



No one appears able to stop Netanyahu
p. 9

A defence industrial policy is a good offence
p. 18



Carney's 15% challenge: cutting and rewiring the public service
p. 12



Exclusive opinion: inside

Exclusive news: inside



THE HILL TIMES

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Tariff export quotas could spare Canada pain from U.S. and serve as negotiating tactic with Trump, says Hampson

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

The endless rounds of negotiations between Canada

and the United States regarding tariffs could take a dramatic turn if Prime Minister Mark Carney's government offers

American President Donald Trump's administration a cap on what it exports south of the border, argues Fen Hampson, a

professor of international affairs at Carleton University, and co-chair of the Expert Group on Canada-U.S. Relations.

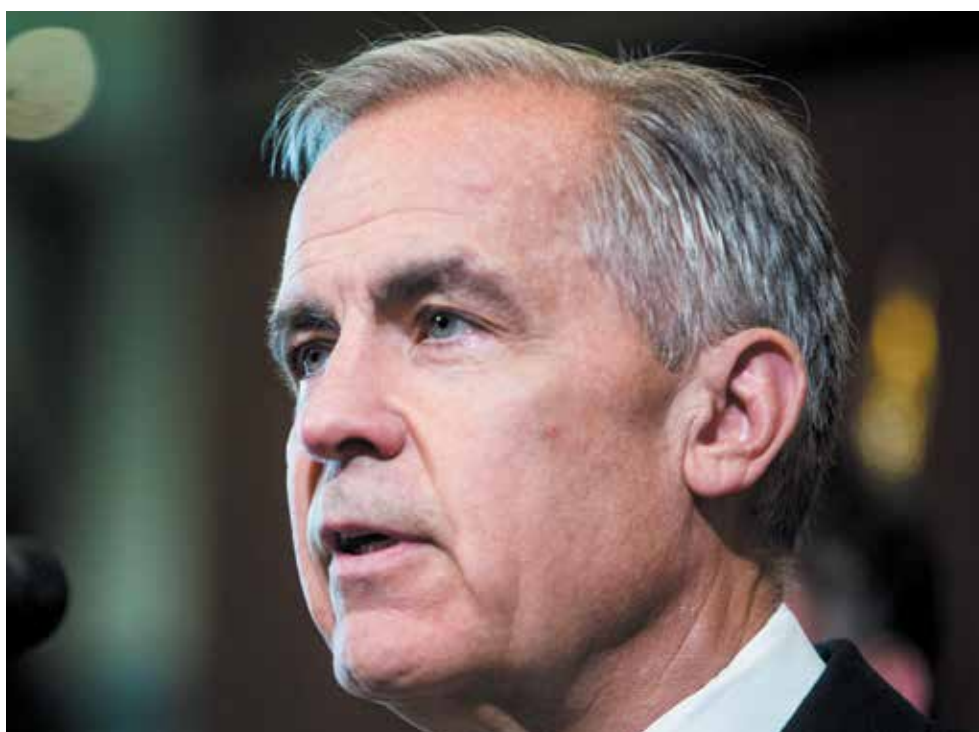
In a paper published by *Policy Magazine*, Hampson wrote that

Continued on **page 20**

NEWS

Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories are all open to pharmacare talks, but say they're not taking place

Prime Minister Mark Carney's government's commitment to a national pharmacare program is in question after the Liberals promised to 'protect' it during the 2025 election campaign. Health Minister Marjorie Michel's office says it will honour the four existing deals, but is not promising to negotiate others. Read the full story by **Tessie Sanci** on p. 5.



Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured on June 6, 2025, on the Hill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

U.S. a 'wildcard' in Canada-Mexico trade talks, but Canada has advantages in domestic energy and advanced manufacturing, say experts

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Expanding trade between Canada and Mexico is complicated by the overpowering economic weight of the United States in the middle, but our country does have some advantages, including expertise in clean energy, mining, and advanced manufacturing, say business and trade experts.

"The [Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement] makes the Canada-Mexico link always contingent ... on the activities that are happening in all three countries, plus the 800-pound gorilla that sits there and could, at any time, just throw something at Mexico that would either threaten them or just make it easier to receive from the U.S. some counter benefits," said

Continued on **page 21**

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

‘There’s insight. There’s context. There’s tea’: former comms chief Max Valiquette to serialize 10,000-word memoir of his time in Trudeau’s PMO



Former director of communications for then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, Max Valiquette, left, launched a Substack on Aug. 11 where he plans to publish his memoirs from his time working in the Prime Minister's Office, right. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn, and The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Max Valiquette is ready to talk about himself again, what he's up to now, and about his time in the Prime Minister's Office.

"I went silent for 18 months," the former executive director of communications for **Justin Trudeau's** PMO wrote on LinkedIn on Aug. 11. "Not because I had nothing to say; rather, it was because my job [at the PMO] wasn't about me. Now I'm back!"

His comeback includes launching a Substack where he plans to serialize a "10,000-or-so-word memoir" of his time at PMO "during what I will delicately call a *batshit-crazy time* in Canadian politics," he wrote in his first post on Aug. 11.

"There's insight. There's context. There's tea," he wrote. Catnip to **Heard on the Hill**, who subscribed immediately.

When he joined the PMO in November 2023, Valiquette brought with him two decades of experience in speaking publicly "on culture, politics, and business," but chose to mute his personal views in favour of promoting the prime minister and what the federal government were up to, which he did until this past March.

"I believed then, and still believe now, that public service comes with a responsibility to make it about the work, not about yourself. (That I was capable of

that may come as a surprise to some of you.)"

Now with the "kind of clarity that is only provided by distance"—five months—Valiquette is unpacking his "intense" time working in the Trudeau PMO, an experience which he describes as "extraordinary privilege" and "so much more complicated than it looks from the outside."

He's also writing other non-fiction, "the first in a series of academically-rigorous-but-highly-entertaining books, each tackling a single huge idea that shapes how we think and act and live," which he hopes to publish next year.

Volume Two of *Capitalism and Colonialism* out Sept. 2

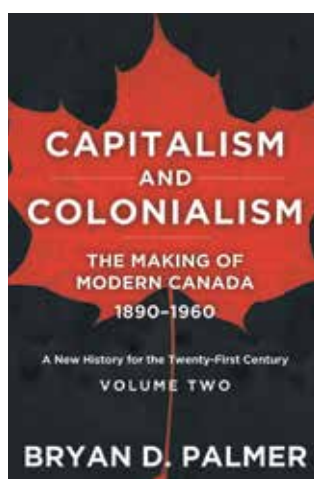
Former Trent University professor **Bryan D. Palmer** is publishing the second volume of his *Capitalism and Colonialism* series of history books just after the Labour Day Weekend.

To be published by Lorimer on Sept. 2, *The Making of Modern Canada 1890–1960: A New History for the Twenty-First Century Volume Two* follows Palmer's first volume, *Canada's Origins 1500–1890*, which came out in 2024.

Palmer is Professor Emeritus and former Canada Research Chair, Canadian Studies, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont.

Clocking in at 432 pages, *The Making of Modern Canada 1890–1960* "continues the examination of our nation's past through a new lens, incorporating the scholarship of Canadian historians to portray a richly endowed and wealthy but very unequal first-world country," reads the blurb from the publisher's website.

"Weaving together themes that include business, labour, politics, and social history, this account brings the experiences of Indigenous peoples into the centre of the narrative."

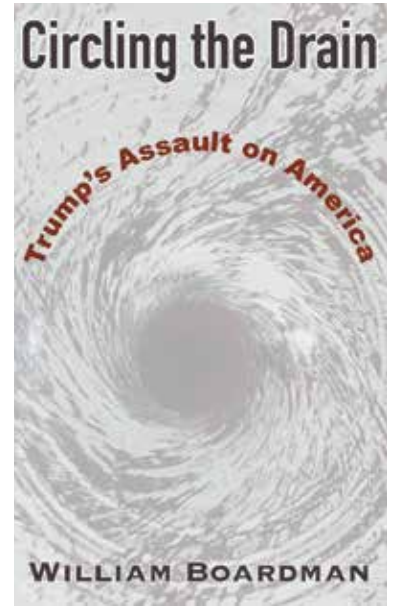


The Making of Modern Canada 1890–1960: A New History for the Twenty-First Century Volume Two will be published by Lorimer Press on Sept. 2. Cover image courtesy of Lorimer & Co.

New book *Circling the Drain* examines Trump's words and deeds

American author and reporter **William Boardman** has a new book coming out soon: *Circling the Drain: Trump's Assault on America* by Toronto-based Yorkland Publishing. The 332-pager "dissects the words and actions of the [United States] president and his MAGA cohorts," laying "bare [Donald] Trump's deluge of lies, criminality, cruelty, and his ultimate aim: to replace America's 250-year-old democracy with autocratic rule." The book also provides the reader with "12 Rules for Surviving Trump 2.0."

Circling the Drain is a follow up to Boardman's 2019 book, *Exceptional: American Exceptionalism Takes Its Toll*, a collection of articles "warning of American decline for Reader Supported News." According to the press release, Boardman is a veteran reporter who "grew up in Manhattan, graduated from Yale, wrote for television, and moved to Vermont in 1971. He worked as a reporter and editor, then served as an elected non-lawyer judge."



William Boardman's new book, *Circling the Drain*, is published by Yorkland. Image courtesy Yorkland Publishing

‘Self-interested politics have taken over the world’: Bob Rae



Peter MacArthur, left, and Bob Rae. The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade

One former ambassador and one current one expressed their views on the state of Canada-U.S. relations on social media on Aug. 5.

Peter MacArthur, this country's former envoy to the Philippines and Indonesia and who's now executive director of the Australia-Canada Economic Leadership Forum, posted a photo of then-American president **John F. Kennedy** during a visit to Ottawa over 60 years ago: "Contrast words of President Kennedy to Canada's Parliament in

1961 with today: 'Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder.' Hmm."

To which our current ambassador to the United Nations **Bob Rae** commented "Those days are over. The power of transactional, self interested politics and economics has taken over. Not just us, but the world. Empathy has gone on vacation. We're going to need to fight to get it back."

Isaac Bogoch's name, image used without permission

Elsewhere on the internet, University of Toronto infectious diseases physician and scientist **Isaac Bogoch's** had his summer soured by a case of wrongful appropriation.

"A quick note: My name and image are being used without permission in social media ads promoting products I do not endorse.

I am working with social media platforms and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre to have these ads removed," wrote Bogoch, who gained national attention for his work during the COVID-19 global pandemic, on social media on Aug. 8.

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The \$25,000 fine for violating Nova Scotia woods ban ‘not high enough,’ says Grit MP Fancy-Landry: ‘people really need to wake the hell up’

As fires burn out of control in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Liberal MP Jessica Fancy-Landry says bans on entering forests is not about politics or control, but about safety.

BY ELEANOR WAND

Nova Scotia’s and New Brunswick’s moves to ban residents from entering the provinces’ forests is sparking backlash from civil liberties groups, but locals say the move is a necessary precaution as wildfires burn out of control in tinder-dry conditions.

Nova Scotia’s woods ban, which the provincial government put in place on Aug. 5 to remain in effect until Oct. 15, prohibits camping, fishing, hiking, and vehicle use in the woods. The fine for violating the ban is \$25,000. Similarly, in New Brunswick, all Crown land was closed as of Aug. 5, with the fine set at \$140.

Backlash against the bans have been swift and fierce, with some constitutional rights groups and politicians arguing it violates residents’ right to liberty.

“While the government says this is to prevent forest fires, the approach has left many feeling discouraged, disconnected, and wondering if there’s a bigger purpose at play,” wrote Conservative MP Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand-Norfolk, Ont.) in a Aug. 10 X post. She added Canadians have been contacting her to express their concerns.

But Liberal MP Jessica Fancy-Landry, whose South Shore-St. Margarets, N.S., riding was ravaged by some of the largest forest fires in the province’s history in 2023, said she “completely” supports the provincial government’s decision.

“It’s about safety. It’s not about the politics or the control factor,” Fancy-Landry said.

“People really need to wake the hell up,” she added. “It’s a serious matter.”

She said the \$25,000 fines are “not high enough.” The 2023 fires burned more than 230 square kilometres of land, destroyed hundreds of homes and buildings in southwest Nova Scotia, and were caused by human activity.

Dalton Clark Stewart of Shelburne County, N.S., is facing charges under the province’s



New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are banning residents from entering forests in response to wildfires, sparking backlash and potential legal challenges from some civil liberties groups. Photograph courtesy of the Government of Nova Scotia

Forests Act, including for lighting a fire on privately owned land without permission of the owner or occupier, failing to take reasonable efforts to prevent the spread of a fire, and leaving a fire unattended. He’s expected to be sentenced this fall.

“Hundreds of homes literally went up in smoke, right? We’re talking suburbs worth of people,” Fancy-Landry said. “When you think about the impact that has, financially, mental health-wise, ... \$25,000 was a drop in the bucket for the potential of what could happen.”

Progressive Conservative Premier Tim Houston said on Aug. 5 that the ban is needed to prevent the devastation from two years ago. Nova Scotia is facing a severe dry spell, with some communities there instituting mandatory water conservation orders in response.

Houston said that Environment Canada isn’t forecasting significant rainfall in the near future, and that his government is hearing from rural fire departments worried about low water levels in ponds and lakes on which they rely.

“I’m loosing sleep about what’s happening,” Houston told reporters, adding that the risk of fires is “very, very high,” and that there is “no end in sight” for dry conditions.

“We can take steps while we are in the middle of trying to fight fires, or we can be proactive, and try to prevent them,” the premier said.

Civil liberties organizations have called on provincial governments to rescind the bans. The Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms sent a letter “warning” New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt and her Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development John Herron that the ban violates Canadians’ section seven Charter right to liberty.

The Canadian Constitution Foundation launched a petition against the Nova Scotia ban.

The group also sent a letter to Houston on Aug. 6 urging him to rescind the ban and calling the \$25,000 fine “grossly disproportionate.”

“There are dozens of pedestrians killed each year on Nova Scotia roads. The medical bills of those who survive cost the province millions,” wrote Josh Dehaas, counsel for the CCF and author of the open letter, in a Aug. 7 X post. “Maybe we should fine people \$25,000 for waking in those places too. Better safe than sorry!”

But the Nova Scotia government has defended the ban, citing the province’s Forests Act, which enables the minister to—when it is “deemed necessary” and “at any time”—impose “a restricted travel zone in any area or woods upon which no person shall enter” for “any period of time.”

“The decision to restrict access to Nova Scotia’s wood was not made lightly,” the province’s Department of Natural Resources wrote in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

But Dehaas argues in his letter that interpreting the Forests Act as an authority to institute a provincewide ban on activities that pose “no serious risk to sparking fire” is “unreasonable.”

Ex-N.B. natural resources minister says ban is ‘100 per cent right’ call

As of Aug. 12, New Brunswick had 12 active fires, with two classified as out of control. Nova Scotia has sent 20 firefighters to help the neighbouring province, and was battling its own fire that struck on Aug. 12 near Bayers Lake, about 10 kilometers west of downtown Halifax near a suburban business centre. As of Aug. 13, dozens of firefighters were on the scene of the uncontrolled fire, with water tanker planes circling the area and fighting the flames from above.

Former New Brunswick natural resources minister Mike Holland said he supports the woods bans, calling them “100 per cent the right call to make,” given the circumstances.

Holland said he wasn’t involved in conversations regarding the fire bans and subsequent fines, but he said these decisions are made by weighing risks and rewards.

“Someone that would otherwise not worry as much about breaking a rule or a law, might give it extra consideration,” Holland, who’s now vice-president of Atlantic Canada at Sussex Strategy Group, said. “If that keeps people out of the woods, then that’s goal.”

Holland also said there is some “misinformation” contributing to people’s opposition to the bans. He said that during his time as natural resources minister from 2018 to 2024, he regularly consulted with wildfire professionals monitoring fire spread and conditions—and that decisions often came from their recommendations.

“Quite often—I would say almost exclusively—when these recommendations are made, they’re followed,” Holland said.

He also noted that there are bans instituted on some activities in the woods at “various points” based on recommendations and data during wildfire season.

Nova Scotia has had a provincewide burn ban in place since July 30, which also carries a \$25,000 fine. New Brunswick has instituted a similar burn ban, as well.

A prohibition on entering the woods entirely is a last resort, Holland said, because “ultimately, rather innocuous behaviour could inadvertently start a fire.”

Stephen Maher, a political journalist living in rural Nova Scotia, said he believes most Nova Scotians support the ban, and the criticism he’s seen is largely from people living outside the province.

“People in other provinces who are upset about this should find some other way to occupy themselves,” said Maher, who is also the author of *The Prince: The Turbulent Reign of Justin Trudeau*. “I’m not hearing it from here.”

He said the dynamic in Nova Scotia now is “quite similar” to during the COVID-19 pandemic, when most Bluesosers followed lockdown restrictions and other rules to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Maher said that, as with lockdown restrictions, there’s a minority of people objecting to the forest ban, but most are interested in keeping people safe.

But Maher said he doesn’t think the ban would be as successful in other provinces in Western Canada, as the “political culture is different.” Nova Scotia’s conservative politicians tend to be on the progressive side, he said.

“The libertarian strain of Canadian conservatism has never been strong here,” he said, speculating that Western provinces might see more pushback on similar restrictions.

“I see our ability to manage this kind of thing in Nova Scotia as a kind of special power that we have, based on our collective, or communitarian, political culture,” Maher said.

Fancy-Landry also said that in her riding “everyone’s all for it.” She said there are always “bad actors,” but that she doesn’t see the prohibition as an infringement on rights or civil liberties.

“It’s just attention seeking,” she said, commending the provincial government’s actions. “Sometimes, you have to have a harsh penalty for extreme events, which is what we’re facing right now.”

Some residents have already been fined for violating the ban. Coxheath, N.S., resident Jeff Evely deliberately walked into the woods in his province, and was slapped with a fine of \$28,872.50, which includes a surcharge and HST. Evely is planning to challenge the order in court.

Nova Scotia’s Department of Natural Resources told *The Hill Times* in a statement that the province has issued nine fines for violating “precautionary measures,” but didn’t specify how many of those penalties were issued for entering the woods versus violating fire bans.

The bans have also divided prominent Conservative voices in recent days.

The Hub’s editor-at-large Sean Speer took to X, calling the ongoing conversation “a microcosm of the sorry state of Canadian constitutionalism,” and saying that the woods bans constitute an infringement on Charter rights.

“Just because a policy outcome may be good or even desirable doesn’t mean we get to dismiss the [Charter] in some cases or manufacture rights in others,” he wrote.

Former CPC campaign manager Fred DeLorey disagreed with Speer.

“So we agree it reduces risk and protects people, but you still think it’s not worth it?” DeLorey wrote in an Aug. 10 X post. “From where I’m sitting in a province still rebuilding from the 2023 fires and Hurricane Fiona, the loudest critics seem to be the ones furthest from the smoke.”

Former Conservative cabinet minister Lisa MacCormack Raitt, who’s originally from Cape Breton, N.S., and who served as deputy leader of the opposition for the Conservatives from 2017 to 2019, agreed with DeLorey in an Aug. 11 X post.

She wrote that there are three ways to deal with fire disasters: “prevent it from happening, mitigate [it] while it’s happening or finding liability to recover losses after it’s happened.”

“I know which one I’m leaning to,” she wrote.

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NEWS

Canada-U.S. parliamentary group has been without a Commons co-chair since election: 'very concerning'

The Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group has built deep links in Congress, but the annual general meetings to select the executives for interparliamentary associations have been delayed until the fall.

BY NEIL MOSS



Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald, left, co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, said it would be better if a co-chair is in place on the Commons side. Independent Senator Marty Deacon, vice-chair of the group, said it has a 'quite significant role to play' in resolving trade discord in the bilateral relationship. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

The House lead of an influential Canada-United States parliamentary association that builds deep links in Congress has been vacant since the election was called, despite the heightened focus on the bilateral relationship.

Past co-chairs of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group described the vacancy as a "significant detriment" that should be righted, and said that the government should better take advantage of the links the association has.

The Canada-U.S. group has two co-chairs: one from the Senate and one from the House of Commons. It lost its House leader when the last election was called as then-Liberal MP John McKay chose not to re-offer. Its Senate leader is Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald (Cape Breton, N.S.).

That House-level absence persists as Canada is in the midst of trade talks with the United States after missing an Aug. 1 deadline, with American tariffs climbing to 35 per cent on Canadians goods that aren't compliant with the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement. In the past, the inter-parliamentary group has established links with influential members of Congress with sway over the Trump administration.

When Parliament returned in the spring, there was no meeting called to reconvene the group before the House rose for summer break. Under its constitution, the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group has to hold a meeting within 60 days of the opening of Parliament. The new Parliament opened with the Throne Speech on May 27. Parliament doesn't

have to be sitting for the meeting to take place.

MacDonald told *The Hill Times* that he thought the group would have named someone in the spring, but a meeting was postponed until the fall.

"We're waiting on a representative from the other side," he said.

The Hill Times understands that the Joint Interparliamentary Council—which oversees inter-parliamentary associations—sent a notice late last year that delayed annual general meetings until the fall of 2025 due to the approaching federal election that relieved the groups of its constitutional obligations to hold meetings within the 60-day period.

Former Liberal MP Wayne Easter, who served as co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group in the 42nd and 43rd Parliaments, said that it is "very concerning" that the post has yet to be filled.

"I know the haste of Parliament in those times that they're still trying to get their parliamentary committees set, but in my view, there is still no excuse for at least setting up a couple of the most critical committees—one being Canada-U.S.," he said, remarking that there's been "neglect" on the part of party leadership for not convening a meeting.

He said the group has great utility, as there are personal relationships built in Congress which allows a Canadian parliamentarian to pick up the phone and call their congressional counterparts on any issue of consequence.

During his time in the group, Easter developed close ties with longtime Republican Senator

Chuck Grassley of Iowa—the current dean of the U.S. Upper House and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Following the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, it was Grassley who authored a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed in 2019 that implored then-President Donald Trump to lift tariffs on Canadian and Mexican steel and aluminum exports.

An under-appreciated tool

Along with McKay's departure, the group lost significant institutional knowledge in its executive. Former NDP MP Brian Masse had been a member of the group since 2004 and a vice-chair since 2006. Fellow past vice-chair Vance Badawey also lost his re-election bid. The now-former Liberal MP co-founded the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Group in 2020, which came out of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group.

McKay told *The Hill Times* that the current lack of a co-chair for the House of Commons is a "significant detriment to the functioning of the association." He said it needs to be the number-one item on the agenda to be dealt with.

The former longtime Liberal MP said that there is an under-appreciation for the group's work within government and even Parliament.

"I think GAC [Global Affairs Canada] would like to see the association just go away even if they pay lip service to us because it's a challenge to their bailiwick," he said. "The PMO [Prime Minister's Office] and PCO [Privy Council Office] love to keep all

these relationships in a tight little circle—knowledge is power. But, I think it is short-sighted, and I think it is foolish to overtly or covertly reduce the effectiveness of [the group]."

He said, overall, the values that parliamentary diplomacy brings is under-appreciated.

"It's an effective and cost-effective form of diplomacy," he said, remarking that it's time for Parliament to properly back it.

He said that the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., can only do so much, describing the work of the parliamentary associations as a "force multiplier."

"I hope that JIC [Joint Interparliamentary Council] and the Parliament of Canada recognize [that it is cost-effective] and fund the associations appropriately—I would say even generously," he said.

In total, the 13 interparliamentary groups received \$2.5-million in funding for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group was allotted \$298,000.

The work goes on

MacDonald said it "would be better" if a co-chair were in place on the Commons side.

"When an important position like this is left empty, it's not good," he said.

While the vacancy remains, the group's work continues. Over the summer, it participated in four meetings.

MacDonald took part in two of them: the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Annual Summit in Bellevue, Wash.; and the annual meeting of the National

Conference of State Legislatures in Boston, Mass.

He said the Boston conference is the largest interparliamentary group event of the year as it brings together thousands of delegates from all over the U.S.

"When I talked to Americans, I said, 'Look, we should all just turn the televisions off and talk to each other and stop letting the media decide who we are and how we negotiate with each other and how we are as neighbours,'" he said.

He said the two countries have to look past the "narrow stuff" and see the broader relationship.

MacDonald said he doesn't envision the government employing the links that the parliamentary association has built.

"I don't see them using us," he said. "I don't know what the government's doing."

Independent Senator Marty Deacon (Waterloo Region, Ont.), a vice-chair of the group, said now is a good time for the government to review how it uses the association in its diplomatic strategy, remarking that from her perspective, it is "underutilized."

She said that would involve Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) including parliamentarians from the group when he meets with members of Congress.

A bipartisan congressional delegation that came to Ottawa back in May to meet with Carney included U.S. Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, a former co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group on the American side.

Deacon was part of the group's contingent in Washington state this summer.

She said the group has "a quite significant role to play" in trade discussions with the U.S., noting that she spoke with Americans who have not given up on the bilateral relationship despite the current tensions.

"At one-on-one meetings that are not under the same microscope as more high-level summits, officials and other representatives are much more open and candid about their wishes for a robust and renewed trade relationship," said Deacon in an email.

She said that selecting the new Commons lead for the group takes time.

"The new co-chair needs to be clear on the role while managing many changes and new members in the House. The fall will be a good time to ensure the right person at the right time takes on this role, and in the long run I think it was wise not to rush it," she said.

She said that both MacDonald and Conservative MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings-Lennox and Addington-Tyendinaga, Ont.), a member of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, brought important perspectives to the Washington summit, but added that it would have benefited if an MP from the government benches joined.

"This may have been a missed opportunity, specifically because there is no one to report back to the Liberal caucus and thus the current government," Deacon said.

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Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories all open to pharmacare talks, but say they're not taking place



Health Minister Marjorie Michel is in charge of any future work connected to a national single-payer pharmacare program. However, what that program will look like is unknown as her office is not committing to negotiating deals with provinces and territories that had not signed up prior to the 2025 election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The Carney government's commitment to a national program is in question after the Liberals promised to 'protect' pharmacare during the 2025 campaign. Health Minister Marjorie Michel's office says it will honour the four existing deals, but is not promising to negotiate others.

BY TESSIE SANCI

Both Saskatchewan and Nunavut are open to conversations about a national pharmacare program, but say they are not in active talks with the federal government. Newfoundland and Labrador says it has reached out to Health Canada to "re-engage" in conversations, but did not say whether the federal department has responded.

These are some of the answers to questions sent by *The Hill Times* to the provinces and territories that do not have signed bilateral agreements for national single-payer pharmacare funding as outlined by the Pharmacare Act passed last October.

The jurisdictions that currently do not have deals are Alberta, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Quebec, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario were the only provinces that did not respond to *The Hill Times*' questions.

An Aug. 14 statement from Saskatchewan's Ministry of Health reads, "Any proposed national pharmacare program must be designed and implemented in partnership with our current provincial systems. While Saskatchewan has expressed a willingness to resume discussions about this with the federal government, there have been no negotiations scheduled."

An Aug. 13 statement from Nunavut Health Minister John Main's office said, "At this time, the Government of Nunavut is not engaged in any active discussions" regarding pharmacare.

"Nunavut is open to future discussions regarding a pharmacare agreement. Nunavut continues to reiterate that flexibility in funding agreements is pivotal to account for the distinct circumstances of the territory," the statement continued.

Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Health and Community Services said that it "supports the federal government investing greater funding for medicare services, including pharmacare. ... We have reached out to Health Canada staff to re-engage in these discussions, and look forward to working with them."

The Hill Times reached out to the provinces and territories regarding their stance on pharmacare as doubts continue to grow as to whether the current Liberal government led by Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) will forge ahead with negotiating agreements.

The Hill Times asked the nine provinces and territories currently without bilateral deals the following questions:

- Is the province or territory currently engaged in a conversation with the federal

government for national pharmacare bilateral funding?

- Is it interested in reaching an agreement for national pharmacare bilateral funding?
- If Carney's government does not go ahead with negotiating further pharmacare funding, will the province or territory seek its share of funding that could have come through a pharmacare agreement?

The passing of the Pharmacare Act, which occurred on Oct. 10, 2024, was a component of the confidence-and-supply agreement between Justin Trudeau's Liberal minority government and the NDP, then led by Jagmeet Singh. The act includes multiple components that are meant to work "towards the implementation of national universal pharmacare."

The act stipulates that Ottawa negotiate bilateral agreements for federal money to ensure single-payer—as in government-funded—coverage for specific pharmaceuticals related to diabetes treatment and contraception.

The Trudeau government set aside \$1.5-billion for these bilateral pacts in the federal budget in 2024, and signed deals with British Columbia, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island before Carney won the Liberal leadership on March 9, 2025. After Carney's swearing-in as prime minister on March 14, a deal with Yukon was announced on March 20.

A federal election was called just days later. The Liberal platform said it would "protect" pharmacare, calling it a "critical" service and part of a "strong public health-care system that [Conservative Leader] Pierre Poilievre would cut."

But since the election, the Liberals have not announced any other deals. The Liberals won 169 seats on April 28, four shy of a majority win.

The Hill Times asked the Prime Minister's Office by email on Aug. 12 if it has directed Health Minister Marjorie Michel's (Papineau, Que.) office to continue pharmacare talks, but did not receive a response.

The Hill Times also reached out to Michel's office and asked if the minister would continue discussions on pharmacare; and if there were no plans to do so, would the federal government compensate the provinces and territories that did not have agreements.

"We will continue to protect the four signed pharmacare agreements and the Canadian Dental Care Plan," said Guillaume Bertrand, Michel's spokesperson,

Continued on [page 19](#)



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NEWS

CRA complaints on the rise as deep job cuts forecast: ‘I’ll be honest, we’re swamped’

Taxpayers’ ombudsperson François Boileau says his office saw record-high complaints during the COVID-19 pandemic, and his office continues to be ‘swamped.’

BY MARLO GLASS

The Canada Revenue Agency’s watchdog says complaints are on the rise, while the agency forecasts a 10-per-cent reduction in staff over the next three years.

Taxpayers’ ombudsperson François Boileau says his office is nearing the record-high level of complaints it received during the COVID-19 pandemic, when Canadians were scrambling to receive CERB and other emergency benefits.

“Our office was quite popular at the time,” he said. “But now, we’re getting a multitude of complaints touching a multitude of programs. I’ll be honest, we’re swamped.”

The office received 3,533 complaints in 2020-21, and complaints peaked at 3,874 in 2021-22. The office saw a 43.4 per cent decrease in complaints in 2022-23, but complaints are back on the rise, totalling 2,796 in 2024-25, the annual report says.

About 25 per cent of complaints to the taxpayer ombud last year were around the CRA’s contact centres, Boileau said, including long wait times, dropped calls, or information that is incomplete, inaccurate, or otherwise unclear.

When the federal public service shrank by 10,000 jobs between the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years, the CRA bore the brunt of those cuts, with the large department reporting 6,656 fewer employees between 2024 and 2025. That represents 68 per cent of jobs lost in the public service, reported as of March 2025.

Further cuts are forecast, too. The CRA’s latest departmental plan forecasts that the agency will employ 47,732 full-time equivalent staff by 2027-28, down from the planned 50,804 for the current fiscal year. That total already represented a 2,103 job reduction from the 52,907 staff from the year before, as a part of a steady decline reported since 2023-24, when the CRA employed more than 55,000 workers.

The biggest job losses are expected to occur in tax-related



Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne is responsible for the Canada Revenue Agency. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Taxpayers’ ombudsperson François Boileau says his office is nearing the record-high level of complaints it received during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Photo submitted*

programs—a category which has the most staff to begin with—as 3,877 full-timers are projected to be cut from the agency, about nine per cent of the total, over three years.

The agency’s departmental plan cites the end of COVID-19 pandemic-era programs, the consumer carbon tax, the temporary sales tax holiday, and funding cuts in general as reasons behind the personnel cuts.

Boileau said his office is currently working on complaints that were received back in May. A notice on his office’s website said there is also a 120-day delay in assigning cases needing an examination.

“We’re being up front with complainants, but it’s not cool for us to do this,” he said. “It’s not fun, because we’re an ombud’s office. We’re supposed to respect our own standards of service, but we’re not.”

Boileau said it’s too early to make a “clear determination” if



John Oakey is vice-president of taxation for CPA Canada, a group representing 22,000 chartered professional accountants across the country. *Photo courtesy of LinkedIn*

the cuts have resulted in more complaints, but he said awareness and outreach of his office has been increasing, which would lead to more complaints.

His office doesn’t publish quarterly reports on the number of complaints it has received, he said, but they’ve seen an “uptick” over the last quarter, he said.

“But my estimated guess is that we will see, at some point, clear correlation,” he said. “But we’re not here yet.”

The Office of the Taxpayers’ Ombudsperson is funded via the CRA, and the departmental plan shows a funding cut of roughly 10 per cent over the coming three years, from \$5.3-million this year to \$4.8-million by 2027-28. That includes dropping five staff, with 33 people earmarked for 2027-28.

According to the Treasury Board’s main estimates, the CRA’s estimates to date are over \$20-billion. Its main estimates for 2025-26 are approximately half of that, at just over \$10-billion.

John Oakey is vice-president of taxation for CPA Canada, an organization that represents more than 220,000 chartered professional accountants across the country. He noted the CRA’s workforce has significantly increased in recent years, partially due to administering pandemic-era programs that are now finished.

But a lot of tax legislation has recently entered into the system, he said, citing mandatory disclosure rules, trust reporting, the now-repealed digital service tax, the global minimum tax, underused housing tax, and more, along with social programming like the universal dental care program also being administered by the CRA.

“With all this new legislation and additional services, how many people do they really need in order to execute these programs, with the loss of some old programs?” he said. “From the outside looking in, it’s very difficult to understand if this reduction is good or bad.”

CPA Canada represents the “frontline workers of the tax system,” he said, and has working groups with the CRA, and also has committees of accountants from each province that meet regularly.

“In those meetings, we consistently and constantly hear about the poor service that comes from CRA,” he said in a recent interview, adding these complaints are backed up by lots of reports by the taxpayer ombud’s office. “There are a lot of services required from the CRA that have very long, unacceptable time frames.”

If a staff reduction is focusing on redundant services, then it could be positive, but eliminating

senior people who are highly experienced and educated could “be a problem,” he said.

“You lose that in the training of the new staff, and it increases chance of errors when dealing with taxpayers,” Oakey said. “That’s always a concern we have, whenever you see significant cuts from CRA, the loss of experience from senior agents.”

He noted the CRA has recently launched a pilot generative AI chatbot, as outlined in its recently published departmental plan. The chatbot was launched this past March, billed as available 24/7 to answer questions about charities, personal income tax, and information related to accessing a CRA account.

“I have concerns, if you’re losing staff and replacing it with AI automation, are you losing that experience and implementing AI and automation properly?” he said. “You don’t want to have inexperienced people using AI, you want experienced people.”

Previously, CRA spokesperson Sylvie Branch told *The Hill Times* that the chatbot is supposed to reduce call volumes in contact centres, but isn’t intended to replace human agents. Instead, it helps people get information from the CRA’s labyrinthian website.

As ministers have been tasked with cutting their budgets by 15 per cent over the next three years, Oakey said he’s concerned education and training could be on the chopping block.

“If you match that with the reduction of probably senior agents, you’re losing a lot of experience and education,” he said. “And that will have long-term implications, because it will take a long time to gain that experience and knowledge back up.”

Tax lawyer Ben Isaak said he already sees significant delays in processing files, like objections or disputes with the CRA. Law clerks regularly call the CRA for status updates, and are sometimes unable to get in contact with an agent on the general inquiries line, he said.

While processing times are understandable, Isaak said he has one client who filed a “standard tax form” in March 2024 and has yet to hear back.

Tax lawyer Alex Klyguine noted the CRA is approximately six times larger per capita than the United States Internal Revenue Service.

“Their agency seems to be functioning quite fine, with way fewer people,” he said. “Perhaps the question here is not the number of people, but the complexity of the tax system, and the efficiency at the agency.”

He added Canadian tax law is “extremely complicated” and has grown in complexity over the years.

“Very few people really understand how our tax laws work, even tax lawyers struggle with it sometimes,” he said. “Reducing complexity will go a long way towards simplifying the administration of the system, and obviously perhaps that will reduce the number of people needed to administer the whole system.”

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The Hill Times

Ottawa needs to do more to recognize Newfoundland and Labrador's 'positive impact' on national agenda, says former premier

A recent study of the provinces found that Newfoundland and Labrador residents are the most frustrated with their place in Canada. Among the reasons for discontent is a feeling that fisheries are 'unfairly managed' at the federal level, says Dwight Ball.

BY TESSIE SANCI

Although headlines have traditionally swirled about the dissatisfaction of some Prairie provinces and Quebec over their status in the Canadian federation, a recent study from the Institute for Research on Public Policy finds that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the most frustrated.

The report's findings don't surprise former premier Dwight Ball, who led Newfoundland and Labrador between 2015 and 2020.

Ball said that he would attribute this in part to the fact that multiple generations of workers have travelled to Alberta for work in the oil sector, and so "you are seeing a lot of the Alberta politics showing up in Newfoundland and Labrador communities."

But he also said, in an interview with *The Hill Times*, that there is a lack of understanding from Ottawa about how the province and its natural resources could contribute to the national agenda.

Last month, the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) released a report, *A Less Resentful Federation? Findings from the 2025 Provincial Resentment Index*. Through a survey of 5,391 adults across the 10 provinces, the report found Canadians "feel slightly less aggrieved about their province's place in the federation than at any point since the index was introduced in 2022. However, the overall decline is modest, and important pockets of discontent remain—notably in the Prairies—especially around Quebec's contribution to the country," but it also found that Newfoundland

and Labrador is the most "resentful" of the provinces regarding its place in Canada.

Respondents were asked questions including whether they feel their province receives its fair share of federal funding, whether it receives the respect it deserves within the federation, if they feel it has a distinctive culture that's misunderstood, and whether it has its fair share of influence on national decisions.

The survey was conducted between May 1 and June 16, 2025. Charles Breton, one of the report's authors, told *The Hill Times* that while residents of the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut are surveyed for the report, their responses are not included because of the low sampling size.

Newfoundland's contributions 'not been quite understood as it should probably be'

As for why Newfoundland and Labrador stands out ahead of provinces that tend to get more attention for their dissatisfaction, "it has all the resentment on the fiscal and national decision[ing] side of things that Saskatchewan and Alberta has, but it also has resentment over cultural misunderstanding that Alberta and Saskatchewan don't have," said Breton, executive director of the Centre for Excellence on the Canadian Federation, which is a part of the IRPP.

The report uses a scale that ranges from minus six—the least resentful—to plus six or the most resentful. Overall, the actual level of resentment is pretty moderate. With an average score of 2.4, Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest level. Saskatchewan comes in second with 2.2, Alberta is third with 2.1, and both Quebec and British Columbia follow with 1.5. The least resentful province and the only one to come in "minus" territory is Ontario, with -0.1.

Ball said he was "thrilled" to see that most Canadians feel good about their province's place in the country. He also said there is no formal movement in Newfoundland and Labrador to separate from the rest of Canada "and I would be aware of it" if there was, he said.

"But yet we feel we can have a very positive impact, and so this lack of understanding of what we have in this province, what we have available to help the

national agenda, has not been quite understood to the level that it should probably be," Ball said.

Newfoundland and Labrador is the third-highest producer of crude oil in Canada. Government of Canada data states that the province produced 200,000 barrels per day in 2023, or 3.9 per cent of total Canadian production. The majority of this country's oil came from Alberta—more than 4.3 million barrels per day or 84.1 per cent of total production. Saskatchewan produced 457,000 barrels per day, which was 8.9 per cent of total Canadian oil.

Ball said that Newfoundland and Labrador is ready to work with Ottawa on the big nation-building projects that it's now encouraging, and that the province has the natural resources to contribute. He pointed to the province's supply of rare earth elements as an example.

Rare earth elements are most often used for the manufacturing of permanent magnets, which are in turn used in the production of cell phones, televisions, computers, and automobiles, among other products. The federal government's critical minerals strategy, released in 2022, includes rare earth elements on a priority list of those to produce "for their distinct potential to spur Canadian economic growth and their necessity as inputs for priority supply chains."

"You need a rare earth supply. It's all coming from China now and we have a lot of that available to us in our province," Ball said. "We want to make sure that we're part of the solution for Canada. I don't think it's well understood in Ottawa at this point."

Many feel fisheries is 'unfairly managed in Ottawa'

Both Ball and Jeff Webb, a professor who specializes in the province's history, pointed to a lack of local control over its natural resources industries—including fisheries—as a source of frustration.

"I think most people in our province would look at it as unfairly managed in Ottawa, and that our fishery continues to get traded on for other benefits of national interests, and that it's the fish harvesters, the plant workers, coastal workers in this province—they pay a price for them," Ball said.



Former Newfoundland premier Dwight Ball says his province has the natural resources and the people to help the federal government with its plan for big national projects, and that Ottawa just has to recognize it. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

These workers have become increasingly vocal about their frustration with how their industry is regulated. The reading of the province's 2024 budget was delayed because of a protest by fishery workers blocking the legislature on March 20, 2024.

The provincial government's public advisory issued that same day said the delay was due to the "unsafe environment in which fish harvesters are preventing public service employees from entering the Confederation Building Complex. Presently, the conditions are unsafe for employees and visitors to the complex, and there is a threat of violence."

Jeff Webb, head of the history department at Memorial University based in St. John's, told *The Hill Times* that "control over our two major resource industries—the fishery and the offshore oil—that's got to be negotiated with the federal government in a way that most other provinces don't need to do."

And so, "sometimes the federal government gets the blame for things that go wrong," Webb added.

He referred to the 1992 moratorium on cod fishing, saying that Newfoundlanders believe that the decline of cod stocks is the federal government's fault, seeing as Ottawa is the authority that sets fish quotas.

"Ottawa dropped the ball," Webb said in describing fish harvesters' perception of the situation.

"People feel like, 'well, for 500 years, we've been fishing, and now we're being told we're not allowed to fish,'" he added.

The Liberal government under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau lifted the moratorium in 2024, and this past June current Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, N.L.) more than doubled the allowable quota for cod between 2024 and 2025. That decision has been questioned by some scientists who doubt that current cod levels justify the federal move.

Ball and Webb also referred to the original 1969 Churchill Falls deal between their province and Quebec as another reason for discontent.

"There is quite reasonably still very much a feeling that the Hydro-Québec deal on Churchill Falls was a great crime, [and] that Hydro-Québec gets the grotesque share of the profit from that [and] for many, many years, we get very little," Webb said.

The 1969 deal saw Quebec purchasing electricity from the Churchill Falls hydroelectric plant in Labrador at prices far below market value. The deal was meant to last until 2041, but last December Quebec Premier François Legault and then-Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey signed a tentative deal meant to compensate the Atlantic Canada province more fairly. In a show of how strongly Newfoundland residents opposed the original deal, Furey literally ripped up a copy of the 1969 agreement during a press conference on Dec. 12, 2024.

IRPP's Breton said this resentment index shows politicians that while Canadians are acknowledging that different levels of government are currently working better together (as identified in a separate July 2025 study from the IRPP working in collaboration with the Environics Institute), their own feelings of their province's status in the federation aren't changing as quickly.

"We have to differentiate between those two things. Yes, you guys are working well together—better together at least—[but] that doesn't mean that all of a sudden everything is rosy, right? So, just contrasting those two things is important," Breton said.

Ball said more recognition of his province's contributions to the federation is what is needed: "It's as simple as that—the recognition that this is a province that's ready to work with the federal government on its national agenda. We have the resources here; we have the people here, and [if] we're willing to just recognize that it's here, I think some of this frustration will go. But underlying all this is, we're still strongly supportive of Canada in general."

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Editorial

Editorial

Commons co-chair of Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group should not be vacant during a trade war

The Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, normally headed by both a Senator and an MP, still doesn't have an MP co-chair, even though Canada is in the middle of a trade war with the United States and could use all the diplomacy help it can get.

The parliamentary association plays an important role in building links with the U.S. Congress, and previous co-chairs of the group told *The Hill Times* that the empty spot is a "significant detriment" to its success, and that the vacancy should be filled. The group has created links with influential members of Congress who have weight with the Trump administration.

This wrong should be righted, and the government should make use of every advantage it has right now, which includes using any diplomatic connections made by the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group.

"We're waiting on a representative from the other side," Conservative Senator Michael MacDonald, the Senate co-chair of the group, told *The Hill Times*' Neil Moss in an interview.

The Joint Parliamentary Council, which oversees all interparliamentary associations, sent out a notice late last year that pushed back annual general meetings until the fall of 2025 because of the federal election, meaning the groups were not required to hold meetings within the 60-day period of a new Parliament, Moss reported.

But former veteran Liberal MP Wayne Easter, who co-chaired the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group for two Parliaments, said it's "very concerning" the vacant spot hasn't yet

been filled because the group is known for building personal relationships in the U.S. capital. Easter developed close ties with longtime Republican Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, now the dean of the U.S. Upper House and chair of Senate Judiciary Committee.

Former Liberal MP John McKay, who served as the group's most recent co-chair, said getting it going should be a priority. He also said overall parliamentary diplomacy is under-appreciated within government and Parliament.

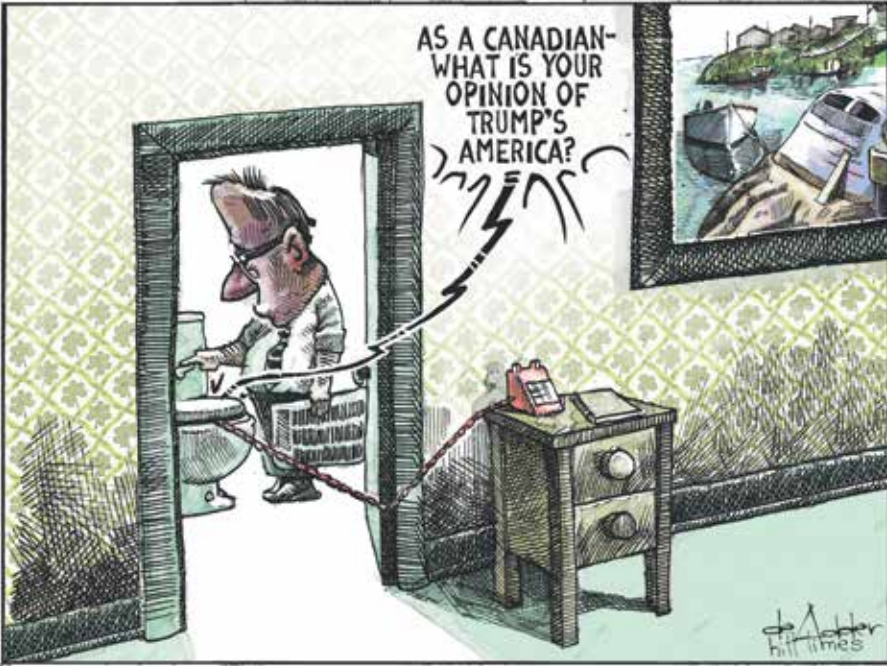
"The PMO and PCO love to keep all these relationships in a tight little circle—knowledge is power. But, I think it is short-sighted and I think it is foolish to overtly or covertly reduce the effectiveness of [the group]," McKay told *The Hill Times*.

But the group's work has continued over the summer. MacDonald took part in two meetings, one in Bellevue, Wash., and the other in Boston, Mass., which was the largest inter-parliamentary group event of the year bringing together thousands of delegates from across the U.S.

Independent Senator Marty Deacon, vice-chair of the group, said it has "a quite significant role to play" right now in trade discussions with the U.S.

The Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary is an effective and cost-effective form of diplomacy, and the MP vacancy should be filled as soon as possible. Parliament and government should review how it uses the group in its diplomatic strategy, and should also appreciate its work.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Image courtesy pexels.com

Citizens should be more vocal about fighting severe climate change and forest fires: letter writer

Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan have primarily been facing severe climate challenges this summer. Ontario has been experiencing air quality alerts due to smoke from forest fires. In Manitoba, communities have been hit with intense heat waves that threaten their agriculture and water supplies. And in Saskatchewan, early wildfire activity and rising temperatures are increasing the risk of another destructive fire.

These events are signs of a climate crisis that is getting closer each year. Our provinces must increase their investments in renewable energy, strengthen wildfire prevention and forest management, and support farmers and communities facing extreme weather. As citizens, we can make a difference by raising our voices, volunteering, and urging elected officials to treat climate change.

Ananthakrishnan Binu Pillai
Ottawa, Ont.

Carney says young people deserve more from government, so where's action on climate change?: letter writer

Five months ago, when Prime Minister Mark Carney was on a mission to woo Canadians in his bid to lead both party and country, he wrote online: "Young people deserve more from their government. They deserve to have optimism and confidence in their future. That's the Canada I want to build."

Fifty-eight days after being elected and nearly 10 years after his landmark "tragedy of the horizon" speech about acting with foresight to prevent climate harms, Carney's government rammed Bill C-5 through Parliament. This legislation gives cabinet sweeping powers to bypass environmental reviews and protections.

As the second-worst wildfire season in Canadian history forces evacuations

from coast to coast to coast and leaders muse about taxpayer-funded fossil fuel expansion, I have to ask: is this the "more" that young people deserve? Or are we seeing the continued sidelining of young peoples' rights to a climate-safe future, leaving them with no choice but to litigate?

On World Youth Day, I celebrated the bravery of the seven young Ontarians named in Mathur v. Ontario for taking their government to court over climate harms. For them, and for me, actions speak louder than words.

We are at a crisis point in the world, and we need your voice to amplify the efforts of these courageous young people.

Marci Burgess
Ottawa, Ont.

COMMENT

No one appears able to stop Benjamin Netanyahu from uprooting one million people from Gaza City

With both the Israeli PM and the U.S. president ignoring public opinion, it's time for a political leader in the West to tell Benjamin Netanyahu you can't crush the rights of a million people without serious consequences. Canada should stand up.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—No one appears able to stop Benjamin Netanyahu from uprooting one million people from Gaza City.

Why is that of epical importance? Because should this mass eviction and military operation go forward, it will likely trigger an unimaginable humanitarian disaster.

It is a disgusting and unjustifiable policy against a population that has already lost more than 60,000 people in Israel's invasion, with hundreds of thousands wounded. As I have written in this space before, the reaction to the heinous murder of 1,200 people in Israel by Hamas no longer bears any resemblance to "self-defence." This is a conquest, and that means more rivers of Palestinian and Israeli blood in Gaza.

Why do I say that? The Israel Defense Forces hasn't even been able to distribute food without shooting more than 1,000 starving Palestinians trying to get it. So how does the military supervise the forced removal of a million people to what at best will be life in a tent? Where will the tents be? Somewhere Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says is safe. There's just one problem. In the past, the prime minister has made that same



Should Benjamin Netanyahu proceed with his takeover of Gaza, there is a diplomatic card that could be played. At the minimum, ambassadors to Israel could be recalled. At the maximum, countries could suspend diplomatic relations, writes Michael Harris. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

claim, and then bombed the very "safe" areas to which Palestinians were directed.

Ever since Netanyahu announced that he intended to take over all of Gaza, the condemnation from the rest of the world has been united, but mostly rhetorical.

To his credit, Prime Minister Mark Carney was quick off the mark with sharp words for Netanyahu. Canada has at least made small moves to express displeasure with Netanyahu's belligerence and inhumanity.

Canada sanctioned two Israeli West Bankers who were members

of Netanyahu's cabinet. Canada also officially stopped approving permits for companies in this country selling arms—mostly in the form of parts—to Israel.

Is that the reality? ISG Senator Yuen Pau Woo told The Canadian Press he's not so sure. In fact, he's alarmed that arms might still be getting through, despite the March 2024 vote in the House of Commons that passed a non-binding resolution to halt new arms permits for Israel. As the Senator told CP, "I'm horrified to hear this news about certain arms exports and parts going to Israel, directly or indirectly."

Now a raft of countries have also imposed a full or partial ban on arms sales to Israel, claiming such weapons could be used to kill even more non-combatants—thousands of them women and children.

Germany is the latest country to join the group. Netanyahu says he hopes the Germans will reconsider their decision. Chancellor Friedrich Merz announced that Germany will suspend all arms exports to Israel as a direct response to Israel's security cabinet approving the plan for a complete takeover of Gaza City.

But these steps, as important as they are, will be essentially meaningless, as long as United States President Donald Trump and his country continue to replenish Israel's deadly arsenal. If the world wants to avoid a bloodbath of unprecedented proportions in Gaza, it will have to take other decisive action.

The government of Norway shows what that might look like. The world's biggest sovereign wealth fund, holding a staggering \$1.9-trillion, has pulled its investment in 11 Israeli firms.

Norway has also made all investments in Israel "in-house," and terminated the contracts of all external managers working in Israel. The government will continue to monitor these "in-house" contracts, and divest of them if they fail to meet Norway's ethical standards for investment.

Here is another possible way to send the message to Netanyahu that he is violating ethical norms with his bloody onslaught in Gaza. More countries could join South Africa, which is pressing genocide charges against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague.

The ICJ has already found that Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territories is unlawful, as are all the settlements that have been erected there. The court instructed Israel to stop building new settlements, disband existing ones, and immediately get out of Palestinian lands.

Another action that would send a message to Netanyahu would be for more countries to recognize Palestine as a state.

Currently, 147 of the UN's 193 member states recognize—or plan to recognize—Palestine. If the majority of the 46 countries that don't recognize Palestine changed their policy, it would further isolate Netanyahu and his

opposition to a two-state solution in the Middle East.

And should Netanyahu proceed with his takeover of Gaza, there is a diplomatic card that could be played. At the minimum, ambassadors to Israel could be recalled. At the maximum, countries could suspend diplomatic relations. And since Netanyahu's policies violate the United Nations Charter, with respect to honouring the sovereignty of others, Israel could be tossed out of the UN.

The lives of one million people are hanging in the balance, while the West and the rest of the world decide whether to get tough with Netanyahu and his extreme, right-wing government, or let him run amok in the Palestinian Territories.

As horrible as they are, war crimes and genocide are not the only components to this unfolding tragedy. With every passing day, there is reason to believe that Netanyahu is planning not just a brutal war, but a colossal land grab. It has been reported by The Associated Press and others that Israel is in negotiations with several countries to take in the refugees of Gaza. The PM couches this obvious attempt at ethnic cleansing as "allowing" the Palestinians to leave, but not forcing them. How generous of him. They will be allowed to live in the rubble of Gaza if they so choose, without schools, hospitals, houses, or roads.

And remember what members of his own government have said about their plans for the West Bank, home to three million Palestinians and half a million Israelis. The Knesset recently passed a "symbolic" measure calling for the annexation of the West Bank that has been under Israeli occupation since 1967. Looking for a foreign home for Gazans? Annexing the West Bank? Really?

So a million Palestinians are living on the knife's edge of an historic injustice. If no one stands up to Netanyahu, they could be dispossessed—again.

The great irony in all of this? The people of the United States, and the people of Israel have something amazing in common. They are both dead against the atrocities that flow from Netanyahu's appalling policy of death and dispersal in the Palestinian Territories.

According to recent polling, only 32 per cent of Americans approve of what Israel is doing in Gaza and the West Bank.

In Israel, 74 per cent of those recently polled by that country's Channel 12, including 60 per cent of whom voted for Netanyahu, want an end to the war. They want a negotiated settlement that would end the bloodshed, and bring back the hostages.

With both the Israeli PM and the U.S. president ignoring those public sentiments, it's time for a political leader in the West to tell Benjamin Netanyahu you can't crush the rights of a million people without serious consequences.

Canada should stand up.

Michael Harris is an award-winning journalist and author.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

How can Trump and Putin negotiate a deal on Ukraine without Ukraine?

Trump is truly delusional enough to believe he could end the war in a single day. He has repeated that enough times. But in reality, if he sells out Ukraine and rewards Russia with a land deal derived from illegal attacks on another country, he will be setting the stage for a larger war.

Sheila
Copp

Copp's Corner



OTTAWA—How can Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin negotiate a deal on Ukraine minus Ukraine?



Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump at the G20 in Osaka, Japan, on June 28, 2019. Photograph courtesy of Shealah Craighead, Official White House photo

How could the American president even think about hosting a meeting with Russia's president in Alaska? The message is baked in. Trump will reward Russia for launching an attack on its neighbouring country.

What would an agreement between Putin and Trump mean for the rest of Europe?

So many countries in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics despise the memory of their time under the thumb of Russian leadership.

They are not anxious to return to those days, and will very likely

oppose any one-sided agreement reached by the Americans and Russians.

Major players in Europe, including France and Germany, still want to be able to massage their relationship with Trump, however challenging that may be.

As the American president continues to pursue bizarre and unpredictable projects, like taking over Washington, D.C., and replacing the Rose Garden with a golden "Mar-a-Lago" style ballroom, allies need to either manage their relationships, or get out of the way.

Perhaps that is why the mayor of Washington, D.C., did not condemn the Trump promise to bring in the National Guard to control crime in America's capital city.

Like Ottawa, Washington, D.C., has a unique position as the city which houses the nation's major political bodies like the Congress, the Senate, and the White House.

Trump has also signalled his intention to move into other cities (with Democrat mayors), although the authority for a Washington intervention is clearer.

The president is also unwilling to produce statistics buttressing his claim that the actions are prompted by a hike in crime. Crime statistics in the capital city last year were at a 30-year low.

Facts don't matter to Trump. He is guided by his own feelings, hence the decision to meet privately with Putin, to the exclusion of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In virtual meetings with Trump earlier last week, European leaders and Zelenskyy warned against the trap that Putin may be laying. The Russian leader is expecting to be rewarded by annexing some of the lands he attacked.

Zelenskyy and European allies have ruled out any land swap,

and all are calling for a focus on ceasefire.

Many are questioning the strange choice of Alaska as a meeting ground.

The territory used to belong to Russia until it was sold to the Americans in 1867. Some Russians believe the sale approved by Tzar Alexander was a mistake, and the territory should return to them.

Most observers think the decision to meet in America is already a win for Putin, who has not been invited for an official visit to the U.S. in the past decade.

Trump characterizes the meeting as a "listening session," giving him a chance to feel out the willingness of Putin to agree to a ceasefire.

But European and Canadian leaders are worried about the nature of concessions that Trump may agree to in Alaska.

Suffice to say, it is difficult to trust a leader who will set up a meeting about the future of Ukraine without the leadership of Ukraine even being present.

Trump is truly delusional enough to believe he could end the war in a single day. He has repeated that enough times. But in reality, if he sells out Ukraine and rewards Russia with a land deal derived from illegal attacks on another country, he will be setting the stage for a larger war.

Europe won't escape this one.

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

Fixing our social media problem

In my view, more funding of local news or the regulation of 'Big Tech' won't really help either journalism or democracy.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—One of the ironies of the "information age" we're living in is that, when it comes to politics, many citizens in this country apparently feel uninformed.

Indeed, according to a recent Ipsos poll, 57 per cent of Canadians either believed they didn't have enough local news or could have used more to assess candidates in the last federal election.

The reason for this, many people say, is that social media is distracting us from following the news that really matters.

Can we do anything to change this?



Reporters file their stories at the Conservative Party's event at the Rogers Centre on election night April 28, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

I'm dubious, but some experts think we can fix the problem.

For instance, the Public Policy Forum, which commissioned the above-mentioned Ipsos poll as part of a report it produced examining the role of local news in elections, thinks it has a solution.

Their study notes that the erosion of local news outlets forces Canadians seeking political information to wade through the "toxic waters of social media."

Says the report, "There was scant coverage at the local level, with candidates using their own

social media channels rather than have their information filtered through local reporters."

The answer, according to the PPF, is to set up a permanent, non-partisan election fund to help media outlets better cover political races.

Another solution comes from Andrew MacDougall, the former director of communications for prime minister Stephen Harper.

In a paper written for the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, MacDougall argues that the rise of what he calls the "attention

economy" is having a pernicious impact on both democracy and journalism.

As he puts it, "The major platforms of the attention economy—including social media, video sharing, and messaging services like Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp), X, TikTok, YouTube (Google), Snapchat, Telegram, and Twitch, among others—are creating an information economy that is hostile to quality civic journalism."

This, says MacDougall, makes "the practice of rational, collaborative politics nearly impossible."

His answer is for the government to implement a series of laws, rules, and regulations to check the power of "Big Tech," to offer a "fairer playing field for media that still practise fact-based journalism, free from bias and misinformation."

Okay, while these two solutions may sound good, in my view, more funding of local news or the regulation of "Big Tech" won't really help either journalism or democracy.

For one thing, it's important to understand that the average citizen doesn't pay much attention to political news out of choice.

In other words, most people don't consume political news

simply because it doesn't interest them; this is why they wade through the "toxic waters" of social media, so they can focus on stuff that does interest them.

To be blunt, people are willfully ignorant about politics.

As for the minority of people who do care about politics, they tend to binge on those media voices that confirm their biases, meaning they'll focus most of their attention on outlets that will reliably tell them what they want to hear.

Of course, this pattern of political news consumption has always been a problem, but the media's fragmentation and the emergence of social media have made it much worse.

My point is, even if you provided more funds to local news to provide better information, it's doubtful many people would put down their phones long enough to consume it.

Nor do I think the government regulating social media will help.

After all, history tells us that new communication technologies are hard to control.

Just ask the authorities who tried to control the printing press.

Maybe I'm too pessimistic about this issue, but as someone once put it, "sometimes a pessimist is only an optimist with extra information."

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

Global

Carney should push the Pact for the Future at UN, and a path to a 'brighter future for all of humanity'



Prime Minister Mark Carney scrums with reporters as he leaves the Métis Major Projects Summit in Ottawa on Aug. 7, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada has always supported international law, including the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, and the Geneva Conventions. Come now to their defence at this moment of world peril.

From the rostrum of the General Assembly, you can speak about what your government is doing and will do to implement "The Pact for the Future," a UN document Canada signed onto last year, which charts "a path to a brighter future for all of humanity."

The pact includes a pledge to move faster towards achieving the sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement commitments on climate change. It calls for addressing the root causes of conflicts and accelerating pledges on human rights. Most importantly, it brings into sharp focus the need for recommitment to international co-operation based on respect for international law.

I respectfully put it to you, prime minister: Canadians need to hear about the pact because it provides a way for our country to regain its integrity as a peace-building nation, an integrity which your government is currently sidestepping with its concentration on military spending at the expense of meeting economic and social development needs both at home and abroad.

Your government moved with alacrity to promise to devote five per cent of GDP to defence spending on the unproved assumption a stronger military will bring peace. The experience of the past 80 years, since the end of Second World War, has proved that assumption false. What brings peace is strengthening the rule of law. The undermining of law is at the root of today's chaos.

The Pact for the Future cannot by itself solve problems, let alone enforce solutions, but without at least a map to guide peoples forward to a safer world, humanity would be even more lost than it is in today's conflicted atmosphere. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN in 1948, was at first only a document, but combinations of like-minded governments and an active civil society breathed life into it. The Universal Declaration lived because it is an ethical statement of life. So, too, is the Pact for the Future.

Prime minister, you have an opportunity to raise Canada against Trump's game. Unify us as you lift up Canada's hopes and aspirations in a bewildered world. Strengthen us at home by showing the world that this country has the courage to creatively respond to global threats. Start a dialogue with people across Canada and across the nations.

With the weight of Canada's strong support for the UN for 80 years, go to the UN microphone, sir. And speak.

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

The Hill Times

The Pact for the Future calls for addressing the root causes of conflicts and accelerating commitments on human rights. Most importantly, it brings into sharp focus the need for recommitment to international co-operation based on respect for international law.

United Nations General Assembly in New York in September and speak about what Canada will do to help build the conditions for peace in today's fractured and very dangerous world. So far in your tenure, you have talked about preparing Canadians for war. That isn't good enough.

You've got tons of problems coming at you, largely generated by the mendacious, rapacious, and wholly unpredictable United States President Donald Trump, and I know you must stay focused on the tariff issue to protect this country's economy. The way to stand up to Trump is to have Canada stand up in the world for the full application of international law, and the place to do it is the green podium of the UN General Assembly with the eyes of the world on you.

I am not suggesting here that one speech can save us from Trump's machinations or turn the world around. Of course, Canada cannot reach beyond its middle-power strength. But the voice of Canada—your voice—can lift up a frightened country and international community which will see you providing leadership to a world weighed down by wars, unspeakable human suffering, and climate disasters.

Your speech at the UN would give a sense of direction to the

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audience at home as well as the international community that has always retained a respect for Canada despite our poor international performance in latter years, especially in peacekeeping and aid assistance.

The assembly this fall will undoubtedly be riveted on how to advance the immediacy of full recognition of the State of Palestine and an end to the Gaza war. This is the place to spell out clearly how Canada would implement its commitment to the recognition of Palestine in a way that does not challenge the continued existence and security of Israel. Speak to this, yes, but speak also about the main issue that bedevils the world today: the rearming of nations that have lost confidence in the processes of law and order established by the UN.

The interests of Canada and the world are joined in recovering respect for international law. Over the years, the UN has produced a body of law of unprecedented proportions: one has only to look at the growth of human rights, the condemnation of nuclear weapons, and the protection of the planet from global warming to grasp the scale of UN activity. However, the laws emanating from the UN are dependent on the major states to accept them.

Douglas
Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—Prime Minister Carney, please go to the

NEWS

Carney's 15-per-cent challenge: cutting and rewiring Canada's federal public service



Privy Council Clerk Michael Sabia, the country's top bureaucrat hand-picked by Carney, set the tone from Day One, when he said the public service is too complicated and too slow 'at a time when we need to speed up because the world is moving as fast is.' *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Departments grapple with conflicting data as they race to finish the pivotal expenditure review the prime minister will use to reallocate resources.

BY KATHRYN MAY

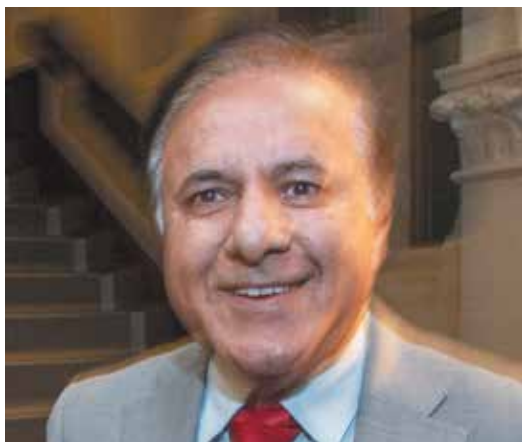
OTTAWA — As federal public servants race to wrap up an expenditure review the Liberals will use to map out massive change, the Carney government is learning how hard it is to shrink and reshape a bureaucracy that's been growing for years.

Departments have several weeks left to figure out what's essential and what's drift: programs, roles, and spending that may be outdated, overlapping or even outside federal jurisdiction. By Aug. 28, Prime Minister Mark Carney expects ministers to have found savings of up to 15 per cent.

But one basic problem is the starting point. Nobody knows what it is.

Departments are still untangling Trudeau-era restraint measures, and it's not even clear whether the public service is growing or shrinking.

A recent Parliamentary Budget Office report shows conflicting data. Treasury Board data says headcounts are down by 10,000. Departmental reports say full-



Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali, pictured on the Hill in 2024. Mohammad Kamal, a spokesperson for Ali, said this is not an exercise in shrinking the public service. 'We have asked departments to do deep dives ... and submit savings proposals that seek to make the federal government more effective, efficient, and productive.' *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

time equivalents—a measure of actual workload—are up.

Without a clear baseline, finding savings—or reinvesting them effectively—will be difficult, experts warn.

Sabia's cultural-shift signal

The public service has grown 43 per cent over the past decade. But the review isn't just about cuts or how many people the government employs. It's also the machinery they're working in.

The Carney government signalled an intention to rewire the culture of the public service—from stability to speed, risk avoidance to innovation, compliance to outcomes.

Privy Council Clerk Michael Sabia, the country's top bureaucrat hand-picked by Carney, set the tone from Day One when he said the public service is too complicated and too slow "at a time when we need to speed up because the world is moving as fast is."

Reforming the public service so it can deliver government priorities—rather than just manage process, which Sabia says is too onerous—is a central piece of Carney's strategic realignment. He's looking for savings to reinvest in housing, defence and infrastructure, some of the government's priorities as it rebuilds Canada's economy.

Most inside government are bracing for job losses. "If I were a deputy minister doing the review, I'd be looking really, really hard at what I could cut—not shave, but eliminate programs," one former senior bureaucrat says.

Treasury Board, however, says this is not an exercise in shrinking the public service, according to Mohammad Kamal, a spokesperson for Treasury Board President Shafqat Ali. "We have asked departments to do deep dives ... and submit savings proposals that seek to make the federal government more effective, efficient, and productive."

Headcount confusion

How many people does the public service actually have? Where can it be cut? How will cuts affect workload and productivity?

It's hard to answer these basic questions because of inconsistent data for headcount versus full-time-equivalents (FTEs), says one veteran bureaucrat with long experience in budgeting and finance.

Headcount measures how many people are on the books—full-time, part-time, as casuals or students. FTEs measure actual work effort by standardizing hours into workload. Both matter, but together they can make tracking real staffing a moving target.

For example, cutting 1,000 casuals working 15 hours a week drops headcount by 1,000—but trims only 375 to 400 FTEs. And if FTEs are rising while the number of employees is falling, that can point to inefficiencies and increasing burden on the workers who remain.

Managing the work, not just the workers

Counting people won't cut it, another senior financial executive says. If fewer employees are covering the same workload, FTEs stay high—and so does the wage bill. Real restraint will mean managing the work, not just the workers.

Without reorganizing, streamlining, or automating, cuts don't bring efficiency. Instead, services decline, staff burn out. Canadians are left waiting while they lose confidence in government.

The PBO report highlights how departmental plans—the government's main tool for projecting staffing and spending—have repeatedly missed the mark.

With Trudeau-era cuts, departments forecast a shrinking workforce that didn't happen. Projected FTEs for 2025–26 jumped by 31,000 compared to the previous year. Another 25,000 were added for 2026–27. That's 56,000 jobs departments didn't expect to need or have.

Some critics say departmental plans are unreliable snapshots that don't incorporate the budget, and are outdated by the time they're released. How can anyone deliver a 15-per-cent reduction without reliable staffing forecasts?

Others argue that even when governments signal a desire to cut jobs or scale back operations, the machinery is wired to push back due to layers of mandates, rules and entrenched programs.

Signs of recent decline—but in the wrong places

Headcount fell by nearly 10,000 between March 2024 and March 2025, Treasury Board stats show. That's an equivalent decline of 8,000 FTEs—a trend that could mark the largest reduction in more than a decade if it holds.

Most of the reductions, however, were term, student, and casual jobs—typically the young, eager workers government wants to attract. Permanent FTE positions grew by nearly 3,000.

Political and operational limits

The scale of reductions will go well beyond attrition and expiring term contracts. Reallocations remain uncertain with a trade war, economic slowdown, and increased military spending, including raises for Armed Forces personnel.

Carney is looking for more than the \$13-billion in efficiencies he pledged in his election platform. If Canadians start to feel the pinch of job cuts and declining services, federal unions will be sure to underline it.

They think Carney will renege on his election promise of "capping not cutting public service employment." A recent report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives projected a flat 15-per-cent cut could eliminate close to 60,000 jobs, hitting the National Capital Region hardest.

Hard choices remain: cut more FTEs and hope efficiency gains fill the gap; eliminate low-priority internal roles, or trim grants and contributions to outside organizations, which carries heavy political risk and job losses.

"Rather than starting this with the wind at their back, the government faces the inertia of 10 uninterrupted years of public service growth," said one senior government financial expert not authorized to speak publicly. "The path to balancing the operating budget runs through the \$73-billion wage bill—there's no avoiding it."

The target: day-to-day expenses

But senior officials say the review is about locking in a smaller funding base that will reshape how government spends for years to come.

The 15-per-cent reduction targets apply to roughly \$180 billion to \$200 billion in operational operating spending—the day-to-day costs of running government, which have been growing at about nine per cent a year. (That includes wages, services, maintenance and grants and contributions to outside organizations.)

Carney wants to separate operational and capital budgets, and cap the growth of operational spending at just two per cent. The idea is to impose more discipline on routine expenses while safeguarding long-term investments in housing, infrastructure, and productivity.

After ministers and cabinet have looked at the proposed reductions, any approved cuts will be baked into the Main Estimates over the next three years. Future budgets will start from that smaller base. New spending—including for housing, infrastructure, or major projects—could still be added, but with limited fiscal room, it may require running higher deficits or raising new revenue.

This article was first published on Policy Options, and republished with permission. Kathryn May is a reporter and the Accenture fellow on the Future of the Public Service, providing coverage and analysis of the complex issues facing Canada's federal public service for Policy Options.

The Hill Times

Global

Carney better be sharp on Canada's game-changing projects



Prime Minister Mark Carney arrives at the West Block on Parliament Hill ahead of a meeting with a bipartisan delegation of United States Senators on July 21, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Without the capacity for rigorous analysis of which projects make sense, and an ability to say ‘no’ to projects that cannot meet rigorous review, we could waste billions of dollars and end up with little or nothing, but disillusion.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—The Carney government is looking to projects “of national interest”—call them mega-projects—to help create a new economy (the strongest in the G7) with billions of dollars to be set aside to provide funding.

These projects can range from ports, rail systems, and highways to digital infrastructure and enhanced electricity grids.

Yet in the rush to get projects started, the federal government faces intense pressure from provincial governments and industry lobbies to endorse and fund pet projects that make no economic, national security, or environmental sense—our own wasteful version of “roads to nowhere.” Prime Minister Mark Carney will need the strength to say “no” to many of these provincial demands.

This is why we need a system—and the people—to rigorously analyze each proposal so that only those making real economic sense or meeting clear national security or environmental needs will receive federal funding. Without it, we will end up supporting projects that make no real sense, deliver false promises and hopes, fail to deliver, and waste billions of dollars.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford, for example, wants the federal government to endorse and help fund the overhyped Ring of Fire, a vast region 500 kilometres north east of Thunder Bay, Ont., and its unproven claims of massive mineral riches. A remote region without roads or electricity, it is one of the most fragile envi-

ronmental regions anywhere in the country. As James Franklin, former chief geoscientist at the Geological Survey of Canada, has said, this is “about the worst place in the world you can think of to build a mine.” There is no evidence this project makes sense. But Ford is pushing hard for it, seemingly based on promoters’ hype.

Meanwhile, three premiers—Ford, Alberta’s Danielle Smith, and Saskatchewan’s Scott Moe—have agreed to jointly lobby the Carney government to support a number of their pet projects, with “advocacy on the essential need for federal funding commitments to support nationally important infrastructure projects.” These include a proposed deepwater port on the east coast of James Bay, with an oil pipeline from Western Canada, though critics maintain the water is too shallow for a deepwater port, and no oil company has offered to financially support such a project.

At their June summit in Saskatchewan, the first ministers agreed on criteria for projects that would be fast-tracked as “major projects of national interest.” The criteria included strengthening national autonomy, resilience and security, offering undeniable benefits to Canada and supporting economic growth,

having a high likelihood of successful execution, and with clean growth potential. But will they be honestly adhered to?

As the first ministers put it in their communiqué, “nation-building infrastructure and corridors, such as highways, railways, ports, airports, pipelines, nuclear projects, clean and conventional energy projects, and electricity transmission systems, are crucial for driving Canadian productivity growth, energy and economic competitiveness.”

A good example of how an over-hyped and under-analyzed project—raising high hopes only to be followed by disappointment—was the proposed net-zero green hydrogen plant to be built by World Energy GH2 in Newfoundland and Labrador. It planned to use a massive wind power installation to create hydrogen, convert it to ammonia, and ship it by LNG tankers to Europe. At a planned eventual cost of \$16-billion, it was to begin shipments late this year. The project was embraced with great enthusiasm. In August 2022, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau and then-German chancellor Olaf Scholz descended on Stephenville, N.L., with a delegation of German and Canadian business leaders to celebrate the launch.

Planning for the project proceeded, accompanied by government enthusiasm and boosterism. In February 2024, Export Development Canada announced a \$128-million credit facility to help finance the capital costs, with then-Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson declaring that the investment would “strengthen Canada’s position as a leading supplier of clean energy and technology to the world.” The 2024 federal budget contained a hydrogen investment tax credit that would subsidize the Newfoundland project. But that December, the project was mothballed. It was not economic.

The really big question, though, is how did it get to that stage without anyone really crunching the numbers. And how do we avoid a repeat as provincial governments seek funding for their many pet projects in the name of national benefit, and are not ashamed to use national unity to extort support? Will project approvals be driven by politics or by a rigorous assessment of what makes—or doesn’t make—economic or national security sense?

Carney has promised a process under which, first of all, the cabinet will decide whether a proposed project is in the national interest—and if it is, fast-track regulatory evaluation and, if positive, so that projects identified as being in the national interest can proceed.

“Under the new process,” Carney told a news conference in June, “once a project is designated as being in the country’s national interest, a new federal major projects office will bring together all relevant federal departments to provide a single set of conditions that must be met for those projects,” adding that the approval process would not take more than two years. The goal is to make this country into an energy superpower with the strongest economy in the G7. But success will depend, first of all, on the ability of government to conduct serious analysis and only approve feasible projects, avoiding roads-to-nowhere projects despite intense provincial and private sector lobbying.

The goal of embarking on big game-changing projects to build prosperity for the future, and ensure Canada’s sovereignty, is a good idea. There are many possibilities for projects that make economic, national security or environmental sense. But without the capacity for rigorous analysis of which projects make sense, and an ability of the federal government to say “no” to projects that cannot meet rigorous review, we could waste billions of dollars and end up with little or nothing, and much disappointment and disillusion.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION



Canadian artist Benjamin Von Wong's public art installation 'The Giant Plastic Trap' is pictured outside the fourth session of the United Nations Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa on April 23, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Canada must join forces with allies to stop the pollution threatening our health and environment

As most of the world moves away from plastic, Canada must not lock into a bygone economy and industry.

Sehjal Bhargava,
Anthony Merante
& Karen Wirsig

Opinion



Plastics are not just an ocean-litter problem, they are also a growing threat to human health. Microscopic pieces of plastic are entering human bodies

at an alarming rate, with serious consequences that we are just beginning to understand. Plastics are found wherever medical researchers look for them, from brains and blood vessels to lungs, testicles, and placentas. They're even in babies' bloodstreams before they're born. We need to protect people and the planet from plastics.

Governments around the world had a chance to do just that when they met in Geneva, Switzerland, for the final round of negotiations toward a global treaty to end plastic pollution (INC-5.2) from Aug. 5-14. The consensus among scientists and civil society groups is that plastics need to be reduced at the source—and that means making and using less plastic worldwide, starting with unnecessary single-use plastics. While a majority of the countries at the negotiating table have agreed in principle to turn off the plastic tap, bold

global action is yet to be seen. Canada has a critical role to play, and a responsibility to lead.

Canada must also lead at home by matching its international commitments with decisive domestic action, and backing its words with binding policies—from stronger regulations to timelines for eliminating the most dangerous plastics—in order to protect our oceans, communities, and economy.

Pollution from plastic starts when its main ingredients, oil and gas, are taken from the earth and transformed into petrochemicals. This is an energy-intensive, highly polluting process often done in the backyards of vulnerable communities, leading to disproportionately high rates of chronic health problems and cancers, on top of environmental harm.

Once plastic is made, it inevitably gets into the environment. Plastic pellets pollute beaches,

rivers, lakes and oceans. Plastic litter fills our streets and parks. And now, microplastics have been found in drinking water, agricultural soils, and seafood, putting some of Canada's largest industries and staples at risk.

What's more, the chemical additives in plastics can leach into the food and drinks they package, and are present in household dust from the breakdown of all the plastic items in our homes. We have made a world where we can't avoid eating, drinking, and breathing these toxic substances. Studies are published on a weekly basis linking plastics and chemical additives to human disease, including infertility and cancer.

Despite the scale of the crisis, governments and industries have wasted decades and precious resources trying to sell recycling as a solution when, in reality, less than 10 per cent of plastics are recycled in Canada and around the world.

When Minister of Environment and Climate Change Julie Dabrusin connects with her global counterparts, she must hold firm on her government's commitments, including establishing science-based targets to reduce plastic production. Canada and its partners will need to stand up to a small minority of oil-and-gas-producing countries—including Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the Gulf States, and now the United States.

This is also a moment of economic strategy. As Canada looks to deepen trade ties with countries beyond the U.S., it should coordinate action on plastics with countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania that support an ambitious plastic-reduction policy.

Measures such as reuse and refill systems that eliminate our reliance on single-use packaging, phasing out inherently toxic chemicals in plastics, and ending subsidies for petrochemical expansion are just a few of the ways countries can work together to end the plastic scourge. As most of the world moves away from plastic, Canada must not lock into a bygone economy and industry.

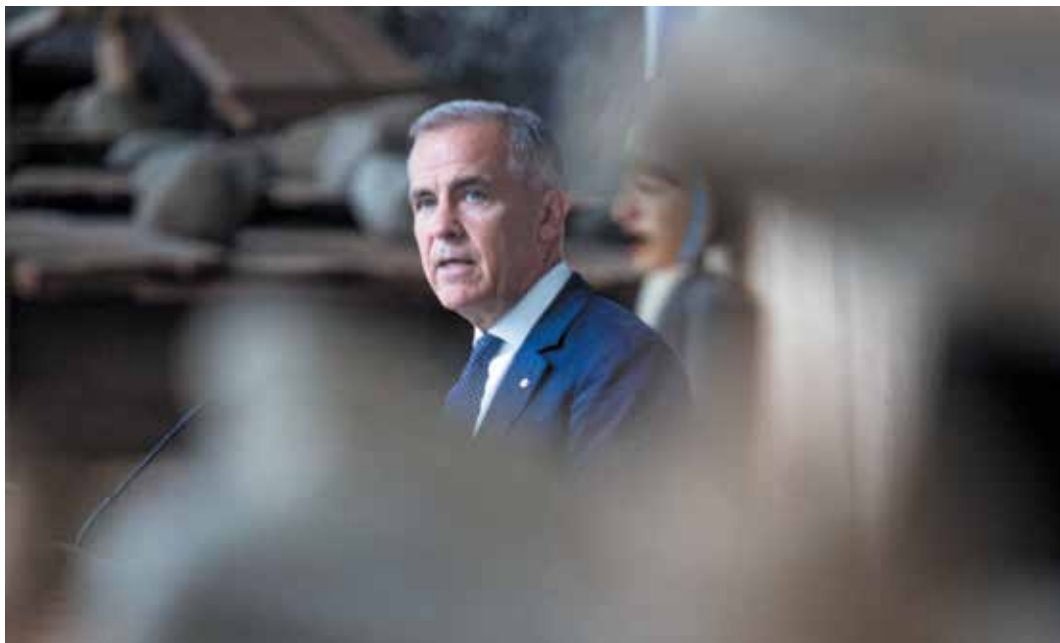
Dr. Sehjal Bhargava, family physician and Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment board member; Anthony Merante, senior plastics campaigner, Oceana Canada; and Karen Wirsig, senior program manager for plastics at Environmental Defence, have participated as observers at previous rounds of the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations.

The Hill Times

Global

Carney should heed his own advice from his bestselling book, *Value(s)*

Clean-energy projects—building out the grid, supporting renewable and other clean-tech investment, and financing efficiency—can deliver on affordability, growth, and sustainability goals. He and his key ministers should keep a copy of *Value(s)* by their bedsides



Prime Minister Mark Carney at the Prime Minister's First Nations Summit on Bill C-5 in Gatineau, Que., on July 17, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Shawn McCarthy

Opinion



OTTAWA—Mark Carney, the prime minister, would do well to heed the advice of Mark Carney, the author, as his Liberal government struggles to transform the Canadian economy into one that is stronger, and more independent, equitable, and sustainable.

Over the summer, I read Carney's *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*, which lays out his vision for a world that embraces bedrock values of fairness, the protection of rights, economic security for households, and the preservation of our natural world. *Value(s)* was first published in 2021; it was updated for the paperback edition in 2022 as Carney considered whether to jump into the political ring.

In writing it, the future prime minister enunciated some core principles that he and his cabinet colleagues should now follow as they consider how to proceed on proposed “national interest” infrastructure projects, including oil and gas pipelines.

Canada confronts a multi-headed crisis in which economic development, trade diversification, energy security and national unity are top priorities.

The national-interest projects are meant to address those myriad challenges while respecting Indigenous rights and protecting the environment.

However, some provincial premiers and business leaders argue that the efforts to meet climate commitments and protect nature should take a backseat to economic and national unity priorities. Carney needs to resist those siren calls, and follow the path that he laid down in *Value(s)*.

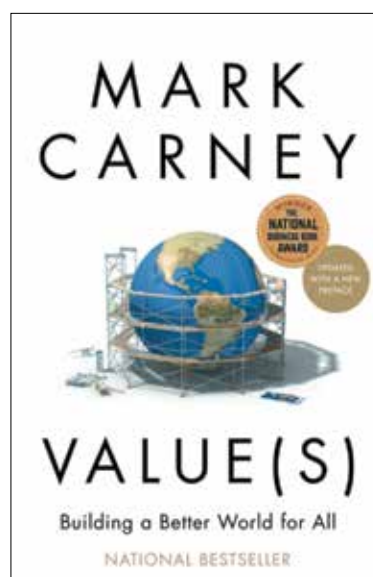
In it, he cautions against pursuing strategies and investments that are unsustainable in the longer term or that impose onerous costs on Canadians in the future.

The book warns about both market and political failures that can leave us unprepared for risks, and unable to plan for the long term.

Markets are great at driving innovation and putting a price on goods and services, he noted. However, markets are poor at assessing some key risks, particularly threats to social goods that do not appear on corporate balance sheets, such as economic fairness or biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

If our society values sustainability, security, and equity, we need government to promote them through regulation, taxation, subsidies and other policies, Carney wrote.

The climate crisis is upon us, but it's most catastrophic impacts



Mark Carney's *Value(s): Building a Better World for All*, published in 2021 by McClelland & Stewart/Penguin Random House Canada, won the 2021 National Business Book Award and was shortlisted for the 2021 Donner Prize. Book cover image courtesy of McClelland & Stewart/Penguin Random House Canada

will be felt in the decades to come. Both markets and politicians typically fail at ascribing current value to longer-term risks, a failure Carney identified as “the tragedy of the horizon.”

“Climate change is the ultimate betrayal or intergenerational equity,” he wrote. “It

imposes costs on future generations that the current generation has no incentive to fix.”

(This summer, extreme heat and forest fires in this country and around the world are providing ample evidence of current damage from a warming planet. Incentives are being ignored. The impacts will only worsen.)

The longer we wait to get on track towards a solution, the higher will be the cost—in terms of human lives, economic impacts and the loss of biodiversity, Carney concluded.

As Carney argues in *Value(s)*, we need more—not less—effort to reduce carbon emissions. “Up until now, nations have been taking global warming more seriously, but not seriously enough.” He wrote that in 2021-2022, before United States President Donald Trump returned to office and trashed America's climate strategy.

It's striking is how Carney's technocratic optimism of the early 2020s—best expressed in his subtitle: *Building a Better World for All*—must now confront the political reality of the mid-2020s. After a bout of inflation and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, affordability and security now trump sustainability in the eyes of many voters, politicians, and corporate executives.

Carney quickly responded to those concerns when he became prime minister in February, and was preparing to fight a federal

election. Immediately after taking office, he cancelled the consumer carbon tax, despite his acknowledgment in *Virtues(s)* that a price on carbon emissions is an important step in driving the transition off fossil fuels.

He consistently promises to make Canada an “superpower” in both clean energy and conventional fossil fuel production.

Faced with anger in Alberta and nascent separatism, he and his energy minister, Tim Hodgson, have promised a new oil pipeline and expansion of liquified natural gas exports, both of which will drive up greenhouse gas emissions. They insist GHGs can be dramatically cut through technologies like carbon capture and storage, though it remains to be seen who would pay for the proposed multi-billion-dollar buildout of CCS.

His book warns that new investments in fossil infrastructure risk becoming “stranded assets” as the realities of climate change drive a transition in the energy sector. Will his government heed that warning?

In *Value(s)*, Carney takes great pride in the advances made to win commitments from the global financial institutions, including Canadian banks, to disclose the financial risks posed by climate change, and pursue net-zero lending and investment strategies. He had led the formation of the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero that was unveiled at the climate change summit in Scotland in 2021.

Over the past two years, many major banks—including Canada's big six—have quit the alliance. It's now clear that voluntary commitments are not doing the job of shifting capital flows from carbon intensive activities to those that reduce climate risks. Calls for Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne to regulate are growing.

As we head into the fall, Carney is going to have to spell out how his “energy superpower” ambitions and infrastructure program jive with his government's effort to meet Canada's commitments under the Paris Treaty to dramatically cut emissions.

Clean-energy projects—building out the grid, supporting renewable and other clean-tech investment, and financing efficiency—can deliver on affordability, growth, and sustainability goals.

He and his key ministers should keep a copy of *Value(s)* by their bedsides.

It is undoubtedly more complicated to govern than prescribe, but Carney's core principles can guide his government through short-term crises.

Shawn McCarthy is a senior counsel at Sussex Strategy, and a former national business reporter covering global energy for The Globe and Mail. He's also the past president of the World Press Freedom Canada, a volunteer advocacy group based in Ottawa. *The Hill Times*

OPINION

Billions spent, little delivered: we need results-based budgeting

Rather than chasing headlines or diplomatic distractions, we should focus on delivering value—exporting food, medicine, energy, and innovation to the world’s fastest-growing markets: China, India, and ASEAN. The demand is there.

Ram Mathilakath

Opinion



On July 9, 2025, a major trading partner proposed a 200-per-cent tariff on pharmaceutical imports—a move that should have

jolted policymakers in Ottawa. For a country that imports 70 per cent of its finished drugs and 90 per cent of its pharmaceutical ingredients, this kind of disruption isn’t just inconvenient. It’s dangerous.

Consider insulin—a drug discovered by Canadian hero Frederick Banting, now relied on by more than 640,000 Canadians. Despite that legacy, not a single drop of insulin is made here. Instead, three global giants dominate 97 per cent of the global insulin market, leaving Canadians vulnerable to price hikes and supply chain chaos. Meanwhile, India manufactures 14 per cent of its own insulin needs. Canada? Still at zero.

We’ve drifted far from Banting’s original vision. After his discovery, the insulin patent was entrusted to the University of Toronto, but eventually ended up with the French multinational Sanofi in 1984. Since then, Canada has steadily given up its pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity. And when global supply chains buckled during COVID, our pharmacies were caught flat-footed. Did we learn anything, or just how to make banana bread?

Despite being the eighth-largest pharmaceutical market in the world, Canada relies heavily on external sources: more than 30 per cent of imports from Europe, and

only slivers from Asia. Meanwhile, our domestic research breakthroughs often get commercialized abroad, meaning taxpayer-funded innovations enrich other economies. As the World Intellectual Property Organization notes, we still haven’t built the manufacturing ecosystem needed to anchor innovation at home.

Even advanced therapies—like gene-edited treatments for rare diseases—are greenlit here, but manufactured elsewhere. Our medical supply chains are too fragile. During the pandemic, we saw bidding wars for everything from masks to basic drugs. In response, governments rushed to spend—but often without clear vision, strategy, or accountability.

Take the Biologics Manufacturing Centre in Montreal. Launched in 2021 with fanfare, it has yet to produce a single market-ready product. Billions of dollars were spent under the Bio-manufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy, but taxpayers have little to show for it. We need less confetti, and more accountability.

The Innovation, Science and Economic Development budget for grants and contributions is forecast to hit \$7.67-billion next year. But what are we getting for it? Programs like the Strategic Innovation Fund make bold

promises, but real success can’t be measured in press releases. Industrial Technology Benefits should be redesigned to ensure Canadian content in the core technology—this promotes creation of IP and jobs. We need tangible outcomes, not ribbon cuttings and LinkedIn posts.

This country hosts only four per cent of global clinical trials, and according to the Fraser Institute, our advanced manufacturing capacity continues to lag. We shouldn’t be ashamed of a “make-in-Canada” strategy, one that knits together government policy and funding, industry, and academia to rebuild our pharmaceutical and life sciences ecosystem from the ground up.

This isn’t about waving flags. It’s about health security, economic resilience, and equal access to life-saving medicines. Without domestic manufacturing, national pharmacare is a nice slogan.

Government funding with no clear outcomes is ubiquitous. In areas like auto, energy, agriculture, and defence, we’ve long supported industry with taxpayer dollars—often with little scrutiny or insistence on measurable return. We’ve subsidized generously, but evaluated poorly.

Rather than chasing headlines or diplomatic distractions,

we should focus on delivering value—exporting food, medicine, energy, and innovation to the world’s fastest-growing markets: China, India, and ASEAN. The demand is there. So should be the strategy and funding that is tied to outcomes. Grants and contributions that do not deliver outcomes should be under the microscope.

Let’s be clear: the next global shock—be it a pandemic, supply disruption, or trade crisis—isn’t a possibility. It’s a certainty. We need to act with urgency, co-ordination, and long-term vision.

And we must stop measuring success by how much is spent. Government funding should be judged by results, not receipts. Our programs must be evaluated against clear outcomes that serve Canadians—not just support legacy systems or political optics.

Let’s honour Banting’s legacy by finally making life-saving medicines—and the industries behind them—right here at home. While others are doubling down on on-shoring, Canada must stop subsidizing the export of its own innovations. Expenditure reviews are about extracting value for money in government operations, eliminating waste, redirecting funds to higher priorities, and investing in our future.

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

The Hill Times

Battle River—Crowfoot byelection parallels a defeated prime minister’s attempt to return to House nearly 100 years ago

But local reaction has been much different. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has been widely criticized for being a parachute candidate, while Liberal leader William Lyon Mackenzie King was welcomed to Saskatchewan riding after losing in Ontario.

Bill Waiser

Opinion



Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre, who lost his

Ottawa riding in the April 2025 general election, is not the first national party leader to seek a safe seat in Western Canada to get back into the House of Commons. A century ago, Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King ran in Saskatchewan after he was defeated in his Ontario home riding in the October 1925 election.

The parallels are striking. Poilievre has turned to one of the most Conservative ridings (Battle River—Crowfoot) in one of the most Conservative provinces (Alberta) to salvage his political career. King sought to preserve his position as Liberal leader and prime minister by running in the predominantly Liberal riding of Prince Albert in a province that had returned mostly Liberal representatives at the provincial and federal levels for the previous two decades.

The other commonality is that neither party leader lives/lived in their new western riding. But the local reaction has been much different.

Poilievre has been widely criticized for being a parachute candidate—an outsider in it for

himself—who will continue to reside in Ottawa. It has led to more than 200 candidates lining up against him in the Battle River—Crowfoot byelection.

In response, Poilievre has promised to champion local issues on Parliament Hill. He has also made a big deal about being national party leader and how that gives him a prominence unmatched by the other candidates.

Poilievre can’t do much more, especially when he’ll return to the Opposition benches if he succeeds on Aug. 18. Even then, his days at the Conservative helm could be numbered.

King, by contrast, was Liberal leader and prime minister in search of a new constituency. He still swung a big bat. That’s why Charles McDonald, the newly-elected MP for Prince Albert, was willing to step aside for him. That King had no intention of forsaking the Canadian capital for a new home on the North Saskatchewan River was never an issue.

The Prince Albert seat was attractive to King. Not only was it a safe riding—McDonald had easily defeated another future prime

minister, John Diefenbaker—but King wanted to shore up Liberal strength on the prairies in the face of agrarian protest.

However, Prince Albert wanted something special in return. When King arrived in the city to accept the nomination, he was met by a delegation of local Liberals. They were willing to support King’s candidacy on the understanding that he would do his best to establish a national park just north of the city.

The powerful Saskatchewan Liberal party machine ensured that King easily won over a single independent candidate in the February 1926 byelection. Even Diefenbaker, a perennial candidate, chose to remain on the sidelines for the byelection.

King was elated with his victory. He had saved his political hide.

At a Laurier House dinner party held in honour of his fellow Saskatchewan Liberal members one week later, King spoke of McDonald’s resignation “standing for the significance of sacrifice and the vision beyond,” and what his own election victory “would mean in the light of history.”

At a more practical level, King’s new constituents were more interested in what the re-elected prime minister could provide. He didn’t disappoint.

A March 1927 government order created Prince Albert National Park. King would be the special guest of honour at the opening ceremonies the following August. He was given a cottage overlooking Lake Waskesiu as a thank-you gift.

And what of the two men who resigned their seats so that the national party leaders could run in their federal constituencies?

Damien Kurek, who won the Battle River—Crowfoot riding in April 2025 with 82 per cent of the popular vote, will likely be rewarded in some manner by the Conservative party. It’s not an unreasonable expectation.

Prime Minister King, meanwhile, looked for an opportunity to repay McDonald. That time arrived in the fall of 1935 when King appointed him to a Senate vacancy. But McDonald, then living in Vancouver, was too ill to travel to Ottawa to be sworn in and died the following year.

McDonald enjoys the distinction of being the only person elected to the House of Commons and appointed to the Senate who never uttered a single word in either chamber.

Saskatchewan historian Bill Waiser is a two-time Governor General’s Award winner. He lives in Saskatoon.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Is Canada's government democratic or hierarchical? It's both

In assessing people's access to political rights and civil liberties in over 200 countries, Freedom House ranks Canada higher than Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and the United States.

Nelson Wiseman

Opinion



TORONTO—Is Canada's government democratic or hierarchical? It's both, and that is good and necessary.

Steve Paikin's TVO program *The Agenda* focused on voter turnout and Canadian democracy a few days after February's Ontario election. The producer of the program had assumed that voter turnout would decline because the

election took place in mid-winter, was unnecessary—the Conservatives had won a resounding majority just two-and-a-half years earlier—and that voter turnout had been trending downward.

Although voter turnout actually crept up, from 44 per cent to 45 per cent, the broadcast proceeded on the assumption that low voter turnout signalled that Canadian democracy was unhealthy. Three of the panellists agreed. As a contrarian, I rejected the idea that democracy was taking a drubbing because voter turnout was low.

Democracy is much more than voting turnout. A democratic state features a free press, an independent judiciary, respect for minority rights, a competitive party system, a non-partisan civil service, an actively engaged civil society, and a constantly expanding social safety net. Canada has all of them. They are not counted when votes are tabulated. No one would argue that Russia is more democratic than Canada because the turnout in last year's presidential election was 77 per cent while it was just 70 per cent (the highest in the last 32 years) in Canada's April election.

If high turnouts are to be lauded as indicators of democratic health, we ought to praise

Quebec's 1995 sovereignty referendum. Turnout was an astounding 94 per cent. Because that vote was such a divisive, emotionally fraught exercise, tearing families, friends, and work colleagues apart, Quebecers don't want to repeat the exercise.

Canada's system of government has always contained elements of both democracy and hierarchy. The democratic impulse—the drive for ever more freedom and greater equality—has grown over time, and continues. The franchise has been expanded, a merit-based civil service created, gerrymandering and corruption checked, racial and religious discrimination outlawed, and Canadians have replaced Britons in the Office of the Governor General. The Access to Information Act has lifted veils, promoted transparency and accountability, giving force to the aphorism that information is the currency of democracy.

Although the gap between this country's rich and poor has widened somewhat in recent years, indicating a hierarchical economic structure, the gap has narrowed over time, and there is greater equality in accessing government services such as health care and education. The rich and poor have become more alike in many ways;

both now eat the same junk at the same fast-food restaurants.

In some ways, politics has become more hierarchical. MPs, who used to choose their party leaders, are now more likely to be MPs because their leaders decide who may run for Parliament under their party's name. Power has been centralized in the offices of the leaders, but leaders are more beholden than before to rank-and-file party members who now elect them. Until the 1960s, no party leader had been unseated at a party convention.

Reverence has abated for hierarchic institutions such as the Crown and the Catholic Church, but the monarchy remains at the apex of constitutional power. Michaëlle Jean could have dismissed Stephen Harper as her prime minister in 2008, but she chose not to. Some lieutenant governors have fired their premiers in recent decades. Although the Charter of Rights prohibits religious discrimination, Catholics are still privileged in having their own publicly funded school systems in Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in a way they are not in British Columbia and Manitoba because of provisions that were entrenched in the Constitution in the 19th century.

With large-scale democracy has come large-scale bureaucracy.

This has meant specialization, formal rules, and impersonal relationships. Without some element of hierarchical ranking, status, regimentation, and authority, chaos would threaten. Efficient management requires order and stability through top-down pyramids of power and expertise.

If low voter turnout—so bemoaned by journalists, academics, and others, including some politicians—is a threat to Canadian democracy, mandatory voting would be a solution. Almost two dozen countries have made voting compulsory. However, none of our political parties propose it, and there is no evidence the public wants it. There is solid evidence, however, that lowering the voting age, as some now propose, will lower turnout.

Obviously, all forms of government have flaws. Canada's is not perfect, but no country's is. Comparatively, our nation ranks highly. *The Economist's* Democracy Index, using political participation as one indicator, ranks Canada 13th among 167 states. In assessing people's access to political rights and civil liberties in over 200 countries, Freedom House ranks Canada higher than Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and the United States.

By these criteria, Canadian democracy is healthy, vibrant, and a model for countries around the world.

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

OPINION

Arctic deserves more than promises for improved security

While southern Canada debates the purchase of drones and submarines, the North still waits for basic investments in safety, predictability, and connectivity.

Daniel Dagenais

Opinion



The debate about how Canada meets its NATO spending targets risks missing the real point: what we build matters far more than what we count.

Recent commentary about the federal government's attempt to "enlist" the Canadian Coast Guard into defence spending calculations has focused on bureaucratic turf-wars, military accounting, and whether Coast Guard vessels might be "too civilian" to count. But Canadians—especially Inuit, Quebecers, and other residents of the remote Eastern and Western Arctic—deserve better than a proxy debate about ledgers and chains of command.

If we're serious about defending the North, we must invest in real, lasting infrastructure that does more than check a NATO box. One impactful and achievable investment Ottawa can make today is in a network of adapted aids to navigation (AtoN) and digital coastal infrastructure, deployed across our northern sealift corridors and critical marine access points.

These AtoN aren't symbols—they are solutions. They provide a

foundation for surveillance, dual-use intelligence gathering, and environmental monitoring, which are all core functions under both the expanded Coast Guard mandate and Canada's Arctic defence priorities.

Let's be clear: the Arctic is not an abstraction. It is home. For the Inuit, it is ancestral land. For Quebecers, it is an economic and geographic frontier. For NEAS Group, it is where our ships resupply families, housing projects, and health-care services that cannot wait for politics to catch up. Every sealift season we operate under conditions where the absence of digital navigation infrastructure puts lives, cargo, and communities at risk.

And yet, while southern Canada debates the purchase of drones and submarines, the North still waits for basic investments in safety, predictability, and connectivity.

Expanding the Coast Guard's mission and budget must mean more than new uniforms or reassigning organizational charts. It should mean deploying the systems and infrastructure that enable resilience. These beacons are force multipliers: they allow the Coast Guard, Canadian Armed Forces, and Inuit marine operators to collaborate in real time without militarizing relationships, or threatening civilian oversight.

AtoN infrastructure also helps de-risk marine operations, reduce fuel and insurance costs, improve year-round situational awareness, and bolster this country's Arctic sovereignty in meaningful, community-serving ways. They are not weapons, but they help secure lives, cargo, and the integrity of Canadian territory. They're not flashy, but they reflect the quiet leadership that Canadians expect from a smart, values-based defence policy.

As Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a speech on June 9, our goal is to protect Canadians, and not just to satisfy NATO accountants. That means investing in practical, locally beneficial infrastructure like beacon networks that make life safer for families and stronger for the federation.

At NEAS, we stand ready to help Canada deliver these investments on the water, in our ports, and in partnership with Inuit communities. NEAS is a majority Inuit-owned essential sealift service provider for communities across the Eastern and Western Arctic. NEAS has retained registered representation in Ottawa lobbying on Arctic shipping and resupply issues since 1999, ensuring continuity and expertise through successive governments and policy changes.

The Arctic deserves more than promises. It deserves presence. Let's start by building something that shines.

Daniel Dagenais is president and CEO of the NEAS Group, a majority Inuit-owned essential sealift service provider for communities across the Eastern and Western Arctic.

The Hill Times

OPINION

A defence industrial policy is a good offence

Canada could revisit its industrial policy and consider a new defence, dual-use, industrial policy. This would take advantage of the government's already-announced commitment to ramp defence spending up to five per cent of GDP over the next decade.

Kevin Lynch
& Paul
Deegan

Opinion



Policy interest and political support for industrial policy ebbs and flows in Canada. From Canada's National Policy of the second half of the 19th century—which focused on railway construction, immigration and tariffs—to wartime military production in the first half of the 20th century, to auto production and the Auto Pact in the post-war boom, to embracing free trade and globalization, this country has seen and done it all.



Defence Minister David McGuinty, pictured June 10, 2025, on the Hill. Industrial policy is in play whether we like it or not. Our major trading partner is deploying it very aggressively through tariffs. It is time for us to counter these with industrial policies, write Kevin Lynch and Paul Deegan. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

In the 21st century so far, China has been the master of industrial policy, with the 2015 launch of its "Made in China 2025," which aggressively targeted global leadership in selected high-tech industries and has succeeded in some areas such as EVs, solar panels, batteries, robotics, and rare-earth metals. The Europeans, by contrast, have focused mainly on regulatory-based industrial policies.

In the United States, former president Joe Biden brought his nation back into the industrial policy game big-time, combining geopolitical (countering China's growing tech dominance), economic, and environmental objectives. His two signature legislative accomplishments (the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act) aimed to bolster domestic manufacturing and innovation in key sectors, including semiconductors and clean energy by committing huge amounts—more than US\$650-billion—to research and high-tech applications.

Under Trump 2.0, the U.S. is shifting from subsidies to tariffs as

the new American industrial policy. While his stated goal is to rebuild American manufacturing capacity, President Donald Trump is actually going further: bullying CEOs not to raise prices in response to his tariffs, coercing firms like Apple to invest in the U.S., and telling certain CEOs to step down. The "Tariff Man" is also imposing a hefty federal sales tax on American consumers via his tariffs to finance his massive income tax cuts. In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, Greg Ip argues that, under Trump, "capitalism in America is starting to look like China."

Under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, Canadian industrial policy was linked to climate change. Huge subsidies were provided to three firms to support EV and EV battery production in Canada at a total cost of \$43.6-billion, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office. Yet today, one of those firms, Northvolt, has declared bankruptcy, while VW and Stellantis are under enormous pressure to shift activities from Canada to across the border. It

was never clear what comparative advantage we had in this space other than massive fiscal subsidies and untapped rare-earth metals which our complex regulatory regime keeps in the ground.

So, what does a mid-sized country like Canada do now that our southern neighbour has abandoned free trade for a Trump version of mercantilism and global trade dominance?

One smart path would be to revisit our industrial policy and consider a new defence, dual-use, industrial policy. This would take advantage of the federal government's already-announced commitment to ramp defence spending up to five per cent of GDP over the next decade—more than tripling the current budget. It would require replacing today's ineffective procurement system in order to engage the military and Canadian business on a more collaborative, long-term basis. It would be more strategic than today's Industrial and Technology Benefits Policy which was designed for a different world and a different America. The dual-use mandate would combine developing high-tech military uses with their potential commercial applications as well, benefitting innovative Canadian tech firms. Such a policy would mirror defence reappraisals in the EU and United Kingdom, and could lead to new defence development, production, and trade partnerships with like-minded NATO countries in Europe.

As well as augmenting our existing capacities in naval ship-

building, combat vehicle production, munitions, and aircraft maintenance, it could absorb some of our auto capacity which is at risk of being stranded in the CUSMA renegotiations. There could be tech partnerships with Canadian AI firms as well as with Ukrainian drone firms to develop unique applications for wildfires, undersea operations, and Arctic surveillance. It could be the genesis for dynamic tech clusters such as ocean-based defence applications in Atlantic Canada.

Industrial policy is in play whether we like it or not. Our major trading partner is deploying it very aggressively through tariffs. It is time for us to counter these with industrial policies that will rebuild our economic growth, create technology advantages, build pools of talented scientists and workers, create partnership opportunities with like-minded allies, and restore some leverage vis-a-vis the U.S. for future negotiations.

It's not about picking winners and losers—effective industrial policy never has been. It's about creating winning conditions for business and entrepreneurial success. Done right—a Made-in-Canada defence industrial policy is a GDP multiplier that fits the bill for our increasingly disruptive and changing world.

Kevin Lynch is former clerk of the Privy Council and vice chair of BMO Financial Group. Paul Deegan is CEO of Deegan Public Strategies and was an executive at BMO and CN.

The Hill Times

An impact blueprint for Canada's global agenda

Canada should stand alongside our neighbours in the Global South as a partner and investor. It would be a good choice for the world and good for Canadians.

Adam
Spence

Opinion



Canada is at a critical moment. The world is hotter, more conflict-prone, and caught in a trade fight driven by American tariffs that is reshaping markets. Decisions being made now on defence, foreign affairs priorities,

and the new government's first budget will set our global posture and shape opportunities for Canadians. We need to be clear about what we stand for abroad, and how it serves us at home. We also need to invest where it will generate results for Canadians.

To meet these needs, we must advance an integrated global aid and trade strategy that will generate positive social, environmental and economic outcomes, strengthen trade and connections between Canada and the Global South, create new opportunities for this country's investors, entrepreneurs and funds, and stretch public dollars.

Yes, we must invest at home and reduce internal barriers. We also need to invest in relationships, trade, and partnerships around the world. When major donors pull back from international development, humanitarian crises deepen, democracy weakens, and future markets for Canadian businesses become less reliable. We should not add to that gap. A bold global agenda should maintain overall aid levels; look

beyond Europe to Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia; keep a strong focus on gender equality, climate action, biodiversity, and regeneration; and use impact investing as a core tool.

Impact investing does not replace core grants to health, education, or infrastructure. It complements them. It mobilizes private and philanthropic capital for resilient, locally led development in the Global South by investing in enterprises, projects, and organizations. Canada already has experience through Grand Challenges Canada, Fin-Dev, and other programs.

This approach fits the moment. Impact investing channels capital to address issues from inequality to climate risk while supporting locally led economic development. The global impact capital pool is large. Global impact assets are estimated at more than \$1.5-trillion. Canada can help direct more of that money into high-quality opportunities aligned with our values and interests. We can also be a preferred home base for global impact funds.

Home-grown firms from Deetken to Sarona to CPPIB are active in Global South markets, and solutions move both ways, creating mutual benefit. Most importantly, the leverage is real. Independent research finds roughly three to four dollars of private money mobilized for every public dollar. We have seen this in practice: a \$4-million Canadian commitment to the impact investing market in Colombia helped unlock another \$20-million in grants and private capital.

So what does an "Impact Blueprint" look like in practice? It means setting up and funding regional investment funds where they are needed. It means using a slice of public money up front to reduce risk and attract private dollars. It means making this country an easy home base for global impact funds and creating a Canadian platform where vetted, ready-to-invest opportunities from emerging markets can be found in one place. It means practical support like visas, workspace, and regulatory guidance for funds and entrepreneurs working across borders. It also means two-way exchanges so Canadian and global investors and entrepreneurs can learn and do deals together, backed by partnerships across government, business, and community.

It is ambitious, but it is also prudent. If the federal govern-

ment allocated roughly one to one-and-a-half per cent of the current aid budget to this effort, we could mobilize an estimated \$1.5-billion to \$2.5-billion in private capital. Because many of these investments return capital, we can recycle funds into future projects and keep the flywheel turning.

The payoff would be clear. Canada would deepen knowledge, business, and capital exchange with high-growth markets, and we would diversify trade beyond a single dominant customer. Our investors, entrepreneurs, and intermediaries would find new opportunities. Every public dollar would go further, with several private dollars alongside it. Local ecosystems would become more resilient, improving security and climate outcomes and delivering measurable benefits, including better livelihoods for women and regeneration of natural systems. And Canada would lead among G7 peers by linking aid, trade, and impact capital in a single, practical plan.

Canada should stand alongside our neighbours in the Global South as a partner and investor. It would be a good choice for the world and good for Canadians.

Adam Spence is the CEO, co-founder, and director of SVX and managing director of Bloom Local Food Fund.

The Hill Times

Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories all open to pharmacare talks, but say they're not taking place

Continued from page 5

by email on Aug. 13. "Universal, accessible, and publicly funded health care is a point of pride for Canadians and it underpins our economic strength. Our new government is discussing with our provincial and territorial partners how we can support them for better health outcomes for Canadians."

Some jurisdictions say \$1.5-billion funding promise not enough

In their responses to *The Hill Times*, both Alberta and the Northwest Territories questioned whether the feds' original price tag—\$1.5-billion for all 13 agreements—would be enough to sustain appropriate levels of coverage in their jurisdictions.

A communications officer for the Government of Northwest Territories said in an Aug. 13 email that his government "is open to discussions if the funding offered is sufficient to support programs that reflect the unique needs of NWT residents and the realities of our health-care service delivery. The current national pharmacare model does not adequately address these needs."

The statement also said, "There has been no indication of available funding through a pharmacare agreement" and that "any future conversation should prioritize increased federal investment in health programs that are responsive to the distinct challenges and priorities of the Northwest Territories."

Alberta's Ministry of Primary and Preventative Health Services said in an Aug. 11 statement: "While Ottawa originally committed \$1.5-billion over five years to cover contraceptives and diabetes medications, it has already committed more than \$900-million to just three provinces—raising serious concerns about the program's long-term sustainability."

The bilateral funding for B.C., Manitoba, P.E.I., and Yukon adds up to approximately \$936-million, which is 62 per cent of the total funding allotted for bilateral pacts in the 2024 federal budget.

Alberta's email also stated that it "has made it clear that we would like to receive our share of federal funding to enhance Alberta's existing comprehensive coverage, but we have not received a response."

An Aug. 12 statement from New Brunswick's health department didn't specifically point to concerns with funding, but said that the federal model proposed



Nunavut Health Minister John Main, left, and Nunavut Tunngavik president Jeremy Tunraluk, right, met with Health Minister Marjorie Michel in Ottawa on June 4. Main's office says that he is not in 'active discussions' with the feds over pharmacare. Photograph courtesy of John Main's office



Lesa Semmler is the Northwest Territories' health minister. A statement from her government says that it has not received 'any indication' that funding is available for pharmacare, and that it's open to discussing a program if enough money is provided to meet the territory's needs. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

in the Pharmacare Act "does not align" with the province's existing public drug program.

"We have proposed that the federal government fund contraception access as a first step in advancing pharmacare in New Brunswick," reads the statement. "This would align with our province's upcoming initiative to provide free contraception, ensuring more equitable access to reproductive health services, and any additional federal funding being



Dr. Nav Persaud leads an expert committee tasked with producing recommendations for the financing and operation of a single-payer program. Its report is due this fall. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Nav Persaud

allocated to making our existing drugs plans more affordable for New Brunswickers."

Three pharmacare-related processes continue behind the scenes

The Pharmacare Act also set the stage for three projects, with related reports to be submitted to the federal government one year after the act received royal assent, which will be Oct. 10, 2025.

Canada's Drug Agency (CDA), formerly known as the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, is the lead on two of those initiatives.

The law tasks the agency with creating a list of essential prescription drugs and related products, and to develop advice for Health Canada about a national bulk purchasing strategy for pharmaceuticals.

Then-health minister Mark Holland provided further directions to the agency in a letter on Dec. 4, 2024, to CDA CEO Suzanne McGurn. He wrote that the organization is "well-positioned to provide expert advice in support of the Government of Canada's advancement of national pharmacare."

The Hill Times requested an interview with the CDA to discuss the publicly-funded agency's pharmacare-related work and its view on how it could be used as a part of how federal and provincial drug programs purchase medicines. The CDA declined, saying that it "cannot comment on how the government intends to use the work."

It did tell *The Hill Times* that it recently completed consultations related to both tasks. "Our report will be provided to Health Canada this fall as required by the legislation," a CDA spokesperson wrote in an Aug. 12 email.

The third information-gathering process related to the Pharmacare Act will produce recommendations from an expert committee "respecting options for the operation and financing of national, universal, single-payer pharmacare," as per the legislation.

Appointed by the Trudeau government, the committee currently has three members: chair Dr. Nav Persaud; Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions; and Amy Lamb, executive director of the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada.

The committee's work continues and most of the consultations have been completed, according to Persaud, a Canada Research Chair in Health Justice, a practicing physician, and a professor at the University of Toronto's family and community medicine department. However, he didn't rule out additional consultations in a phone interview with *The Hill Times* on Aug. 12.

Persaud noted he is unable to discuss any potential recommendations.

He described the committee's work as more "technical" in nature than that of a previous government-appointed committee that was tasked with studying

possible pharmacare models. That report, which recommended a single-payer model, was released in 2019.

The current committee's work, chaired by Persaud, focused on speaking with sectors that would be impacted by pharmacare, including the pharmaceutical industry, clinicians, and pharmacies. The committee also connected with Indigenous representatives.

The committee took "the wording in the act very seriously" when it pursued consultations, focusing their work on how a single-payer program—the model dictated by the legislation—could be financed, Persaud said.

But it didn't limit its study to some of the law's other components.

"Our mandate is not restricted to the bilateral agreements. First of all, certainly, our mandate is not restricted to diabetes treatments and contraceptives," said Persaud, referring to the fact that only two classes of pharmaceutical products are outlined in the Pharmacare Act. "We are looking more broadly than that."

Persaud told *The Hill Times* that committee members had observed that bilateral deals had not been signed with all 13 provinces and territories, "but [bilateral agreements are] certainly not the only model" to implement pharmacare.

When asked about other possible models, Persaud pointed to the Canada Health Act and how the federal legislation sets up an exchange of funding from Ottawa on the condition that provinces and territories adhere to a set of principles for health-care delivery.

But he also noted that medication is not one of the insured health services covered by the 41-year-old Canada Health Act.

"I'm not necessarily saying that pharmacare would be directly based on the Canada Health Act, but I'm saying that that is another model out there. And also, just to be clear ... I'm not talking about the committee's recommendations," Persaud said.

As to whether the recent change in government impacted the committee's work, Persaud said no, as members knew when they were appointed last year that an election was likely to take place in 2025.

"So, in some ways, I understood that this was the design, that this would be a type of message in a bottle from the former government to the present government. I think that was the intent. Not that it's a very important thing from our perspective as a committee because we would go about the work in the same way regardless," Persaud said.

He also said he wanted to "emphasize that the work of the committee is not political."

"Issues like access to medicine shouldn't really depend on the outcome of an election, to some extent, especially if you accept that access to medicines is a right," said Persaud, who supports single-payer pharmacare. "So, that's part of the reason I think it has been that political changes have not been front of mind for us because our focus is more technical."

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NEWS

Tariff export quotas could spare Canada pain from U.S. and serve as negotiating tactic with Trump, says Hampson

Fen Hampson says Canadian negotiators should consider redirecting talks towards tariff rate quota-based trade, but others say Donald Trump likely has little interest in applying them in a trade deal.

Continued from **page 1**

a tariff rate quota (TRQ)-based approach would “set a ceiling for managed trade,” and that tariffs would “only kick in if the quota is exceeded.”

In an interview, the former director of Carleton’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs said that “the focus in negotiations has been very much on tariff rates and bringing them down,” and that TRQs would “reframe” the discussions.

“Unless there is a breakthrough in talks soon, or relief through successful court challenges against presidential outreach in Trump’s use of the International Emergency Economics Powers Act to justify his sweeping tariffs [including one heard before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit on July 31 involving a lawsuit on the 25-per-cent tariff on Canadian and Mexican imports imposed in March], further trouble on the trade front may arise unless we adjust our strategy,” Hampson wrote in his *Policy* essay.

“The time has come for Canadian negotiators to consider redirecting talks away from tariffs” to a tariff rate quota-based trade.

Hampson said that, in June, the United Kingdom signed an Economic Prosperity Deal with the U.S. that includes a TRQ arrangement for automobiles, with a reduced tariff rate of 10 per cent on up to 100,000 vehicles imported annually, and the same rate for auto parts for use in U.K.-made vehicles.

He said the goal for Canada would be to have zero tariffs “on an agreed volume of trade.”

“We’re in a strong position for bargaining leverage because the U.S. sells more assembled cars to us than we sell to them,” said Hampson.

TRQs would be particularly beneficial to the auto sector



U.S. President Donald Trump, left, and Prime Minister Mark Carney pictured in the Oval Office at the White House on May 6, 2025. Photograph courtesy Official White House photographer Daniel Torok

because “the profit margins are around seven per cent in car production, so a 10-per-cent tariff just kills that,” he said.

“Our auto industry has been on a big decline since the 1990s when we were assembling over three million vehicles in 1995, and it’s now just over a million,” said Hampson. “Much of the trade has shifted to auto parts.”

He said that quota levels are already recognized in side letters to the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and Sec. 232 tariffs, which empower the president to invoke in protecting national security.

In a recent interview with Bloomberg News, British Columbia Premier David Eby said “that, for the first time, there’s some willingness to have a conversation about” from the U.S. about “a fixed amount of lumber that gets to come from Canada.”

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced countervailing duties on Canadian softwood lumber of 35 per cent just days after Carney (Nepean, Ont.) unveiled \$1.2-billion in support for the Canadian industry.

Hampson said that if TRQs end up on the table for softwood lumber, they should also apply to other Canadian exports, such as steel, aluminum, copper and assembled automobiles.

In April, the Trump administration slapped 25-per-cent tariffs on Canadian-made passenger vehicles on the value of all non-U.S. content. Canada responded with 25-per-cent tariffs on U.S. vehicles that are not CUSMA-compliant.

Two months later, American tariffs on Canadian steel and



Fen Hampson: ‘The time has come for Canadian negotiators to consider redirecting talks away from tariffs’ to a tariff rate quota-based trade. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

aluminum doubled from 25 per cent, announced in March, to 50 per cent.

On Aug. 1, the U.S. also imposed 50-per-cent tariffs on semi-finished copper.

Hampson said that on Canadian steel and aluminum, which is in great demand from U.S. manufacturers, Canada could pitch the idea of removing tariffs and imposing quotas.

He explained that if volumes were to exceed that quota, then a tariff rate would kick in, which could be graduated at 10 per cent to start.

To protect this country’s steel industry, Carney announced in July that the federal government would halve the tariff rate quota levels for steel products from

countries without free trade agreements with Canada from 100 per cent to 50 per cent of 2024 steel import volumes.

Following the recent first ministers’ meeting, Ontario Premier Doug Ford called for the quota to be lowered to 25 per cent to give Canada “a competitive advantage,” he told reporters.

“The U.S. uses 70 to 80 per cent of their steel. Do you know where Canada is, folks?” he said. “We’re at 35 per cent. So, 65 per cent of the steel that’s coming into our country is coming in from foreign countries.”

Last year, more than 91 per cent of Canadian iron and steel valued at \$12.1-billion was exported to the U.S., according to Statistics Canada.

Hampson said that, with quotas, domestic producers “capture the benefit of any price increases.”

“The steel producers probably wouldn’t like it because nobody wants volumes capped,” he said. “But if the alternative is a punitive 50-per-cent tariff, I can tell you what their preference would be.”

Hampson added that a TRQ arrangement could also include a sunset clause allowing Canada and the U.S. to review the terms of the deal when there is a different administration in the White House that “might be more open to Canada.”

He noted that Canada might have added leverage to advocate for TRQs through the growing dissatisfaction from the American Big Three automakers—General Motors, Ford and Stellantis (formerly Chrysler)—over U.S. tariffs against Canadian-made cars.

In his *Policy Magazine* paper, Hampson said that quotas

also include a “psychological dimension.”

“By framing the conversation around TRQs as a way to prevent catastrophe, short-term loss to the U.S., rather than asking for concessions or touting mutual benefits, Canadian negotiators tap directly into” the situations involving bullies “like Trump [who] are far more moved by the threat of immediate, visible losses than by the promise of future gains,” Hampson wrote.

“Trump’s instinct is to avoid any outcome that could be seen as him ‘losing ground’ or letting others win at his expense. Highlighting that tariffs will cost American jobs, provoke factory shutdowns, and potentially destroy supply chains right now, not years in the future, puts the conversation in terms he cannot ignore. It reframes inaction or sticking with tariffs as a self-inflicted wound, rather than a show of strength.”

Said Hampson: “TRQs allow Trump to protect his ‘America First’ brand and avoid the stigma of immediate defeat: he can claim control, maintain leverage, and ensure future flexibility, all while averting costly blows to his own political constituencies. It channels his keen fear of loss—political and economic—into a pragmatic, face-saving solution.”

However, Frank McKenna, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., said there was “nothing new” in Hampson’s idea.

“Quotas are well known to our negotiating team and part of our arsenal. It very much depends on the size of the quota,” said McKenna, who was Canada’s senior envoy in Washington from 2005 to 2006.

“It also needs to be emphasized that Trump either wants revenue or industries to move to the U.S.,” he said, adding that TRQs do neither.

McKenna, who’s also a former Liberal premier of New Brunswick, noted that softwood lumber is “a special situation.”

“It has taken us 10 years to get [British Columbia] to accept quotas and the U.S. may not agree,” McKenna said.

David Adams, president and chief executive officer of the Global Automakers of Canada (GAC), said that while the CUSMA side letters regarding autos already address tariff rate quotas, Trump likely has little interest in applying them in a trade deal that might not even have a future within his administration.

“He seems to get a lot of energy from making tariff pronouncements, especially as they relate to the automotive industry,” said Adams, whose association represents vehicle manufacturers, except for the Big Three in the U.S.

Trump’s tariffs directly impact two GAC members—Toyota and Honda—that build cars in Canada.

“The federal government needs to look at every option to get out from underneath the 232 tariffs and ensure that we have an environment where there are zero tariffs paid on autos going into the United States,” said Adams.

The Hill Times

U.S. a 'wildcard' in Canada-Mexico trade talks, but Canada has advantages in domestic energy and advanced manufacturing, say experts

Continued from page 1

Andreas Schotter, a professor of international business at Western University.

"Imagine Canada and Mexico, they come to some kind of agreement, and then [U.S. President Donald] Trump easily divides again because he said, 'Mexico, if you do this, you don't get this. And Canada, you do this, [and] you don't get this.'"

During a press availability in the Oval Office on Aug. 14, Trump said "Mexico does what we tell them to do, and Canada does what we tell them to do because we have the two borders."

Trade tensions between Canada and the U.S. escalated on Aug. 1 when Trump increased tariffs to 35 per cent on goods from this country that don't comply with the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). Mexico, however, received a 90-day reprieve from the threatened higher levies.

On Aug. 5-6, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.) and Foreign Affairs Minister Anita Anand (Oakville East, Ont.) visited Mexico to discuss strengthening the two nations' strategic partnership, including economic growth, the possibility of increased trade, and security.

Schotter told *The Hill Times* that both Canada and Mexico know that over-reliance on the American market leaves them vulnerable to political swings from Washington, D.C., "especially under Trump's more aggressive trade stance." However, the trade flows between Canada and Mexico are modest compared to each country's trade volumes with the U.S., which could mean there is "less political urgency to make big concessions to each other," he said in an Aug. 13 emailed statement.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said during an Aug. 7 press conference that since her country, Canada, and the U.S. are a part of CUSMA, there is "no need" for a bilateral deal, as reported by Global News. Sheinbaum also said Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) is expected to visit Mexico for direct talks on a date to be announced.

About 75.9 per cent of Canada's exports were destined for the U.S. in 2024, according to

Statistics Canada. That same year, about 80 per cent of Mexico's goods went to the U.S., according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

Schotter argued that, without scale, negotiations between Canada and Mexico "could stall or deliver token wins."

"If President Sheinbaum's government remains focused on U.S. relations and domestic reforms, Canada risks being a secondary partner, with co-operation limited to symbolic announcements rather than deep, tangible agreements," he said by email.

In terms of what Canada could potentially offer Mexico outside of CUSMA, Schotter pointed to reliable energy imports, arguing that this country could help meet Mexico's energy needs with stable, long-term contracts, especially for heavy crude and liquid natural gas.

"Canada could supply more oil, gas, and renewables technology to Mexico, especially as Mexico modernizes its power grid," he said in the email.

He also argued Canada has expertise to offer in clean energy, mining, and advanced manufacturing, which could be appealing to Mexico in upgrading its industries.

In a follow-up phone interview, Schotter said that Canada has a "fairly active" artificial intelligence (AI) cluster, particularly around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The Toronto region includes a dense cluster of 273 AI firms, according to the City of Toronto's website.

"There's an opportunity here to connect businesses from the GTA on internationalization paths with Mexican businesses. Same thing on mining. This is a clear strength," said Schotter.

Ian Lee, an associate professor at Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, told *The Hill Times* that he doesn't consider there to be any significant trade irritants between Canada and Mexico, but said the issue of how each country handles trade with China could be a significant factor in the first joint review of CUSMA expected on June 30, 2026.

"I think the elephant in the room when they get to these [CUSMA] discussions is going to be hammering out a common position on the treatment of Chinese goods coming into North America," he said.

"The three different countries are sovereign and they have different strategic objectives, and the country that's the most concerned about China is the United States ... [and] when Donald Trump leaves office ... the concern of the Americans at the top—the decision-making people at the top—is not going to go away. This is a long-term issue that will have to be addressed in the next CUSMA."

In March, Ottawa responded to U.S. tariffs by placing a 25 per cent tariff on \$29.8-billion in U.S. products, including some imports that fall under CUSMA, such as orange juice, motorcycles and appliances.

U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra said that Canada's counter-tariffs on certain American products has "pulled the rug out from [CUSMA]," during an interview with Global News on Aug. 14.

Charles-Étienne Beaudry, a political studies professor at the University of Ottawa and author of *Radio Trump: How He Won the First Time*, told *The Hill Times* that a key consideration in advance of the CUSMA renegotiations could be for Canada to make improvements to the Temporary Foreign Worker program, upon which he said many people from Mexico rely.

In 2024, more than 52,000 Mexican workers came to Canada under that program and the International Mobility Program, according to the Government of Canada website.

"Many Mexicans are happy to come work in Canada with this program, but this program has problems, so that makes the relationship between Canada and Mexico less perfect than it can be," said Beaudry.

"[Mexican workers] want to benefit from this program. They want to participate, but they want their workers to feel respected and equal, and that would be a great way to polish our relationship."

The United Nations' special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata, released a report in July 2024 in which he called Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker program a "breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery."

In his report, Obokata said he had received reports of underpayment and wage theft; physical, emotional and verbal abuse;

excessive work hours; limited breaks; and a lack of personal protective equipment, including in hazardous conditions, among other issues.

"Women reported sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Fraud is also an issue, as some workers reported receiving false assurances that their employers had undertaken a labour market impact assessment or applied for permanent residency, only to find out that they had fallen out of status," reads the report.

After the report's release, then-immigration minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) said he objected to the use of the phrase "contemporary slavery" in reference to the temporary foreign worker program, but also acknowledged the abuses outlined in the report and said they need to stop, as reported by CBC News.

Shauna Hemingway, the senior special adviser on Mexico and the Americas for the Business Council of Canada, told *The Hill Times* that a single free-trade deal—in this case, CUSMA—is important, as opposed to developing multiple bilateral deals—such as one between Canada and Mexico—that could create a "spaghetti bowl effect" of businesses navigating many agreements.

"A lot of Canadian businesses are very focused and concerned with making sure that their goods that they're shipping out are compliant with the [CUSMA], and there's not an insignificant process and paperwork that needs to be done for that," she said.

"The more agreements that they need to provide that compliance for, the more work is doubled or tripled for businesses. It's best if you have one solid agreement under which you have reliable, predictable rules, transparent rules ... and that's the best way to grow your trade with a country."

When it comes to Canada diversifying trade, she said improving trade with Mexico is an obvious first place to stop.

"In the case of Canada and Mexico, everyone's agreed for a long time that relationship could be stronger, could be deeper, could be strengthened. What we've seen is, we haven't necessarily had the incentives in place to take advantage of all the poten-

tial that the relationship offers," she said.

"We've seen over the last year that many components are in place for us to take those steps now, and businesses have been doing it. We've seen a very significant increase in Canadian investments in Mexico, for example, in the last three to five years."

Hemingway said Canada and Mexico are both very committed to free and fair trade, and committed to "a rule-based system for trade" that provides predictability.

"I think, for Canada, it's essential that we capitalize on every opportunity with the partners that we see eye-to-eye with, and to reach stability in all of our relationships, even where there are irritants or some difficulties that we have to overcome," she said.

"We're very complementary in terms of agri-food. We're both very focused on securing or achieving food and energy security for our country. There are opportunities, as well, in terms of the future of industry as we look ahead [at] how we integrate AI into our supply chains, and how we trade and build and create together. That's an area for the opportunity."

Hemingway said there are opportunities to strengthen infrastructure between Canada and Mexico. As an example, she cited increased rail access between the two countries. On April 24, 2023, the "Falcon Premium" rail service began operation, allowing the transportation of goods between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent discussed international trade during an interview with Fox News host Larry Kudlow on Aug. 12. During the interview, Bessent spoke of a trade strategy wherein the U.S. would treat the wealth of allied nations as an American "sovereign wealth fund," with the U.S. president deciding how that money would be directed to build American factories and reshore industries.

Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association of Canada and a member of the prime minister's Council on Canada-U.S. Relations, called that portion of the interview "a must-listen for everyone who thinks we should have already made a deal of some sort with the sharks," in a post on X on Aug. 13.

"We are in the middle of what history will remember as an inflection point for the West," Volpe wrote in the post.

Other reactions online include a post on LinkedIn by Manish Singh, chief investment officer at Crossbridge Capital Group in London, U.K., who said the interview was extraordinary.

"Even Fox News host Larry Kudlow recoils, calling it 'off-shore appropriation'—a polite way of saying theft," said Singh in the LinkedIn post. "The logic is plain: with wars now too costly to fight, the U.S. turns to plundering its own 'allies,' exploiting their dependence on American 'protection.'"

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Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

The house that Robertson built: a look at the minister's team to date

Mary-Liz Power is director of policy to Housing Minister Gregor Robertson, while Reeha Korpall leads work related to the minister's Pacific Economic Development Canada file.

Housing and Infrastructure Minister **Gregor Robertson's** office is currently almost fully staffed up, with 18 aides confirmed to date.

As previously reported, **Marie-Pascale Des Rosiers** is in place as chief of staff to the first-time federal minister, who's also been given responsibility for the regional agency Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan).

Mary-Liz Power has been tapped as director of policy to Robertson. She's spent much of this year as a senior adviser in Prime Minister **Mark Carney's** office, but before then was director of issues management and senior policy adviser to then-public safety, democratic institutions, and intergovernmental affairs minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, with Power's policy focus having been on the public safety file.

A former staffer at Queen's Park, Power first arrived on the Hill at the beginning of 2020 as press secretary to then-public safety minister **Bill Blair**. Between 2021 and early 2023, Power was an issues adviser in then-prime minister **Justin Trudeau's** office, after which she spent close to a year as a senior policy adviser to then-foreign affairs minister **Mélanie Joly**. Power joined LeBlanc's public safety team in late 2023 where she spent her first year, roughly, as deputy director of policy.

Reporting to Power are senior policy adviser **Eamonn Schwartz** and policy advisers **Sanjana Shah** and **Bayan Kadri**.

Schwartz similarly comes from LeBlanc's old public safety team, which Schwartz joined as a policy adviser in late 2024. He continued as an adviser after now-Defence Minister **David McGuinty** took charge of the public safety file last December. A former assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Rachel Bendayan**, Schwartz landed his first ministerial job in 2022 when he was hired as an Atlantic regional adviser to

then-employment minister **Carla Qualtrough**. He went on to be a policy and Atlantic adviser to Qualtrough as then-sport and physical activity minister before exiting to work for LeBlanc.

Shah is a first-time cabinet staffer and past 2022 summer intern in the office of then-Toronto Liberal MP **Arif Virani**. According to her LinkedIn profile, she was most recently busy as a junior policy analyst with The Dias, a think tank at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Kadri is an ex-policy adviser to then-families and children minister **Jenna Sudds**, whose office Kadri joined back in May 2024. Before then, Kadri worked as an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Arielle Kayabaga**—whose successful 2025 re-election campaign Kadri recently ran—and to then-MP **Carolyn Bennett**. She's also a past programming co-ordinator with Dress For Success Ottawa.

Leading operations for Robertson is director **Enkhjin Enzo Zorigtbaatar**. Zorigtbaatar is another former foreign affairs staffer, having been hired as a policy adviser to then-minister **Joly** in October 2023 following almost a year and a half as a Quebec regional adviser to then-tourism and associate finance **Randy Boissonnault**.

A former policy analyst with Public Services and Procurement Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada, Zorigtbaatar has also worked as an aide to Quebec Liberal MP **Sophie Chatel** and interned for then-MP **Catherine McKenna**.

Also playing a senior role as part of Robertson's operations and regional affairs unit is **Reeha Korpall**, director of PacifiCan.

Korpall has been working on the PacifiCan file since shortly after its creation in August 2021. A former special assistant to **Harjit Sajjan** as then-national defence minister, Korpall followed

Sajjan when he was shuffled into the role of minister of international development and given charge of PacifiCan after the 2021 election, with Korpall becoming a policy adviser focused on the regional economic development agency. Late last year, she was promoted to "senior" status. Prior to joining his ministerial team, Korpall

worked as a constituency assistant to Sajjan as the then-MP for Vancouver South, B.C., between 2015 and 2020.

Robertson represents the rejigged riding of Vancouver

Fraserview-South Burnaby, B.C., which, among other things, includes much of the former riding of Vancouver South.

Covering the British Columbia regional desk for Robertson is senior regional adviser **Diane Chieng**. Another ex-constituency aide to Sajjan, Chieng got her first cabinet-level gig in 2023 when she was hired as an executive assistant in Qualtrough's office as then-employment minister. Chieng went on to be a West and North regional affairs adviser and special assistant for operations to Qualtrough as sport minister, and at the beginning of this year joined then-immigration minister **Marc Miller's** team as operations manager. According to her LinkedIn profile, Chieng spent the election tackling operations for now-Veterans Affairs Minister **Jill McKnight's** successful campaign in Delta, B.C.

Chieng's CV also includes time spent working with B.C.'s Ministry of the Attorney General's court services branch.

Annina Plummer is Prairies and North regional affairs adviser to Robertson. Plummer moved from Edmonton to Ottawa to work for the Liberal government in 2022 when she was hired as a special assistant and executive assistant to the chief of staff to **Joly** as then-foreign affairs minister. Roughly a year later, Plummer joined then-public safety minister **Marco Mendicino's** office as a regional adviser for Ontario and the Prairies. LeBlanc took over the public safety portfolio shortly thereafter, and Plummer's focus subsequently shifted to covering the Prairies and North regional desks. According to her LinkedIn profile, she continued with the public safety team under McGuinty, taking on added responsibility for Atlantic regional affairs.

Overseeing Atlantic regional affairs for Robertson as a senior adviser is **Cordell Johnson**. To **Hill Climbers'** understanding, Johnson was last working on the Hill in 2023 as an Ontario regional adviser to then-defence minister **Anita Anand**. A former case officer with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, Johnson is also past special assistant to then-families minister **Ahmed Hussen** and in Trudeau's PMO.

Malia Chenaoui is a senior regional affairs adviser for Quebec to the housing minister. Since the start of 2025, amid successive changes to the cabinet lineup, Chenaoui has worked for Bendayan as then-official languages and associate public safety minister, and for McGuinty

as then-public safety minister, according to her LinkedIn profile. Before then, Chenaoui was a senior policy and Quebec regional affairs adviser to then-innovation minister **François-Philippe Champagne**. For roughly two years, between 2022 and 2024, Chenaoui worked for the federal defence minister, starting as a Quebec regional adviser to then-minister **Anand**, and ending as a policy adviser to then-minister

Blair. Chenaoui is also a past assistant to then-Quebec Liberal MP **Soraya Martinez Ferrada** and Quebec MP **Peter Schiefke**, amongst other past experience.

Pierce Collier is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management for Robertson.

Collier most recently did the same for then-public services and procurement minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**,

and previously did likewise for Hussen as both then-housing, diversity, and inclusion minister and later as then-international development minister. Collier first began working for Hussen in early 2021 as a parliamentary affairs adviser and issues manager in Hussen's office as then-families minister. Before then, Collier had been an Atlantic adviser and issues manager to then-seniors minister **Deb Schulte**. He's also been a special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs to then-science and sport minister **Kirsty Duncan**, and an assistant to then-Liberal MP **Nick Whalen**.

Working under Collier is legislative adviser and issues manager **Giuliana Endrizzi**. An ex-aide to Liberal MP **Judy Sgro** and then-MP **Chad Collins**, Endrizzi landed a job as a legislative adviser and parliamentary assistant to then-housing minister **Sean Fraser** last August, and has been working on the file since.

Leading communications for Robertson is ex-PMO press secretary **Mohammad Hussain**, who was an Ottawa-based spokesperson for the Liberal campaign during the recent federal election. While he was most recently director of communications to Martinez Ferrada as then-tourism and Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec minister, Hussain fielded media requests in Trudeau's PMO for almost two years between early 2023 until late 2024.

A former program co-ordinator with Jack.org, Hussain has been working on the Hill since the 2019 election, starting as an assistant in now-Secretary of State for Sport **Adam van Koeverden's** MP office. He's since

also been a special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-innovation ministers **Navdeep Bains** and **Champagne**, and press secretary to then-families minister **Karina Gould**.

Renée LeBlanc Proctor is press secretary and senior communications adviser to the housing minister. She was most recently press secretary to then-immigration minister **Miller**, and before then was a senior communications adviser to Qualtrough as then-sport and physical activity minister. Prior to joining Qualtrough's team in December 2023, LeBlanc Proctor was an associate copy editor with Narcity Media. According to her LinkedIn profile, she spent the recent election tackling communications for Liberal MP **Tim Louis's** successful re-election campaign in Kitchen-er-Conestoga, Ont.

Also in place as a senior communications adviser to Robertson is **Piper McWilliams**.

McWilliams is a former communications, and later senior communications adviser to **Duclos** as then-public services and procurement minister, whose office McWilliams joined last fall. Before then, McWilliams was a communications assistant and executive assistant in then-citizens' services minister **Terry Beech's** office. She's also previously been executive assistant to **Gould** as then-families minister, and an assistant to then-B.C. MP **Joyce Murray**, among other things.

Rounding out Robertson's communications team is **Kiana Pilon** as communications adviser and digital media manager. Pilon was most recently a communications adviser to **Anand** as then-transport minister. A 2023 summer intern in the office of the Treasury Board president, Pilon subsequently scored a full-time job as a communications assistant to then-president **Anand**, who had replaced Liberal MP **Mona Fortier** in the portfolio in July 2023. According to Pilon's LinkedIn profile, she spent the recent writ working on Liberal candidate **Tracey Sweeney Schenk's** campaign in Hastings-Lennox and Addington-Tyendinaga, Ont. Ultimately, that seat was held by Conservative incumbent **Shelby Kramp-Neuman**.

Though **Hill Climbers** understands further hires are expected in Robertson's office, capping off the minister's current 18-member team is **Annyse Hawkins** as executive assistant to both the minister and his chief of staff, **Des Rosiers**.

Hawkins previously worked in the PMO at the same time as **Des Rosiers**—who's an ex-advance to then-PM **Trudeau**—in Hawkins' case as a special assistant supporting then-PMO chief of staff **Katie Telford**. Hawkins is also a former research adviser with PAA Advisory, assistant to now-Secretary of State for International Development **Randeep Sarai** as the MP for Surrey Centre, B.C., and was part of the 2021-22 Parliamentary Internship Programme.

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Diane Chieng is a senior regional affairs adviser for B.C. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Eamonn Schwartz is a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Parliamentary Calendar

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

Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., byelection shakes down today



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre at the opening of the Calgary Stampede on July 4, 2025. Photograph courtesy of X/Pierre Poilievre

MONDAY, AUG. 18

Byelection in Battle River–Crowfoot—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is running in the byelection in Battle River–Crowfoot, Alta., which takes place today. Former Conservative MP Damien Kurek resigned his seat so that Poilievre could run here and seek a seat in the House of Commons.

Ontario Premier Expected to be in Ottawa—Ontario Premier Doug Ford is expected to be in Ottawa today to meet with Prime Minister Mark Carney. Details to follow.

FRIDAY, AUG. 22

Minister Dabrusin to Deliver Remarks—Environment and Climate Change Minister Julie Dabrusin will take part in a fireside chat on how Canada can adapt and mitigate climate change hosted by the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Friday, Aug. 22, at 11:30 a.m. AT at The Prince George Hotel, 1725 Market St., Halifax. Details: business.halifaxchamber.com.

SATURDAY, AUG. 23

Corn Roast with Liberal MP Fanjoy—Liberal MP Bruce Fanjoy hosts a corn roast meet-and-greet event. Saturday, Aug. 23, at 4 p.m. ET at 322 Duncan Drive, McNab/Braeside, Ont. Details: liberal.ca.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 27

Elevate Girls on the Hill—Elevate International hosts a leadership forum that brings girls and young women to the steps of Parliament Hill for a day of leadership, empowerment, and celebration. Students, emerging leaders, Members of Parliament, educators, and changemakers will take part in keynote speeches, youth-led panels, and leadership workshops. Wednesday, Aug. 27, at 9:30 a.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Room 100, 144 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1

Senator Seidman's Retirement—Today is Quebec ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 3—FRIDAY, SEPT. 5

Assembly of First Nations' AGA—The Assembly of First Nations hosts its annual general assembly. Wednesday, Sept. 3, to Friday, Sept. 5, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: afn.ca/events.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 4

Susan Aglukark to Discuss Her Memoir—Juno Award-winning Inuk singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark will discuss her new memoir, *Kihiani: A Memoir of Healing*, an uplifting story of an Inuk artist's journey to healing and self-discovery. Thursday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m. at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Details: writersfestival.org.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 5—SATURDAY, SEPT. 6

CSFN Regional Conference—The Canada Strong and Free Network hosts its 2025 Regional Conference. Conservatives will gather to discuss the unique needs and aspirations of Western Canadians within the Canadian federation. Speakers include Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, former Reform Party leader Preston Manning, and Lord Conrad Black. Friday, Sept. 5, to Saturday, Sept. 6, at the Westin Airport Calgary Hotel. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8

'Pole Possessions in International Relations'—The University of Ottawa hosts a talk: "Pole Possessions in International Relations: Status and Geopolitics in the Scrambles for Polar Pre-eminence." Panelists will ask why states desire to possess the North and South poles, how this competition involves how states see themselves, how they desire others to see them, and how others respond to these desires. Wednesday, Sept. 8, at 12 p.m. ET at FSS 4004, 120 University Priv., University of Ottawa. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 9

Webinar: 'Canadian Northerners' Views about Arctic Issues'—The University of Ottawa hosts a webinar, "Perceptions of Canadian Northerners about Arctic issues." Mathieu Landriault, director of the Observatory on Politics and Security in the Arctic, and Mirva Salminen, associate professor at the University of Tromsø, will share data from a survey conducted among Arctic residents in Canada and their opinions about Arctic security, economic development, and governance. Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 10 a.m. ET happening online: cips-cepi.ca.

TUESDAY SEPT. 9—FRIDAY, SEPT. 12

Liberal National Caucus Meeting—The federal Liberals will meet from Tuesday, Sept. 9, to Friday, Sept. 12,

for their national caucus retreat in Edmonton to set their fall strategy.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 11

Panel: 'Strengthening Women in Diplomacy'—The University of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion on "Strengthening the Representation of Women in Diplomacy: Challenges and Policy Solutions," presenting the work of the LSE IDEAS Women in Diplomacy project. Participants include former Canadian ambassador Dr. Lilly Nicholls, uOttawa professor Rebecca Tiessen, London School of Economics professor Karen E. Smith, and Marta Kozielecka, co-founder and manager of the Women in Diplomacy Project at LSE. Thursday, Sept. 11, at 10 a.m. in FSS 5028, uOttawa campus, and via Zoom. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 14—MONDAY, SEPT. 15

Supreme Court Justices to Visit Yellowknife—Chief Justice Richard Wagner and Justices Nicholas Kasirer and Michelle O'Bonsawin will visit Yellowknife, N.W.T., for the third in a series of five visits planned this year to celebrate the Supreme Court's 150th anniversary. The judges will meet with members of the legal and academic communities, and engage with students, the public, and the media. Sunday, Sept. 14, to Monday, Sept. 15. Details: scc-csc.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 15

House Returns—The House of Commons returns on Monday, Sept. 15, and it's expected to be a busy fall session. It will sit Sept. 15-19; Sept. 22-26; Oct. 1-3; Oct. 6-10; Oct. 20-24; Oct. 27-31; Nov. 3-7; Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. That's 11 weeks left before it breaks for the year 2025. In total, the House will have sat only 73 days this year. Last year, it sat 122 days, and in 2023 it sat 121 days. In 2022, it sat 129 days, and in 2021 it sat 95 days.

Justice Malcolm Rowe to Deliver Remarks—Supreme Court Justice Malcolm Rowe will deliver remarks in honour of the 150th anniversary of the Supreme Court of Canada. The lecture will describe the changes leading up to the current role of the court in the Charter era. Monday, Sept. 15, at 4 p.m. ET at Grant Hall, Queen's University Campus, Kingston, Ont. Details: queensu.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16

Conference: 'Canada's Next Economic Transformation'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a day-long conference, "Canada's Next Economic Transformation: Industrial

Policy in Tumultuous Times." Participants include Steve Verheul, former assistant deputy minister of the Trade Policy and Negotiations branch of Global Affairs Canada; Matthew Holmes from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce; Emna Braham from L'Institut du Québec; Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work; Jesse McCormick from the First Nations Major Project Coalition; Chris Bataille from the Centre on Global Energy Policy; and Counsel Public Affairs' Tim Hudak. Tuesday, Sept. 16, at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: irpp.org.

Conference: 'Charting Canada's Digital Ambition'—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a one-day conference, "Charting Canada's Digital Ambition," exploring the barriers and the way forward for Canada to meet the digital moment. Speakers include former national security advisor to the prime minister Jody Thomas, commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command Lieut.-Gen. Steve Boivin, and Vice-Admiral (retired) Ron Lloyd. Tuesday, Sept. 16, at 8:30 a.m. at The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: cgai.ca.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17

CUTA 2025 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2025 Policy Forum, bringing together some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts to discuss the industry's future. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 8 a.m. ET the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

AFN First Nations ISET Agreement Holders' Gala—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a recognition gala for First Nations Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Agreement Holders. Under the theme "A Legacy of Excellence," this event will celebrate the achievements of individuals and First Nations ISET Agreement Holder organizations in their outstanding leadership and innovation in advancing employment and training for First Nations across Canada. Wednesday, Sept. 17, at the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Que. Details: afn.ca.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 19

First of 2025 CBC Massey Lectures—Former Amnesty International Canada secretary-general Alex Neve will deliver this year's CBC Massey Lectures, titled "Universal: Renewing Human Rights in a Fractured World." The next lectures will take place in Vancouver (Sept. 25), Edmonton (Oct. 1), Happy Valley/Goose Bay, N.L. (Oct. 15), and Ottawa (Oct. 30). Friday, Sept. 19, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto. Details to follow: masseycollege.ca.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 21

Senator Mégie's Retirement—Today is Quebec ISG Senator Marie-Françoise Mégie's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

MONDAY, SEPT. 22

Ottawa Centre September Trivia Night—The Ontario Liberal Party hosts an evening of trivia and fun downtown with fellow Liberals. Each ticket includes snacks and a drink cover, and new Future Fund sign-ups will be accepted at the door. Monday, Sept. 22, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 3 Brewers Restaurant, 240 Sparks St., Ottawa. Details: ontarioliberal.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 22—FRIDAY, SEPT. 26

UNESCO World Congress of Biosphere Reserves—UNESCO hosts the fifth World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, a once-a-decade gathering where global experts, policymakers, Indigenous leaders, and youth will shape the 10-year strategy for more than 750 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves across nearly 140 nations. Monday, Sept. 22, to Friday, Sept. 26, in Hangzhou, China. Details: unesco.org.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 23

Senate Returns—The Senate will return on Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 2 p.m., and is scheduled to sit Sept. 23-25, but could also sit on Sept. 26. It's scheduled to sit Oct. 1-2 (possibly Oct. 30); Oct. 7-9 (possibly Oct. 6 and Oct. 10); Oct. 21-23 (possibly Oct. 20 and Oct. 24); Oct. 28-30 (possibly Oct. 27 and Oct. 31); Nov. 4-6 (possibly Nov. 3 and Nov. 7); Nov. 18-20 (possibly Nov. 17 and Nov. 21); Nov. 25-27 (possibly Nov. 24 and Nov. 28); Dec. 2-4 (possibly Dec. 1 and Dec. 5); Dec. 9-11 (possibly Dec. 8 and Dec. 12); and finally Dec. 16-18 (possibly Dec. 15 and Dec. 19). And that will be it for 2025.

Future Forward Summit—Canada 2020 hosts its annual policy summit on the topic "Future Forward: Shaping Public Policy in Canada." At a time when the world is shifting fast, this summit asks the question: how can Canada shape—not just react to—the forces defining our future? Tuesday, Sept. 23, at The Westin Ottawa. Details: canada2020.ca.

Liberal MP Erskine-Smith to Deliver Remarks—Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith will take part in "The Power of Animals: How animal welfare is key to a sustainable future for all" hosted by The Walrus Talks. Tuesday, Sept. 23, at 7 p.m. ET at the Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St W, Toronto. Register via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 24

Politics and the Pen Gala—The Writers' Trust of Canada hosts the Politics and the Pen Gala, its annual fundraiser where the \$25,000 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing will also be presented. Location to be announced. Details: writerstrust.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 29—TUESDAY, SEPT. 30

Couchiching 2025—The Canadian International Council and the Aga Khan Museum host the two-day Couchiching annual conference on the theme "Securing Canada's Atlantic Future." This high-level strategic dialogue bringing together policymakers, thought leaders, and experts to provide insights into how to navigate Canada's role in an era of global upheaval. Monday, Sept. 29, to Tuesday, Sept. 30, at the Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr., Toronto. Details: thecic.org/couchiching2025.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 2

Fireside Chat: 'Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future'—Former cabinet minister Seamus O'Regan will moderate a fireside chat entitled "Compete or Retreat: Energy, Ambition and Canada's Future," featuring Greg Ebel, president and CEO of Enbridge Inc. Thursday, Oct. 2, at 11:30 a.m. ET happening in person and online. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

CARNEY'S ON THE MOVE

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