candidate, public speaker, panellist, advocate for Indigenous Peoples, founder of an Indigenous Book Club, co-founder of the Reconciliation Action Group, volunteer, and a mother.

*The Hill Times*



## OPINION

# Here's why Canada should say 'no' to LNG

Canada has the opportunity to lead in the global clean energy transition, not to follow outdated energy playbooks.

Nichole Dusyk

Opinion



As proponents celebrate the long-anticipated launch of LNG Canada's exports in a few weeks, it's time to take a sober look at where this road really leads. The answer, increasingly, is nowhere promising.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) has long been sold to Canadians

as a pathway to prosperity—a clean, lucrative export that would secure our economic future. But that narrative no longer holds up—if it ever did. From weakening global demand to volatile prices, foreign ownership, and the growing risk of stranded assets, LNG is an increasingly risky bet for Canada. Governments in Canada have already provided hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds to LNG projects, but the net benefit from these investments—whether jobs, royalties, or taxes—hinge on fluctuating global commodity prices, and are far from guaranteed.

Globally, the LNG market is growing more precarious by the day. European demand, once seen as a major driver of LNG growth, is falling fast as countries double down on renewables and energy efficiency. Emerging Asian economies, meanwhile, increasingly view LNG as unaffordable. Soaring prices and wild price swings have made it a risky gamble in

price-sensitive markets. As gas and LNG supply is increasingly caught up in international conflict and trade disputes, the imperative of importers to limit reliance increases. Governments looking to enhance energy security in turbulent times are turning to domestic resources, not foreign gas.

On the exporter side, the risk is equally pronounced. With global LNG supply expected to grow by 50 per cent by 2030—mostly in the United States and Qatar—the world is heading toward a supply glut. That oversupply could tank prices, squeeze margins, and leave stranded expensive new projects, like those proposed and under current construction in Canada. Previous research shows that the demand outlook for Canadian LNG is weak, meaning projects like LNG Canada risk becoming costly burdens. For instance, the British Columbia-LNG Canada Agreement allows for an estimated \$596-million in deferred

sales tax on construction costs that will not need to be fully paid back until the facility has been operating for 20 years. This deferral is effectively an interest-free loan that amounts to a multimillion-dollar subsidy, and could be much larger if LNG Canada were to become unprofitable by 2045.

A new Leger poll shows fewer than two out of 10 Canadians want their tax dollars going to largely foreign-owned LNG projects. At a time when clean electricity, energy-efficient homes, and electrified transportation are creating good jobs, lowering household costs, and building resilience for our economy, why would Canada double down on a high-cost, high-risk commodity with a shrinking market?

Canada has the opportunity to lead in the global clean energy transition, not to follow outdated energy playbooks. The world needs nations willing to step up and power the future with innovation, resilience, and sustainability. That's where Canada can excel.

We already have the building blocks: abundant renewable resources, world-class engineering talent, strong institutions, and a growing clean tech sector. By investing in clean electricity, energy efficiency, electrified transportation, critical minerals, low-carbon exports and grid

modernization, Canada can position itself not just as an energy superpower, but as a 21<sup>st</sup>-century energy superpower; not one defined by volatile commodities, but by stable, scalable, and sovereign energy solutions that align with global demand.

These economic opportunities are real, and so are the jobs. If Canada wants to remain competitive in the decades ahead, we must shift our focus from exporting fossil fuels to exporting know-how, technology, low-carbon products, and clean electricity, all while attracting investment in clean industries right here at home.

This is not an environmental argument, it's an economic one. The countries that move fastest toward clean energy will reap the rewards. If we want Canada to become an energy superpower, that means investing in what the world wants now, and in the future, not more LNG projects. LNG Canada will soon begin operations—now is the time to take a sober look at the long-term economic outlook for LNG exports, and stop making Canadians prop up a sunset industry.

Nichole Dusyk is senior policy adviser, and lead at the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

The Hill Times

# Why Canada's engagement with China is strategic sovereignty, not submission

Far from capitulation to coercion, Canada's pursuit of trade diversification reflects a clear-eyed strategy to mitigate existential risks posed by over-reliance on the U.S.

Wenran Jiang

Opinion



Critics advancing the "abuse victim" narrative contend that Canada's re-engagement with China ignores coercive patterns: arbitrary detentions of citizens Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor ("hostage diplomacy"), punitive measures like the 2019 canola suspension costing farmers \$2.7-billion, and alleged interference in Canadian elections. They claim pursuing trade ties despite these actions constitutes strategic amnesia, with Ottawa returning to an "abuser" for economic relief.

This narrative falsely equates Canada's situation with that of Japan, South Korea, and Australia—ignoring Canada's lack of

historical conflicts with China, absence of direct military threats requiring United States protection, and uniquely complementary trade (e.g., energy exports versus Japan's industrial competition).

But portraying Canada as an "abuse victim" is a dangerous oversimplification that obscures the complex realities of global diplomacy, and economic interdependence. This reductive analogy ignores Canada's agency as a sovereign nation capable of pragmatic decision-making, and disregards the structural imperatives driving bilateral engagement.

Recent consensus from the June 2 First Ministers' Meeting chaired by Prime Minister Mark Carney endorsed re-engagement with China as a national imperative, responding to U.S. President Donald Trump's 25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian metals, and his annexation threats. This commitment was swiftly operationalized: Carney's June 5 call with Chinese Premier Li Qiang urged reciprocal tariff relief on agricultural exports, reaffirming "predictable, rules-based trade"—a stance Li publicly welcomed as "constructive."

Far from capitulation to coercion, Canada's pursuit of trade diversification—including with China—reflects a clear-eyed strategy to mitigate existential risks posed by over-reliance on the U.S., which accounts for 75 per cent of its trade. When the Trump administration threatens tariffs

on Canadian metals or renegotiates NAFTA terms, Ottawa's pivot toward alternative markets becomes not weakness, but rational risk management.

The "abuse" framework also conveniently overlooks China's role as Canada's second-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$133.3-billion in 2024—a 6.1 per cent year-on-year increase. Saskatchewan and Alberta farmers rely on Chinese canola and pork demand, while British Columbia's liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects depend on Chinese investment. Reducing this multidimensional relationship to pathology denies Canada's capacity for interest-based diplomacy.

Critics weaponize incidents like the Meng Wanzhou case to paint China as irredeemable, ignoring diplomatic resolutions: Kovrig and Spavor's release coincided with Meng's return via U.S.-Canada legal compromise, proving behind-the-scenes negotiation efficacy—not surrender.

Similarly, framing trade disputes as "economic coercion" ignores reciprocity: Canada's 2024 100-per-cent electric vehicle tariffs, and 25-per-cent steel/aluminum duties directly triggered China's proportional countermeasures on canola and pork. Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe noted these retaliatory tariffs hurt farmers more than protecting industries, revealing Ottawa's alignment with U.S. protectionism—not Chinese malice—caused the crisis. Chi-

nese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's three-point framework ("mutual respect," "win-win co-operation," and economic "de-politicization") offers a constructive pathway for dialogue, not confrontation.

Claims that engagement enables interference collapse under scrutiny. Canada's robust safeguards—screening Chinese investments in AI/semiconductors, Five Eyes intelligence sharing, and the Foreign Interference Commission—balance sovereignty and engagement, aligning with then-foreign minister Mélanie Joly's "clear-eyed" approach.

Framing all Chinese commerce as predatory ignores tangible benefits: clean energy partnerships position Canada to lead carbon capture innovation, while agricultural exports sustain rural communities. Public opinion reflects this nuance—support for stronger China ties rose from five per cent in 2022 to 31 per cent in 2025, signalling recognition of interdependence.

Economically, isolating China would catastrophically damage Canadian prosperity. With U.S./European Union protectionist tariffs, agricultural and energy sectors face existential threats without diversified markets. China imports \$5-billion annually in Canadian canola alone—a Prairie province's lifeline amid separatist sentiments. The \$40-billion LNG Canada facility, partially Chinese-funded, creates thousands of jobs and anchors regional development.

Critics dismiss these gains as "momentary," yet data shows sustained growth: Chinese imports of Canadian goods surged to \$87-billion in 2024, with an 8.8 per cent year-on-year increase by March 2025. Canada should negotiate tariff reductions via the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or World Trade Organization frameworks to de-escalate tensions and restore market access—options that could de-escalate tensions while restoring market access.

The path forward requires disciplined pragmatism—neither naive embrace, nor hostile isolation. Carney's emphasis on "predictable, rules-based trade" leverages central banking expertise to hedge against U.S. volatility while engaging China on shared interests. This means expanding clean energy collaboration, negotiating WTO tariff truces, and insulating supply chains—without sacrificing human rights principles.

Canada's national interest lies in rejecting false binaries: as U.S. protectionism escalates, diversified partnerships ensure resilience. The emotionally potent "abuse victim" narrative undermines sovereignty by denying Canada's capacity to navigate complexity. True strength emerges not from ideological rigidity, but from the wisdom to engage adversaries without becoming them.

Wenran Jiang, the founding director of the China Institute and MacTaggart Research Chair Emeritus at the University of Alberta, is the president of Canada-China Energy and Environment Forum, and an adviser at the Institute for Peace and Diplomacy.

The Hill Times



## NEWS

# Bill C-5 grants ‘superpowers’ never before seen in ‘environmental law history’: Bloc critic Patrick Bonin

The One Canadian Economy Act is being rammed through the House via a ‘non-democratic’ process and would result in governmental overreach, say the Bloc Québécois, who plan to vote against the bill.

BY ELEANOR WAND

**B**loc Québécois environment critic Patrick Bonin says Bill C-5 gives the government the power to bypass environmental regulations, Indigenous land rights, and provincial jurisdictions, and says his party won’t support the legislation due to overarching concerns tied to Quebec’s sovereignty.

Prime Minister Mark Carney’s (Nepean, Ont.) two-pronged One Canadian Economy Act aims to establish free trade within Canada by removing interprovincial trade barriers, and grants the government the right to fast-track certain projects if they are deemed “in the national interest.”

Bonin (Repentigny, Que.) called it “the worst [bill] in terms of environment that we have seen, even compared” to former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper’s government. Bonin warned Carney’s legislation is being pushed through the House via a “non-democratic” process.

If passed, the bill would create a list of projects in the national interest, and could allow cabinet to bypass or skirt established laws and regulations to fast-track project approvals. Bill C-5 does not require consensus among provincial governments or Indigenous communities. Instead, it requires that “any provincial or territorial government” considered “appropriate” is consulted. It also requires consultation with Indigenous Peoples who have constitutional treaty rights and who may be affected by the project.

The Bloc, led by Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.), holds 22 seats in the Liberal-led minority Parliament, and has said they won’t support the law.

“What we are seeing is a government who wants to have



The Bloc Québécois, led by Yves-François Blanchet, have criticized Bill C-5 as an attempt at governmental overreach that risks violating provincial jurisdiction in Quebec. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

superpowers that could have never been seen ... in the environmental law history,” Bonin, a rookie MP, told *The Hill Times*. “We are highly concerned that they want to accelerate the approval of those projects at the cost of public consultation, environmental protection.”

On June 9, the party called on the government to split the bill into two portions so that the then-unformed House Environment Committee could study the second half of the bill in more depth, while the latter portion of the bill aimed at eliminating trade barriers could pass the House swiftly. The Environment Committee held its first meeting on June 16 to elect a chair.

Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) rejected the Bloc’s proposal, introducing a motion on June 12 to push the bill through the House by June 20, the last day the House is scheduled to sit before rising for the summer. He cited the government’s need to move quickly in the face of ongoing trade disputes with the United States and the economic precarity facing Canada.

MacKinnon’s motion means the House will only have five days to study the bill, an accelerated process that also has the NDP and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) joining in the Bloc’s opposition. Indigenous leaders have also called out the lack of consultation, with the the Chiefs of Ontario protesting with a rally on Parliament Hill on June 17.

The Red Chamber also approved a pre-study of the bill, with the Senate authorizing that a Committee of the Whole meet from June 16 to 18 to scrutinize the legislation and hear from Internal Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) along with Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), and Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Rebecca Alty (Northwest Territories), and others.

Senator Paul Prosper (Nova Scotia) of the Canadian Senators Group said he planned to introduce an amendment to delay the portion of the bill that deals with major projects, saying these “necessary steps” are needed given the “extraordinary powers” within the bill.

“If you don’t do it right, now, we’re looking at some potential litigation in the future,” he said at a press conference on June 16. “It’s best to be proactive now, and not let the bill take place on the backs of Indigenous people.”

## Do the Liberals have a mandate for this bill?

During Question Period on June 12, Bloc Québécois House Leader Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, Que.) slammed the government’s motion, saying in French that the bill raises major debates about the environment and Quebec’s sovereignty over its own territory.

“If there’s any bill that just needs to be studied thoroughly, it’s this one,” she said in French.

“Is that the prime minister’s intention, to bypass Parliament and govern by decree like [U.S. President] Donald Trump?” Normandin asked.

But MacKinnon defended the government’s actions, saying the bill is in line with its mandate.

“Canadians and Quebecers spoke loud and clear of the necessity of transforming our economy,” he said in the June 12 exchange, calling the legislation necessary, and emphasizing that it will move forward.

Carney has also repeatedly promised, both on the campaign trail and since his election, to establish free interprovincial trade by Canada Day—a deadline that is only a couple of weeks away. The bill would need to pass the House and the Senate in a matter of days in order for the prime minister to achieve that goal.

Daniel Béland, a political scientist and director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, said it’s a strategic move for the Liberals to couple “controversial” and popular policies in one bill. But, he noted, Carney’s government could face problems down the line for ramming this legislation through, especially if public pushback grows. It could also cost the Liberals support in the future should they seek out the support of third parties for other legislation, he said.

“You have so many votes in favour of it,” he told *The Hill Times*. “Imagine if the Conservatives and the Liberals vote for this, it will be the large majority of MPs.”

But the concerns that have been raised won’t disappear, he added.

“You might ram this bill through, and then have a lot of social protest,” he said.

Bonin told *The Hill Times* he disagrees that the government has been given a mandate to pass Bill C-5, noting that the bill doesn’t provide clear criteria on what defines projects as in the “national interest.”

“They do have the mandate to govern Canada, respecting our democratic process and actual law,” he said. “What they are proposing is the opposite.”

Bill C-5 outlines broad criteria for projects in the “national interest,” including projects that will “strengthen Canada’s autonomy, resilience, and security”; “provide economic or other benefits to Canada”; “have a high likelihood of successful execution”; “advance the interests of Indigenous Peo-

ples”; and “contribute to clean growth and to meeting Canada’s objectives with respect to climate change.”

Bonin called this criteria vague, and said there’s nothing that gives Indigenous groups or provincial governments the right to a veto, which he called highly concerning.

“We’re talking about environmental sovereignty, for instance, for Quebec,” he said.

Rudy Husny, a political analyst and former adviser to then-prime minister Harper, said it’s a “good line” to say that the bill aligns with the Liberals’ mandate, considering Carney was elected on his promise of a unified response to threats to the Canadian economy. But, he added, if the government wanted to be “thorough” it ought to have tabled a fiscal update or a budget first.

“Normally, you start by taking stock of what are is our fiscal position,” Husny told *The Hill Times*. “We still don’t know what the deficit [is]. The last time we had a fiscal update was in December.”

“If you make that argument of urgency ... can we at least know what’s our current position before saying that we have to rush ... to improve the economy? What is the state of the economy right now? We don’t know.”

## ‘Straight from the [Conservative] handbook’

With 169 seats in the House, Carney’s minority government will need at least three votes from MPs from other parties to pass Bill C-5. The NDP and the Greens have called out the government’s attempts to rush through such a large piece of legislation, but the Conservatives voted with the Liberals on June 16 to approve the motion that would curtail the House’s debate and committee study on the bill.

Husny said he thinks that the government’s alignment with other parties will vary depending on the topic, but said that many of Carney’s first bills have been “Conservative promises.”

“Talking about justice, talking about pipelines—this is straight from the handbook of the Conservatives,” he said. “He’s governing more as a Conservative prime minister, but with the branding of being a Liberal.”

Béland also said that the Liberals are using Canada’s current trade “crisis” with the U.S. to get their legislation passed, noting that Carney is currently popular, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is trailing in public opinion polls.

“They want to do it now ... because, you know, we have not reached an agreement with the United States over trade, but there is discussion that it might happen soon,” he said.

On June 16, Carney met with Trump for the opening of the G7 in Kananaskis, Alta., and Trump told reporters that a deal within a couple of weeks is “achievable,” but said that he and the prime minister have “different concept[s]” in mind.

*ewand@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*



# Electoral success a temporary substitute for Israel-Gaza consensus as caucus quiet on sanctions, say Liberal sources

The prime minister can't keep everyone happy, but he will have more success than his predecessor by focusing on managing international relations rather than caucus concerns, says Thomas Juneau.

Continued from page 1

over the conflict remain within caucus, given his upset election victory and strong polling numbers, it's no longer "open season" on Carney (Nepean, Ont.) as it was in the latter months of his predecessor Justin Trudeau's time in office. Additionally, many of those who would usually be the most vocal have either been quieted by cabinet or parliamentary secretary positions, or are still holding out hope for a promotion in a future shuffle.

While Trudeau had increasingly allowed his caucus and cabinet members to freelance on the issue in the media, one senior government source said that, as with a range of files, once Carney has made a decision that he views is best for Canada, outside of consulting with his inner circle and relevant ministers, he is far less interested in debating with caucus or trying to "keep both sides happy."

Additionally, sources told *The Hill Times* that the recent election results in Canada and the return of U.S. President Donald Trump altered the pressure caucus members feel to speak out and their perspectives on Carney's approach.

"The Trump factor is big on this issue," said one Liberal Party official and campaign organizer, noting that unlike before the 2024 U.S. election when Trudeau was facing similar pressure from his party as then-president Joe Biden and his vice-president Kamala Harris were facing on the campaign, after Trump's victory and his more extreme pro-Israel positions, many Liberals can only "count their blessings" when compared to Carney.

Additionally, while Liberal caucus members on either side



Liberal sources say Prime Minister Carney will be able to keep a lid on dissent over Israel's war on Gaza as long as he can substitute polling success for a lack of consensus on the issue. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of the issue have deeply held personal views on the conflict, the source said that with their re-elections secured, there is less pressure from their constituents to distance themselves from the party's position, which would only hurt their chances of advancing to cabinet or retaining their current spot.

Last week, in co-ordination with the governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Norway, Canada announced it would be applying sanctions against Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich for "inciting violence against Palestinians" in the West Bank, its fourth round of sanctions targeting extremist settler violence.

A statement released by Global Affairs Canada detailing the sanctions described the two ministers as playing a "crucial role in facilitating the significant expansion of settlements and outposts in the West Bank, offering political cover to perpetrators of settler violence, and actively contributing to a more permissive environment for higher levels of harassment and violence by Israeli extremist settlers against Palestinian civilians." Additionally, the statement notes that while the sanctions are related to the West Bank, they "cannot be seen in isolation from the catastrophe in Gaza."

Speaking to reporters on June 10 following a Liberal caucus meeting, Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) officially announced the sanctions, calling extremist settler violence "a threat to the safety and security of Israelis and Palestinians" that prolongs the existing

conflict, and "erodes the path to a two-state solution."

Anand also pointed to a previous joint leaders statement on May 19 by Carney alongside U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron threatening "concrete action" if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government did not stop its renewed military offensive in Gaza, lift restrictions on humanitarian aid into the region, or fail to halt further settlement activity in the West Bank.

When asked whether Canada has plans to sanction Netanyahu, who appointed the two ministers to his cabinet, Anand noted that while Ben-Gvir and Smotrich are members of the government, they are not members of Netanyahu's party, but instead "coalition partners from far-right parties."

"These measures are directed against individuals who directly contribute to extremist settler violence ... not directed against the State of Israel itself," Anand told reporters, adhering closely to her prepared remarks. "Canada remains unwavering in its support for the State of Israel. Canada remains steadfast in its support for a two-state solution, so that both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace and security."

While the move was met with significant criticism from both U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, as well as the Liberals' opponents and critics domestically, there was a notable lack of the usual stream of caucus members willing to speak their minds to the media.

Liberal MP Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Que.), a regular and vocal critic of Trudeau's

decisions on the Israel-Gaza war, did not respond to reporters' shouted questions about his reaction to the sanctions as he arrived at the West Block on June 10, but appeared visibly frustrated.

One of the few Liberals to respond directly to the sanctions that day was Liberal MP Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre-Danforth East, Ont.), who called the sanctions "real, concrete, and significant steps that make clear that Canada is backing its words with actions," noting that Netanyahu's government had "dismissed" the previous joint statement in May "out of hand."

"These sanctions are warranted and needed to show that Canada will stand for international law and justice," Zahid told reporters during a press conference in support of the planned "Global March to Gaza," which would unsuccessfully attempt to cross the Rafah border in Egypt later that week.

However, when asked whether she views the sanctions as a change in approach to the conflict compared to Trudeau, or why Carney and other members of her caucus resisted labelling genocide as she does, pointing to the International Court of Justice's ruling in January 2024, Zahid merely rephrased her previous response.

"As a member of the Liberal caucus, I will continue to advocate that Canada always stands up for the principle of international law," Zahid said.

Liberal strategist and former ministerial staffer Dan Pujdak, now a chief strategy officer with Blackbird Strategies, said that while Carney has demonstrated a better understanding and more serious approach to the threat

posed by domestic antisemitism, he and his cabinet still have not found their "north star" on the conflict, allowing cabinet ministers to continue "opining on the issue to continue to fuel antisemitism in Canadian streets."

Pujdak said Anand's statement on the sanctions had improved since her first foray into the topic as foreign affairs minister on May 14, when she said the Israeli government was using "food as a political tool." However, her more recent statements in response to the renewed war between Israel and Iran demonstrated that there are still some improvements to be made, he said.

He pointed out that Anand took two attempts to recognize the threat Iran poses not just to Israel, but also to Canada's interests, and said the more egregious statement came from her parliamentary secretary, Rob Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.), who shared comments he had made in the House of Commons in a now-deleted social media post that Canada would use "every diplomatic tool available ... to ensure immediate de-escalation" of the tensions with Iran, including the sanctions that had been applied to Smotrich and Ben-Gvir.

"I sometimes wonder how much this government is focused on Canada's best interests internationally, and how much it's focused on diaspora politics," Pujdak said, adding that he also questions "how well this government understands the international environment" when it finds it difficult "to say that a nuclear-armed Iran would be a serious threat to Canada and our allies."

Thomas Juneau, a professor of public and international affairs at the University of Ottawa, told *The Hill Times* that he views the sanctions against the Israeli politicians as more of an effort to manage Canada's international relations than any internal caucus considerations or "domestic performance."

While Juneau said the distinction that the sanctions are being applied to individual ministers rather than the state of Israel itself won't make much of a difference to its supporters in Canada or the U.S., it's another step in Carney's efforts to strengthen and diversify Canada's international partnerships.

"If Canada is to have any impact on an issue like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or any other international issue, we cannot have any kind of influence on our own," Juneau explained. "The fact that this was done with those allies suggests that the foreign policy angle is being taken more seriously."

Additionally, Juneau said that the co-operation with allies suggests that Carney is more focused on what substantive actions his government could take to address the issue than Trudeau's more performative overtures.

"Trudeau tried to make everyone happy, but his approach had very little substance and made everybody, at least, partially unhappy," Juneau said. "It's too early to say if Carney will or won't fall into that trap, but in this case, there is substance."

sbenson@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



## NEWS

# Potential Canada-EU defence deal short on details as questions loom over feasibility of displacing U.S. links

‘Geography, cultural similarities, tight defence linkages—all of those things have gone hand in glove with the defence industrial links,’ says procurement expert David Perry.

Continued from page 1

Canadian Global Affairs Institute president David Perry, an expert on defence procurement, said there is still much to be determined about what a Canadian role in ReArm Europe would mean.

“I don’t think at this point we have a clear idea of what this will or won’t bring, but it’s a new opportunity and a new market to potentially solidify and further relationships we have to some extent, but in some cases could be stronger,” he said. “What the prime minister is doing by signing on is absolutely the right thing to do, but we’ll have to see what comes of it—what opportunities exist in practice, not just in theory.”

Perry said he views Canada’s role in the plan through a lens of diversification as opposed to charting a course for greater stability.

On the day of the Throne Speech, Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) questioned the logic of having so much defence capital flowing south of the border.

“Seventy-five cents of every dollar of capital spending for defence goes to the United States—that’s not smart,” he told the CBC, remarking that he would like to see “something concrete” by July 1.

The public broadcaster subsequently reported on June 13 that a deal could be inked as early as June 23, with the expected signing to take place at the Canada-European Union summit in Brussels later this month.

The Canadian government has indicated it is working with Brussels to see where it can find “mutually beneficial” procurement projects.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the current moment is one to “strengthen Canada’s role in



Defence Minister David McGuinty recently took his first trip to Europe since taking over his new post. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Europe’s rapidly evolving defence architecture.”

“We have started to discuss how we can get even closer in building up our defence architecture,” she said during a pre-G7 summit press conference in Kananaskis, Alta., on June 15.

Von der Leyen said Canada and Europe are working together to sign a defence and security partnership at the Canada-EU summit, which would give Canada access to the ReArm Europe plan.

“The security and defence partnership will basically open the door for joint talks with Canada and their access to our SAFE program,” she said.

The SAFE initiative—Security Action for Europe—offers up to \$235-billion of loans aimed at boosting defence capabilities with “common procurement.”

Perry said that it is still unknown if Canada’s bid to join ReArm Europe would reposition the country from a north-south military co-operation view to one that is increasingly transatlantic.

“Geography, cultural similarities, tight defence linkages—all of those things have gone hand in glove with the defence industrial links,” he said. “Part of the reason we’ve had access to the U.S. market is that we’ve purchased a lot of our defence goods from there.”

He said that regardless of new projects to increase European defence spending, it likely won’t match what the U.S. would be looking to spend.

“The U.S. market is going to remain larger. Just on the straight economics of it, there’s more potential opportunity in the U.S.,”

he said. “Canada has had highly preferential access to the American market ... compared to some other countries.”

It’s unknown how the Canadian defence industry’s access to Europe would work in practice, Perry said.

He added that it is a novel mechanism through which companies would have to navigate. Perry said that Canadian firms are much more aware of what opportunities exist south of the border.

For decades, Canada has attempted to diversify its trading relationship to overcome its reliance on the U.S. market with little success as few companies could resist an overarching dependency on the world’s largest market just across the border.

“As much as [this] is setting up diversity of supply, my guess is that it may not be all that different from regular commercial trade under the CETA [the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade] Agreement, where the government negotiated the agreement, and that framework’s in place, and Canadian companies have that ability to sell into Europe under preferential tariff situations; but the actual take-up on that, and the take-up on using the preferences that have been negotiated for companies to use, is not as extensive as the expectation was,” he said.

## The third option 2.0

In the early 1970s, the government of then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau proposed a third

option to reduce reliance on the U.S., which was ultimately unsuccessful.

Andrew Rasiulis, a former Department of National Defence official, said that the proposed Canadian participation in ReArm Europe brings “a lot of *déjà vu*.”

He noted that in the late 1970s, as Canada was pushing for a third option with Europe, the Trudeau government purchased Leopard 1 tanks from the West Germans.

“We’re doing another version—an Act Two—of diversification that we did in the ‘70s,” Rasiulis said. “We know what happened in the ‘70s—it didn’t work very well.”

He said while the Canadian Army bought more European kit—such as the West German tanks and jeeps, as well as Belgian arms—it didn’t move the needle in any major way.

“Politically speaking, it didn’t change a lot. We’ve kept drifting towards the United States,” he said, remarking that the Canadian defence industry preferred a north-south model as opposed to a transatlantic one. “It’s just that much easier.”

The success or failure of Ottawa joining ReArm Europe will depend on how much the continent wants Canada to be part of its system, Rasiulis said.

It will also depend on whether there will be a return to more normal operations in the Canada-U.S. relationship.

“If things normalize in our relations with the United States ... I would bet that Canadian industry would return to the gravitational pull of the United States,” he said. “Unless the government has incentives, then industry will go the easy way.”

## Will Canada-U.S. relationship nadir break decades-long defence industry bonds?

Charles Davies, a former defence procurement official, said that while joining ReArm Europe is a shift for Canada, it remains to be seen if Ottawa will reorient its defence relationship away from the U.S.

Davies, a retired colonel in the Armed Forces, was the senior director responsible for material acquisition at DND.

“Defence co-operation between Canada and the U.S. is many decades old—well established, lots of very strong industrial partnerships that cross the

border. Certainly, while things have gotten awkward in the last number of months, it remains to be seen what the long-term impact of the Canada-U.S. relationship is going to be,” he said, remarking that is particularly true for defence industrial co-operation.

But Davies said that there is “considerable scope for broadening the range of partners” that Canada deals with.

“Europe offers a very attractive-looking option,” he said.

He said that doesn’t have to come at the expense of cutting down on co-operation with the U.S.

Davies said that if the Liberal government is contributing funding to ReArm Europe, it will expect to receive industrial and economic benefits in Canada from those projects.

He added that it’s not just defence firms that could have a role to play in ReArm Europe, but also more conventional civilian companies, like Bombardier.

## Fighter jet, submarine buys unlikely to be included

With Canada embarking on two major procurements to replace its fleets of fighter jets and submarines, procurement experts say they believe those will not likely be part of any ReArm Europe effort.

Perry said based on the categories for which the European management plan has signalled loans would be used, it would be unlikely that the two major Canadian purchases would be covered.

The European Commission has indicated that seven categories would be covered by loans: “air and missile defence”; “artillery systems”; “missiles and ammunition”; “drones and anti-drone systems”; “strategic enablers and critical infrastructure protection, including in relation to space”; and “cyber, artificial intelligence, and electronic warfare.”

“You’d have to take a very elastic definition of maybe air and missile defence to shoehorn fighter capability into one of the capability areas that it is about,” Perry said. “It’s not about fighter aviation.”

Perry also said none of the categories would cover submarine technology.

The federal government is currently reviewing the plan to purchase F-35 warplanes from U.S.-based Lockheed Martin. A recent report from Auditor General Karen Hogan found that the cost of buying F-35s had risen to \$27.7-billion from the \$19-billion price tag that was pegged by DND in 2023.

Davies said integrating a European aircraft within NORAD would be “difficult.”

“None of them has the ability to seamlessly integrate systems and share data in real-time the way the F-35 is designed to do,” he said, but noted that if Canada wants a permanent air presence in Europe, then a European design would make sense.

*nmoos@hilltimes.com*  
The Hill Times





# Your broadcast, digital and telecom news service

Our specialty is the intersection of business, technology, and government, with a special focus on the regulatory sphere.

We provide daily coverage of breaking news and longer-form features about the wireless, wireline, broadcast and streaming sectors, as well as digital advertising, privacy, copyright and other Internet-related issues.

## WIRE REPORT



SIGN UP FOR  
A **FREE TRIAL**  
TODAY!

For more information visit  
[thewirereport.ca](http://thewirereport.ca) or call 613-688-8821



# NEWS

## ‘I’m a tariff person’: Trump doubles down on levies as new deal pledged within 30 days

Prime Minister Mark Carney’s meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump overshadowed the first day of the G7 summit in Kananaskis, Alta.

Continued from **page 1**

in Kananaskis, Alta., as part of the G7 leaders’ summit in the Rocky Mountain resort town. The majority of international press covering the summit are doing so more than 80 kilometres away in Banff, with only a select few allowed in the summit site.

The leaders have set a target to complete an economic and security partnership within 30 days, according to the PMO read-out of the meeting.

Trump said that Carney has a “more complex idea” than tariffs, which he remarked is “also very good.”

“We’re going to look at both. We’re going to come out with something,” he said.

Carney has revealed little of what he hopes will be contained in a proposed economic and security partnership with the U.S.

When asked earlier if the deal was within reach in the coming days, weeks, or months, Trump told reporters that it is.

“It’s achievable,” he said. “Both parties have to agree.”

The first day of the G7 summit also included a multilateral session on the global economic outlook, as well as bilateral meetings between Carney and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President António Costa.

Trump made an early departure from Alberta after the leaders’ dinner on June 16 “because of what’s going on in the Middle East,” according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

### Tariffs should be removed: Hillman

In his meeting with Trump, Carney was joined by Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), but not Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.).

The U.S. delegation included Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, according to a pool report.



Prime Minister Mark Carney, centre, and Canada-U.S. Trade Minister Dominic LeBlanc, right, met with U.S. President Donald Trump, left, at the G7 in Kananaskis, Alta., for the first time since their Oval Office meeting last month. Screenshot courtesy of X



International press are covering the G7 from Banff, Alta., more than 80 kilometres from Kananaskis. The Hill Times photograph by Neil Moss

LeBlanc said that Canada is “confident” that progress has been made.

He told reporters during a scrum in Kananaskis that after the meeting, he and Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsten Hillman met with Greer and other American officials. He added that the two sides agreed to another meeting later in the week.

Hillman said Canada’s objective is to eliminate tariffs.

“Our position is that we should have no tariffs on Canadian exports to the United States—that is our position,” she said. “We will continue to talk until we find the deal that is the best deal to achieve for Canada.”

“We have had a lot—especially recently—of productive conversations where we are understanding each other better. We feel they’re understanding us better,” she said, remarking that was the case on the first day of the summit with the two meetings. “But we’re not there yet.”

Hillman said there has been an “acceleration in the discussions in the last couple of weeks.”

Neither LeBlanc nor Hillman would comment on whether Trump reiterated his frequent threat to absorb Canada as a “51<sup>st</sup> state.”

The scrum wasn’t broadcast at the Banff media centre.

### CUSMA not a target of U.S. trade action: Chamber

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce’s Matthew Holmes, executive vice-president, international, and chief of public policy, said there was no expectation for there to be a trade deal finalized before the leaders head home.

“Our expectation is that they’re not going to come out of this meeting with a wet-inked deal and here’s the new order—that’s just not my expectation,” Holmes told *The Hill Times* during an interview at the Banff media centre.

He said that he is “optimistic” that there will be a “next step” taken, referencing the announcement of a framework on trade between the U.S. and the United Kingdom shortly after a phone call between Trump and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

That framework was signed in Kananaskis and celebrated as a completed trade deal by Trump and Starmer. The British prime minister told reporters that the deal was the implementation of the previously announced agreement, which dealt with lowering tariffs on steel and autos. The two leaders didn’t offer details of what was included in the signed agreement.

Holmes said that while Trump doubled down on tariffs, he left possibilities open.

“He spoke with some openness to what Prime Minister Carney has positioned in front of him,” he said. “That’s a really healthy signal that the talks are continuing.”

He said that there are “promising” signs for Canada-U.S. trade emerging, citing a recent delegation visit by the Chamber of Commerce to Washington, D.C.

He said Congressional officials signalled that the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) is not a target of American trade action.

“Nobody is being asked to make that problematic or walk away from that agreement,” he said.

CUSMA is up for review in 2026, which gives the parties the ability to indicate their desire to leave the pact within 10 years.

Holmes said linked to the negotiations is a deeper concern over adhering to agreements being made.

“You rip up our trade agreement once, shame on you. You rip it up twice, shame on me,” he said. “A third renewed agreement is only so strong, and is only so good as the parties’ willingness to abide by it.”

He said the trust that has been broken will take some time to heal.

“In the meantime, there will be that threat that this can happen again,” Holmes said. “We need to diversify our risk. We need to diversify our trading partners.”

That diversification can happen at the same time as Canada still takes advantage of its access to the U.S. market, he said.

### The case for a slow approach

Carlo Dade, director of international policy at the University of Calgary’s School of Public Policy, said Canada isn’t as desperate as other countries given the global tariffs being applied.

He said that one pathway to remove the American tariffs is to allow the U.S. judicial process to carry out.

Federal courts have ruled against Trump’s imposition of International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs, which include those on Canada under the guise of dealing with fentanyl and border issues. Those cases are currently being appealed.

Dade said that Canada shouldn’t be finalizing a deal until it has clarity on IEEPA tariffs as Canada would no longer have to be in the position of hoping that the Trump administration honoured trade commitments by not enacting tariffs.

“That’s more important than rushing into an agreement now,” he said. “You could get an agreement that [becomes] meaningless.”

He said that with whatever agreement Canada negotiates to remove tariffs with the U.S., there is a question of whether the agreement will last.

“We may make concessions to prevent this round of tariffs, only to have Trump change his mind the next week or next month,” he said, remarking a court decision that reins in IEEPA powers would provide sufficient assurances to offer concessions.

*nmoos@hilltimes.com*  
*The Hill Times*



# BOIE pushes discussion of NDP resources to future meeting as Bloc mulls 'significant' rule changes

Continued from page 4

The MP working group is set to hold its next meeting on June 20, and plans to hold five meetings this fall, including one with its counterpart Senate subcommittee.

That meeting's agenda is expected to include discussion of a proposal to renovate the Confederation Building in a single phase. At present, approved plans would see the building renovated in multiple phases while still partially occupied.

Back in May 2024, the MP working group gave PSPC a green light to explore a potential one-phase approach to the building's renovation, which the department said would provide cost and time savings, and mean less disruption for MPs, but would require finding sufficient swing space to house displaced offices. Currently, Confederation is home to 162 office suites.

With few real estate options in close proximity to Parliament Hill, one option identified by PSPC is to use the Senate's share of Block 2 offices—54 suites—so that all of Block 2 (roughly 150 offices overall) could be used as interim space for MPs displaced from the Confederation Building.

Doing so, however, would further delay Senators' move out of the East Block.

As a result, last October, the Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee recommended against agreeing to PSPC's proposed plan—at least for the time being.

## What is the BOIE?

The BOIE is the executive committee of the House of Commons, and is responsible for overseeing all financial and administrative matters.

Established through the Parliament of Canada Act, the board is chaired by the House Speaker—June 12 was Scarpaleggia's first time chairing a meeting—and always includes two government-appointed MPs who are members of the Privy Council, the leader of the opposition or their representative, and other members from recognized parties "appointed in numbers so that there are an equal number of government and opposition representatives" (the Speaker not included).

The board has seven members, including its chair. With the NDP no longer enjoying recognized status, members this Parliament are: MacKinnon, Liberal Whip Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Ont.), Liberal MP and deputy House leader Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Ont.), Scheer, Conservative Whip Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie, Alta.), and Perron.

The House clerk serves as secretary to the BOIE.

More specifically, the BOIE is responsible for overseeing, amending, and adjudicating the Members By-Law, which set out the terms of use for House resources, including budgets, offices, and travel points, and MPs' responsibilities as employers; the Committees By-Law, which deals with spending by special, legislative, and standing committees, and the Governance and Administration By-Law, which sets out the responsibilities of the administration, BOIE, House clerk, Clerk's Management Group (a body chaired by the clerk and made up of senior administration officials which sets the overall direction of priorities of the administration). Additionally, it oversees the Members' Allowances and Services Manual, a comprehensive guide on the allocation and use of House resources to MPs and House officers, covering everything from office budgets (and relevant supplements), to printing and mailing services, travel allotments, expense limits, staffing, and what happens with all of the above in the case of dissolution or an MP's death.

It also receives and approves the House administration's strategic plan, the annual Report to Canadians, financial reports, the annual report on the MP workplace harassment and violence prevention policy, reports on committee and parliamentary association activities, and MP, House officer, and committee expenditure reports, among other things.

If House resources are alleged to have been misused—for example, for partisan rather than parliamentary purposes—it's the BOIE alone that makes that determination. And if an MP encounters a legal issue related to their role as parliamentarian, the BOIE has the say on whether to reimburse resulting legal fees.

The board is one of the few parliamentary bodies with "intersessional authority," enabling it to continue to meet and make decisions during prorogation or dissolution.

Each Parliament, two spokespeople are appointed to respond to questions from the media or in the Chamber. As of June 12, they are Warkentin and MacKinnon.

The MP LTVP working group is currently the only sub-body of the board.

Previously, the BOIE met exclusively in camera; it opened its doors in 2017, though it continues to go in camera to discuss matters deemed more sensitive, like security, employment, and legal issues.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times

# Piggybacking changes to privacy laws 'has nothing to do with affordability,' say critics of Bill C-4

Continued from page 3

affordability and tax reduction—Part 4 is decidedly unlike the others, though not completely unfamiliar.

Deacon noted that the language mirrors that of 2023 budget implementation bill, which also proposed an amendment to the Elections Act "to provide for a national, uniform, exclusive and complete regime applicable to registered parties and eligible parties respecting their collection, use, disclosure, retention and disposal of personal information."

However, Deacon said neither was a legitimate attempt to do so, and instead have been attempts to block the application of B.C.'s provincial privacy laws, and undo the recent court decision mandating the federal parties' compliance with them.

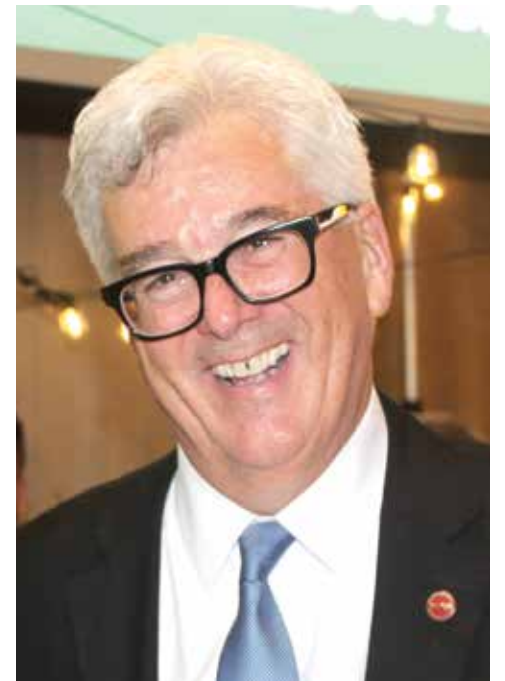
"It's concerning that all three major federal political parties are good with citizen privacy rights remaining a promise, versus a reality," Deacon said, noting that he viewed the lack of more serious debate and criticism from the Conservatives and NDP as an indication of their passive support for it.

"Unfortunately, Canada is desperately behind in terms of privacy, data rights, and cybersecurity for consumers and citizens," Deacon said. "In this transformative era of AI, with quantum sitting on our doorstep, data rights are at the core of our individual and collective sovereignty. They are foundational and crucial to building and maintaining social licence."

Andrew Clement, a computer scientist and professor at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information and one of three complainants in the B.C. court case, told *The Hill Times* that while he understands the Liberals' urgency on the rest of the legislation, there is no evidence for the need to expedite changes to the Elections Act—especially less than two months after the last election.



Andrew Clement, a complainant in the B.C. case, says the Liberals' rush to pass C-4 and lack of transparency only reinforces the feeling that the parties have 'something to hide.'  
Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Senator Colin Deacon says it's concerning that one of the few things Liberals, Conservatives, and the NDP can agree on is keeping Canada from progressing on its promise to protect privacy rights. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

Given the third attempt to make these changes and the parties' long and expensive legal case in B.C., Clement said he is left with the impression they have "something to hide." This feeling is only reinforced by the inclusion of the proposed changes at the end of an affordability bill, he said.

"The affordability premise is a no-brainer politically, but what's the hurry to give political parties the ability to collect these vast amounts of information just to target their advertising?" Clement questioned. "This is unfortunate to say the least, and it belies Carney's claim that he wants to govern in a new way when they're just doubling down on the same game."

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada wrote that it is currently analyzing the bill and would share its observations, "including any potential impact its provisions may have on Canadians' fundamental right to privacy, with parliamentarians at the appropriate time."

During his appearance before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee's study of the budget bill in May 2023, Privacy Commissioner Philippe Dufresne said, "Canadians need and deserve a privacy regime for political parties that goes further than self-regulation and that provides meaningful standards and independent oversight to protect and promote electors' fundamental right to privacy."

sbenson@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



# Party Central



By Stuart Benson

## Serena Ryder, Logan Staats, and Crown Lands rock the GG's Performing Arts Awards

Governor General Mary Simon rolled out the red carpet on June 14 to celebrate the legends, rising stars, and dedicated volunteers of Canada's performing arts community.

The National Arts Centre rolled out the red carpet on June 14 to celebrate some of the biggest stars in Canada's arts and entertainment community at this year's Governor General's Performing Arts Awards.

**Party Central** suited up on a Saturday to join ambassadors, socialites, and the deep-pocketed supporters of the performing arts for a night of glitz, glamour, and some incredible live performances in tribute to this year's 2025 GGPAA laureates, followed by a roaring party that lasted well into Sunday morning.

Arriving just before 6:30 p.m., **Party Central** missed the pre-show VIP cocktail reception that had begun an hour before, but still managed to secure an excellent vantage point along the crimson catwalk ahead of the guests of honour's arrival.

As always, the first arrival was the gala's usual host, **Isabelle Racicot**, a three-time Sounds of Blackness Awards' Female Personality of the Year. She was followed by some of the evening's special guest performers and presenters, including Gemini Award-winning actor and director **Lorne Cardinal**, Mohawk rocker **Logan Staats**, Crown Lands' **Cody Bowles** and **Kevin Comeau**, singer-songwriter **Serena Ryder**, and the filmmakers behind the laureate tribute videos presented throughout the night from the National Film Board, **Monique Leblanc** and **Tara Johns**.

Next, it was this year's GGPAA laureates' turn to strut their stuff, accompanied by entourage of assorted family and friends, including legendary music producer **Bob Ezrin**, who has contributed to equally legendary albums by artists including **Rod Stewart**, **U2**, **Peter Dinklage**, **Alice Cooper**, **Taylor Swift**, and Pink Floyd's *The Wall*; Juno, Opus, and SOCAN awards-winning composer **Denis Gougeon**; Oscar nominated and Gemini-winning actor **Graham Greene** of *Dances With Wolves* and *The Red Green Show*-fame; comedian **Patrick Huard**, the francophone funny man best known in the anglosphere as the surly *Sûreté du Québec* bad boy in *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*, opposite 2019 laureate **Colm Feore**; and **Sandra Laronde**, a multidisciplinary artist and the founding artistic director of Red Sky Performance.

Joining the laureates on the red carpet were this year's mentorship program duo: mentor **Atom Egoyan**, a 2015 laureate and internationally distinguished director of films like *The Sweet Hereafter*, and protégé **Joshua Odjick**, a rising star from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg who has begun branching out from his already successful acting career into filmmaking. Also on hand were 2025 NAC Award winner

**Jeremy Dutcher**, a composer, ethnomusicologist, and Wolastoqey-language tenor from Tobique First Nation; and Mi'kmaw soprano **Emma Pennell**, who received this year's RBC Emerging Artist award and the cool \$25,000 cash prize.

Performance artist and disability advocate **April Hubbard** was also honoured with the 2025 **Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award** for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts in recognition of her more than two decades of dedication to the Halifax Fringe Festival, and her accessibility and inclusion advocacy.

Last, but certainly not least—particularly because it's her awards show—was the arrival of Governor General **Mary Simon**, and her husband—or viceregal consort, if you're fancy—**Whit Fraser**, after which the rest of the attendees and **Party Central** were ushered into the NAC's Southam Hall for the night's tribute performances.

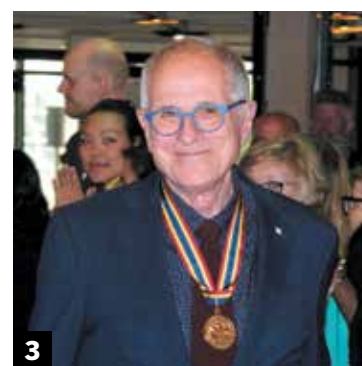
Seated this year in the front row of the second-level mezzanine section overlooking the laureates, **Party Central** managed to get a good look at several of the VIPs illuminated by their spotlight, including Ireland's Ambassador **John Concannon**; Swedish Ambassador **Signe Burgstaller**; Colombian Ambassador **Carlos Morales Lopez**; European Union Ambassador **Geneviève Tuts**; former governor general **David Johnston**; NAC president and CEO **Christopher Deacon**; Gowlings' **Jacques Shore**; **Adrian Burns**, former NAC board of trustees chair; **Shannon Day-Newman**, Honens Ottawa Laureate Circle chair; Liberal MP **Mona Fortier**; independent journalist **Paul Wells**; and several *The Hill Times* colleagues, including publisher **Leslie Dickson**, and *Politics This Morning*'s **Riddhi Kachhela**.

Once the guests were seated, Racicot took to the stage to introduce the night's tributes, beginning with a tailored short film by the NFB, archived online with all previous years' films at [nfb.ca](http://nfb.ca). Each tribute highlighted and showcased the unique and trailblazing contributions of the laureates, featuring a powerful rendition of Staats' *Fear of the Flame* for Greene; a moving duet of Dutcher's *Take My Hand*, accompanied by 2024 mentor **Susan Aglukark**, and a medley of some of Ezrin's biggest hits including **Peter Dinklage**'s *Solsbury Hill*, Pink Floyd's *The Trial*, performed by Nepean High School music students, and mashup of **Alice Cooper**'s *School's Out* and Floyd's *Another Brick In The Wall Pt. 2*, performed by Ryder and Crown Lands.

Once the performances were finished just before 11 p.m., most attendees filed out of the theatre and back into the Canal Lobby, but **Party Central** managed to snag one of the exclusive black wristbands to gain entry to the VIP after party upstairs in the Canada Room. However, while that would have been a fantastic opportunity to network and rub elbows, this reporter was far more intrigued by the fried chicken or pork bao sandwiches, and the freshly made ice-cream sundae bar.

While this reporter called it a night just past midnight, sources say Ezrin made his buddy Cooper proud as the last man standing when the house lights finally went up.

[sbenson@hilltimes.com](mailto:sbenson@hilltimes.com)  
*The Hill Times*



*The Hill Times* photographs by Stuart Benson

1. Jess Milton, GGPAA foundation executive director, left; 2025 laureate Bob Ezrin; and singer-songwriter Serena Ryder at the 2025 Governor General Performing Arts Awards at the National Arts Centre on June 14. 2. GGPAA emcee Isabelle Racicot was the first to arrive on the red carpet. 3. Bob Ezrin. 4. Denis Gougeon. 5. Sandra Laronde. 6. Graham Greene, left, and his wife Hilary Blackmore. 7. Patrick Huard. 8. Atom Egoyan, left, and Joshua Odjick. 9. April Hubbard. 10. Governor General Mary Simon, right, and her husband Whit Fraser. 11. Staats, left, and Dutcher. 12. Hubbard, left, and Odjick. 13. Aglukark, left, and Laronde.



FEATURE

Italy raises a glass for national day  
*The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia



**1.** Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left, and Italian Ambassador Alessandro Cattaneo attend Italy's national day reception at the National Gallery of Canada on June 3. **2.** Sam Sgro, left, his wife Liberal MP Judy Sgro, Cattaneo, and his wife Laura Locatelli. **3.** Italian MP Andrea Di Giuseppe, left, Champagne, Cattaneo, Italian Senator Francesca La Marca, and Labour Secretary of State John Zerucelli raise a toast. **4.** Demet Dizdar, wife of the Turkish ambassador, left; Turkish Ambassador of Can Dizdar; and Dutch Ambassador Grietje Landman. **5.** Uruguayan Ambassador Gustavo Alvarez Goyoaga, left, Cattaneo, and Locatelli.

Hungary delights with anniversary concert



**1.** German Ambassador Matthias Lüttenberg, left, Israeli Ambassador Iddo Moed, Ecuadorian Ambassador Esteban Crespo Polo, Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, Edward Salazar, and Hungarian Ambassador Mária Vass-Salazar attend a concert for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Liszt Academy at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre on May 12. **2.** Pianist Balázs János was the star performer for the packed house. **3.** János, left, and European Union Ambassador Geneviève Tuts. **4.** ISG Senator Suze Youance, left, and Vass-Salazar. **5.** Vass-Salazar, left, and author Margaret H. Dickenson.



# Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



## New Agriculture Minister MacDonald settles his senior staff team

Plus, updates for the offices of Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister Rebecca Chartrand and Secretary of State for Sport Adam van Koeverden.

New Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister **Heath MacDonald** has made progress in solidifying his office, and has settled his senior staff team, a roster which includes **Hilary Peirce** as director of policy. As reported by **Hill Climbers** last month, **Guy Gallant** is in place as chief of staff to MacDonald, having previously run the offices of then-agriculture minister **Lawrence MacAulay** and **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** through her turns as then-minister for official languages, veterans affairs, and briefly as Treasury Board president.

A number of Gallant's ex-colleagues from Petitpas Taylor's shop have been picked up by MacDonald.

Peirce, though, is a carryover from MacAulay's old team as agriculture minister. She returned to the Hill after roughly a year away to oversee policy work in MacAulay's office in August 2024.

A former assistant to then-Saskatchewan Liberal MP **Ralph Goodale**, Peirce was hired to tackle communications in Goodale's office as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister in early 2016. After the 2019 election—which saw Goodale lose his House seat—Peirce was hired as a policy adviser to then-agriculture minister **Marie-Claude Bibeau**. At the start of the subsequent, 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Peirce joined then-Treasury Board president **Mona Fortier**'s team, initially as a senior policy adviser. About a year later, in late 2022, she was promoted to director of labour relations—her last role before stepping away from the political trenches for a year.

**Serena Smith** has been hired as a senior adviser to MacDonald.

She comes from Petitpas Taylor's former team, having most recently been a senior legal adviser to Petitpas Taylor as then-Treasury Board president.

A former associate with Prince Edward Island law firm Cox & Palmer, Smith was first hired as a senior policy adviser to Petitpas Taylor as then-veterans affairs minister in May 2024. Petitpas Taylor, who is no longer in cabinet but continues to represent Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B., in the House, was shuffled from veterans affairs to Treasury Board this past December.

**Bradley Henstock** is continuing as director of parliamentary affairs to the agriculture minister.

Henstock is a former New Brunswick Liberal staffer—including a little more than two years spent as a communications officer in then-premier **Brian Gallant**'s office. He went on to briefly work as a constituency assistant to then-N.B. Liberal MP **Matt DeCourcey** at the end of the

42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, before landing a job as a special assistant for issues management and social media to MacAulay as then-veterans affairs minister in the spring of 2020.

Henstock was promoted to lead parliamentary affairs work for MacAulay in February 2023, and carried the title with him when he followed MacAulay to the agriculture portfolio in the wake of that summer's cabinet shuffle.

**Mikaela Harrison** has been hired as director of operations to MacDonald.

Harrison was previously director of communications to Petitpas Taylor as both veterans affairs minister and more recently as Treasury Board president, having worked for the now-former minister since the fall of 2023. Since landing her first cabinet job in the spring of 2019, Harrison has also been a senior communications adviser to then-infrastructure

and intergovernmental affairs minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, press secretary to then-families minister **Ahmed Hussen**, legislative assistant to LeBlanc as then-intergovernmental affairs minister and Privy Council president, and a special assistant in LeBlanc's offices as then-Privy Council president (when he held that solo portfolio) and as then-intergovernmental affairs,

northern affairs, and internal trade minister.

Finally, rounding out the list of staff so far confirmed in MacDonald's office is director of communications **Annie Cullinan**, having previously done the same for MacAulay as then-agriculture minister since 2023.

Cullinan has been working for the Liberal

government since the fall of 2018, starting as a special assistant in then-border security minister **Bill Blair**'s office. Cullinan followed Blair to the public safety portfolio following the 2019 election, becoming an Atlantic regional adviser. She briefly left to work as press secretary and issues manager to then-special representative for the Prairies **Jim Carr** for a good chunk of 2021. After that year's federal election, she was brought back to serve as press secretary to Blair as then-emergency preparedness minister, and was promoted to communications director in September 2022.

Jumping over to Northern and Arctic Affairs Minister **Rebecca Chartrand**'s burgeoning office, **Kyle Allen** is officially in place as director of communications.

Allen recently did the same for now-Public Safety Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** during his brief run overseeing the northern affairs file.

Anandasangaree, who was named Crown-Indigenous relations minister in July 2023, became Crown-Indigenous relations and northern affairs minister with then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau**'s Dec. 20, 2024, shuffle. In March, he was given the added role of justice minister and attorney general. Anandasangaree carried all three titles through to May 13 when he was named to his current role.

Allen was previously director of communications, parliamen-

tary affairs, and issues management to then-northern affairs minister **Dan Vandal**. Allen started out as Vandal's press secretary in January 2022, and was promoted to his triple-barreled title in September 2023. Prior to joining Vandal's team, Allen was a special assistant

for communications with the Liberal research bureau.

As previously reported, **Kathy Kettler** is chief of staff to Chartrand, who is also the minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

Stay tuned for more updates on Chartrand's team, and beyond.



Mikaela Harrison is director of operations to the agriculture minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Kyle Allen is communications director to Minister Chartrand. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

In August 2024, Hadaller was promoted to director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Joly—her most recent post. According to her LinkedIn profile, she spent this year's election as the federal Liberal Party's Get Out the Vote director in B.C.

Now chief of staff to van Koeverden, this marks Hadaller's first time leading a ministerial office.

An Ontario MP since 2019, van Koeverden is a cabinet rookie, but has held a number of parliamentary secretary roles over the years, including to the ministers for environment and climate change, sport, health, and diversity and inclusion and youth.

Including Hadaller, that makes 31 confirmed cabinet chiefs of staff who have been reported in these pages to date, including **Marc-André Blanchard**, the incoming chief of staff to Prime Minister **Mark Carney**.

Five of those 31 chiefs of staff are running secretary of state offices. Aside from Hadaller, they are: **Maria Morley**, chief of staff to Secretary of State for Rural Development **Buckley Belanger**; **Alex Jagric**, chief of staff to Secretary of State for Children and Youth **Anna Gainey**;

**Kevin Collins**, chief of staff to Secretary of State for the Canada Revenue Agency and Financial Institutions **Wayne Long**; and **Noémie Fiset-Tremblay**, chief of staff to Secretary of State for Labour **John Zerucelli**.

Of Carney's 28-member roster of ministers, **Hill Climbers** is still awaiting official word of who will be chief of staff to four ministers: Treasury Board President **Shafqat Ali**, Foreign Affairs Minister **Anita**

**Anand**, Joly as industry minister, and International Trade Minister **Maninder Sidhu**.

That said, while it's not yet official, **Hill Climbers** understands **Taras Zalusky** is expected to be named as chief of staff to Anand. Zalusky previously ran Anand's office as then-defence minister, but stay tuned for an official update on where he's landed.

If you've crunched the numbers and are left wondering: the other 25 chiefs include two chiefs of staff for **Steven Guilbeault**, one—**Hilary Leftick**—for his office as Canadian identity and culture minister, and another—**Ann-Clara Vaillancourt**—for his office as Quebec lieutenant.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com  
The Hill Times



Now Secretary of State for Sport Adam van Koeverden speaks with reporters in the House of Commons foyer in the West Block on Nov. 20, 2024. He was sworn in to cabinet this past May. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

### Sport Secretary van Koeverden names chief of staff

Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeverden** has found a chief of staff to lead his office in **Lauren Hadaller**.

Hadaller spent the last roughly two years working for then-foreign affairs minister **Mélanie Joly**, but also brings experience from the year and a half she spent working for then-sport minister **Pascale St-Onge**, among other past roles.

A former assistant to British Columbia Liberal MP **Ron McKinnon**, Hadaller has been working for Liberal ministers since the fall of 2020, beginning as a policy adviser to Joly as then-economic development and official languages minister.

After the 2021 election—which Hadaller spent overseeing McKinnon's successful re-election campaign in Coquitlam-Port Coquitlam, B.C.—she was hired as a policy and Ontario regional adviser to St-Onge as then-minister for sport and the Economic Development for Quebec Regions agency. Hadaller was promoted to senior adviser to St-Onge in early 2023, but a few months later exited to join Joly's foreign affairs team as deputy director of parliamentary affairs and issues management.



Lauren Hadaller is chief of staff to the secretary of state for sport. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Hilary Peirce is director of policy to the agriculture minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Serena Smith is now a senior adviser to the agriculture minister. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Bradley Henstock is director of parliamentary affairs to Minister MacDonald. 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](mailto:news@hilltimes.com) by Wednesday at noon before the Monday paper or by Friday at noon for the Wednesday paper.

## Senator Mégie marks National Sickle Cell Awareness Day with parliamentary breakfast on June 19



Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie, pictured right with Dimitri St-Julien in 2017, will co-host a parliamentary breakfast to mark National Sickle Cell Awareness Day on June 19. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

### TUESDAY, JUNE 17—THURSDAY, JUNE 19

**Workshop: 'The Road to Sovereignty'**—Okimaw and Niipaawi Strategies host "The Road to Sovereignty," a three-day, high-level gathering focused on building Indigenous law policy frameworks that reflect the unique traditions, cultures, and governance aspirations of First Nations across Canada. Tuesday, June 17, to Thursday, June 19, at the Rideau Club, 15<sup>th</sup> floor, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

**House Sitting**—The House goes in late-night sittings until June 20, when it is scheduled to break for the summer. The House is scheduled to return on Monday, Sept. 15.

**NMMA Canada Parliamentary Reception**—It's boating season in Canada. Join the National Marine Manufacturers Association in Canada on the Rideau Canal to experience our boats and meet our Canadian manufacturers on Wednesday, June 18, from 5-8 p.m. ET beside the NAC patio and the canal. RSVP by June 13 to [rsvp@blueskystrategygroupp.com](mailto:rsvp@blueskystrategygroupp.com).

### THURSDAY, JUNE 19

**Sickle Cell Breakfast**—To mark National Sickle Cell Awareness Day, Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie will host a parliamentary breakfast in collaboration with Canada's Sickle Cell Association, and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Black Health of uOttawa. Thursday, June 19, 7:30-9 a.m. ET, Senators' Lounge, Senate of Canada Building, 2 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP by June 6 to: [dichema.jean-baptiste@sen.parl.gc.ca](mailto:dichema.jean-baptiste@sen.parl.gc.ca).

**Panel and Film Screening: *Shining Light***—The Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers hosts the Ottawa premiere of the documentary film *Shining Light: A Vietnamese Canadian Legacy*, an extraordinary mother-daughter story, their escape from war-torn Vietnam, a birth on a sinking ship, leads to a new life in Canada. A panel discussion will follow featuring Robbie Hart, director/co-producer, *The*

*Baby Born at Sea*; designer/entrepreneur Anh Vu-Lieberman; and former Canadian immigration officer Margaret Tebbutt. Thursday, June 19, at 7 p.m. ET at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St. Register via Eventbrite.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 20

**Congolese Excellence Award**—Liberal MP Marie-France Lalonde will present the Congolese Excellence Award at an evening celebrating the achievements and exceptional talent of the Congolese community in Canada. Friday, June 20, at 6 p.m. ET at 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 20—SUNDAY, JUNE 29

**Ottawa International Jazz Festival**—The Ottawa International Jazz Festival once again shines a national spotlight on Canadian jazz with a stellar lineup that stretches from coast to coast to coast. Friday, June 20, to Sunday, June 29 in Confederation Park and other downtown locations. Details: [ottawajazzfestival.com](http://ottawajazzfestival.com).

### TUESDAY, JUNE 24—THURSDAY, JUNE 26

**NATO Summit**—The 2025 NATO Summit will be held at the World Forum in The Hague, the Netherlands, from Tuesday, June 24, to Thursday, June 26. Details: [nato.int](http://nato.int).

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25

**Conference: 'Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance'**—The Canadian International Council co-hosts this conference, "Pluralism, Security, and the Future of the Transatlantic Alliance," exploring the intersection of pluralism, security, and transatlantic partnerships in an evolving global order with an emphasis on how Canada and Germany, as well as other G7 nations, can collaborate to strengthen inclusive societies and enhance stability. Wednesday, June 25, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Global Centre for Pluralism, 330 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details: [thecic.org](http://thecic.org).

**Panel: 'Freedom to Move'**—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts "Freedom to Move," a panel discussion on labour mobility and non-competes with experts from McMaster University, the Competition Bureau, and more. Wednesday, June 25, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

**GRIC Spring Social**—The Government Relations Institute of Canada's Board of Directors hosts a toast to the end of the Parliamentary session and to welcome the summer. Wednesday, June 25, at 5 p.m. ET at Beyond the Pale Taproom, 21 George St., Ottawa. Register: [gric-irgc.ca](http://gric-irgc.ca).

**Webinar: 'Is the Pivot Possible?'**—The Canadian International Council hosts a webinar, "Is the Pivot Possible? Evaluating Economic Diversification Options in the Age of Trump," featuring former co-CEO of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada Paul Evans, and retired diplomat and host of the *Global Exchange* podcast Colin Robertson. Wednesday, June 25, at 6 p.m. ET happening online: [thecic.org](http://thecic.org).

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26

**Sharon Musgrave is Retiring**—After 35.5 years at the CBC, Sharon Musgrave is ready to travel, sit on the dock and ski her butt off. Come and raise a glass to Musgrave, a friend and colleague. Thursday, June 26, 6 p.m. (speeches begin at 7 p.m. ET). The Met, 700 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Please RSVP: [rosemary.barton@cbc.ca](mailto:rosemary.barton@cbc.ca).

**A Discussion with Phyllis Webstad**—Library and Archives Canada and the Ottawa Public Library host an event in honour of National Indigenous History month featuring author Phyllis Webstad. Founding member of Orange Shirt Day and CEO for the Orange Shirt Society, Webstad will facilitate a dialogue around the Indian Residential School system, education, awareness, and healing. Thursday, June 26, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Register via Eventbrite.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 27

**Fireside Chat: 'Global War and Chaos'**—The Royal Canadian Legion hosts a fireside chat on "Global War and Chaos: How Did We Get Here and What's The Solution?" featuring retired general Walter Natynczyk and retired general David Lord Richards of Herstonceux. Friday, June 27, at 7 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

### SUNDAY, JUNE 29

**Ottawa Commission on the Future of Ireland**—Sinn Féin has conducted commission events the length and breadth of Ireland. Ottawa is the next stop as Sinn Féin encourages the Irish diaspora in Canada to have a say in Ireland's constitutional future. Featuring Sinn Féin TD Rose Conway-Walsh. Sunday, June 29, at Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts, 310 Saint Patrick St. Details via Eventbrite.

### MONDAY, JUNE 30

**Senator Gold's Retirement**—Today is non-affiliated Quebec Senator Marc Gold's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

### TUESDAY, JULY 1

**Beaumont Hamel and the Somme Anniversary Ceremony**—A ceremony will take place commemorating the 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battles of Beaumont Hamel and the Somme. Tuesday, July 1, at 8 a.m. ET at the National War Memorial, Elgin at Wellington Streets, Ottawa. Contact: 613-406-1414, [herb@herbdavis.net](mailto:herb@herbdavis.net).

**Canada Day in Ottawa**—Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, is expected to be in Ottawa for Canada Day festivities. Official celebrations will take place on the main stage at LeBreton Flats Park from 9 a.m. to 10:15 p.m. ET. Other events include the Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill at 10 a.m., the Snowbirds aerial show at 4 p.m., and fireworks by the War Museum at 10 p.m. ET. Details: [canada.ca](http://canada.ca).

### THURSDAY, JULY 3—SATURDAY, JULY 5

**CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting**—The annual Caribbean Community Heads of Government meeting is scheduled to take place from Thursday, July 3, to Saturday, July 5, in St. George's, Grenada. Details: [caricom.org](http://caricom.org).

### SATURDAY, JULY 5

**Canada First Stampede Barbecue**—The Conservative Party of Canada hosts its Canada First Stampede Barbecue at the Calgary Stampede. Saturday, July 5, at 5:30 p.m. MT at Heritage Park, 1900 Heritage Dr. SW, Calgary. Details online.

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

**Panel: 'Reforming Access to Information'**—As part of its CIPPIC Summer Speaker Series 2025, the University of Ottawa's Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic hosts a panel discussion on "Reforming Access to Information," featuring Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard, freelance journalist Dean Beeby, Canadian Press reporter Jim Bronskill, and access to information activist Ken Rubin. Wednesday, July 9, at 1 p.m. ET at uOttawa, 302 Fauteux Hall, 57 Louis-Pasteur Priv. Register via Eventbrite.

**Lawn Summer Night**—Cystic Fibrosis Canada's annual lawn bowling fundraiser is switching things up this year in Ottawa. We're condensing the excitement into one epic evening instead of four. Invite your friends out to come watch, and get ready for cold drinks and great prizes. Wednesday, July 9, at 6 p.m. ET at the Elmdale Lawn Bowling Club, 1 MacFarlane Ave., Ottawa. Details: [lawnsummernights.com](http://lawnsummernights.com).

### THURSDAY, JULY 10—SUNDAY, JULY 20

**Ottawa Bluesfest**—Ottawa's Bluesfest returns for 10 days featuring a lineup of musicians from a variety of genres including blues, world music, alternative, rock, jazz, funk, soul, rap, folk, urban, and more. Thursday, July 10, to Sunday, July 20 in LeBreton Flats Park, Ottawa. Details: [ottawabluesfest.ca](http://ottawabluesfest.ca).

## THE HILL TIMES CLASSIFIEDS

Information and advertisement placement:  
613-688-8821, [classifieds@hilltimes.com](mailto:classifieds@hilltimes.com)

### APARTMENT FOR RENT



#### 116 CARTIER #B \$3,500 FURNISHED

Experience curated luxury in this beautifully furnished one-bedroom pied-à-terre in Ottawa's sought-after Golden Triangle. Steps to Elgin Street, the Rideau Canal, Parliament Hill, ByWard Market, and Lansdowne. Enjoy skating, cycling, or running along the Canal. Stylish living spaces include designer furnishings, a decorative fireplace, original art, and a dedicated workspace. The dining room features exposed brick and seating for six. A European-style kitchen offers walnut counters, induction cooktop, and wine storage. Step out to a private patio with BBQ and speaker system. The bedroom includes luxe linens and built-ins; the spa-like bath features a soaker tub and heated towel rack. Fully automated with heated floors and A/C. Heat, water, and internet included, tenant pays hydro. Contact: Bruce Libbos, [bruce@libbos.com](mailto:bruce@libbos.com), 613-762-7823

### ROOM FOR RENT



Available: Furnished Bedroom with private bath in executive condo in Ottawa's Byward Market across from US Embassy. Steps from Parliament Hill. September 1st occupancy. Call 613.408-3549

### HOUSE FOR RENT



#### 5BR HOUSE IN CHELSEA

5 bed, 5 bath home in Chelsea QC. Available Sept 1 for 2-year lease, fully or semi-furnished. A family oasis on a 2-acre corner lot in Chelsea Park—just 15 minutes from Parliament and steps from Gattineau Park trails, skiing, and the river. The home features a cedar deck with pergola, BBQ, hot tub, and play-friendly yard with trampoline, garden, and slate patio. Inside: bamboo floors, secret children's loft, walk-out basement rec room, and 2-car garage with EV charger. Includes heat pump, washer/dryer, freezer, dishwasher, and BBQ. Pets allowed. Near top English and French schools, five minutes from Old Chelsea's cafés, Nordic Spa and La Cigale ice cream. Perfect for families or couples who love nature, space, and entertaining. Contact us at [torystevenshome@gmail.com](mailto:torystevenshome@gmail.com) or 819 208 5980.



# **THE LOBBY MONITOR DIGS DEEP ON:**

**CODE OF CONDUCT,  
ETHICS REPORTS,  
LOBBYING RULES,  
AND HOW THEY  
CAN AFFECT YOU.**

**TAKE A FREE TRIAL**  
**LOBBYMONITOR.CA**

