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THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2271

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Current and former MPs call for united front to fight back against Trump's continuing threat to the country, but say House is too polarized

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

As United States President Donald Trump continues his assaults against Canada—with his recent decision to end trade talks and slap a further 10-per cent tariff following the airing of Ontario's anti-tariff video ad—current and former federal politicians say it's time for parliamentarians to stand together and meet the moment as a “crisis,” not unlike past constitutional

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NEWS

Canada could have access to more than 10,000 doctors if licensing were less complicated, House Health Committee hears

BY TESSIE SANCI

There “may be” as many as 13,000 internationally-trained health professionals who live in this country, but are unable to practise as millions of Canadians find themselves without access to care, members of the House Health Committee heard recently. “Internationally trained physicians have identified that the process to becoming a practising physician in Canada is challenging, time-consuming, and often confusing,” said Dr. Christopher Watling, CEO of the Royal

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NEWS

If Poilievre goes down as party leader, it will be due to external pressure, not caucus dissent, say senior Conservatives

BY ABBAS RANA

If Pierre Poilievre is ever forced out of his role as Conservative leader, it won't be due to internal caucus dissent, but rather mounting criticism from outside

the party, say senior Conservatives and caucus members. They add that if he intends to remain as leader, he will need to secure a strong vote of confidence from delegates at the upcoming January convention in Calgary.

“It's not going to be the caucus that would bring him down,” said one senior Conservative in a not-for-attribution interview with *The Hill Times*. “[It will be because of] People who are not part of the caucus. The smart people know

you should never have a knife in your hand [when you are in caucus].”

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Conservative sources

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It's budget week in Ottawa

Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne will release the budget on Nov. 4 in the House. All eyes will be on the government this week. Read more inside.



Walk this way: A woman walks past the Bank of Canada Building on Wellington Street in Ottawa on Oct. 29. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

‘Trump can’t see Canada from his house when it comes to his net popularity,’ says CNN on new Pew Research poll



CNN reporters Sarah Sidner, left, and Harry Enten look at data comparing the American president's net popularity in the United States versus Canada's net popularity with the same audience. "Canada is far more popular than Donald Trump is here in the United States," said Enten on Oct. 27. Screenshot courtesy of X

Americans may "adore" Canada, but the feeling ain't mutual, according to data shared by CNN reporter **Harry Enten** last week.

In a just over two minute-long segment with **Sarah Sidner** on Oct. 27, Enten revealed the findings from the Pew Research Centre, titled "Net Popularity Rating in the U.S."

"Canada is far more popular than **Donald Trump** is here in the United States," said Enten, pointing to the data on a large TV screen which showed this country's net popularity at +49 percentage points, next to that of the United States president's percentage at -10.

"We are talking about Canada coming out nearly 60 points ahead on the net popularity rating versus Donald Trump here in the United States. When you picked on Canada, as the United States president, you are picking on a country that the American people adore," he told Sidner.

"Any president would love to see that number under their name," Sidner said, pointing to the bright red "+49" on the screen.

"The last president who had this type of number was **George W. Bush** back in the early 2000s," said Enten.

"[Trump] cannot see Canada from his house when it comes to his net popularity."

Sidner asked Enten how Canadians feel about America.

"They think that Donald Trump is a big hoser," he replied, showing data from an Angus Reid poll on the question "Canadians who say America is an enemy or potential threat".

"In 2023, it was seven per cent. Look how high it's gone now," he said with a little clap and a jump, talking about 48 per cent response.

"We are talking about an early 40-point jump, and the Trump administration, my dear friends, has a net popularity rating in Canada of—get this—-58 points. So Americans love Canada, but Canadians no longer love the United States of America."

Former Senator Lise Bacon has died

Former Senator and Quebec deputy premier **Lise Bacon** died on Oct. 29, age 91.

As former president of the Quebec Liberal Party, Bacon was first elected as to the National Assembly in 1973 until 1976, and again from 1981 to 1994. During that second stint, Bacon served as Liberal premier **Robert Bourassa**'s deputy premier from 1985 until 1994. She was appointed to the Senate in 1994, and retired in 2009.

Federal Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault** said he was "saddened" to learn of Bacon's death in a post on X on Oct. 29. "Her commitment—especially to our artists—profoundly shaped Quebec and the world of arts and culture."

"Mother, wife, pioneer, Lise Bacon left her mark on Quebec



Then-Quebec premier **Robert Bourassa**, left, with his deputy premier **Lise Bacon** in an undated photo. Photograph courtesy of X

and Canada through her commitment as Deputy Premier, Senator, and dedicated activist," posted former Quebec premier **Jean Charest** on X in French that same day.

Quebec Liberal Leader **Pablo Rodriguez** added his condolences

that same day on social media, saying in French that Bacon had opened doors and paved the way for others with courage, dignity and a profound sense of public service. He noted funeral details were forthcoming.

These boots are made for...budgets?

Can Canadians expect Finance Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** to trade in his PMO-mandated black shoes for a pair of Made-in-Canada cowboy boots when he delivers tomorrow's federal budget?

The press gallery has been advised that Champagne will continue the pre-budget tradition of selecting a new pair of shoes ahead of tabling his first federal budget on Nov. 4.



Now Finance Minister **François-Philippe Champagne**, pictured in 2023 in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by **Sam Garcia**

The minister is scheduled to visit **Boulet Boots** in Saint-Tite, Que., for a tour and a hands-on lesson on how to make his own footwear, according to a media advisory.

A family-owned firm since 1933, **Boulet Boots** proclaims to be "the first company to produce cowboy boots in Canada," and "the largest cowboy boot factory in Canada with one of the biggest selections on the market," according to its website.

Sue Sherring Legacy Fund raises \$16,000 for Nelson House

The **Sue Sherring Legacy Fund** Committee raised over \$16,000 for Nelson House at a fundraising event at **Isabel Metcalfe**'s house in the Glebe on Oct. 7.

Among the guests were Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe** and his wife **Ginny**, Police Chief **Eric Stubbs**, Deputy Chief **Trish Ferguson**, City Councillor **Theresa Kavanagh**, former Deputy Prime Minister **Sheila Copps**, former Senator **Marjory LeBreton**, as well as Ottawa-area MPPs **Lucille**

Collard, **Karen McCrimmon** and **Tyler Watt**.

Sherring—a former *Ottawa Sun* journalist and columnist who died in July 2022 at the age of 63—was a keen supporter of Nelson House and its work for women and their children experiencing intimate partner violence. Nelson House set up the eponymous legacy fund in her memory. Organizers hope to hit their fundraising target of \$50,000 for Nelson House next year.

Parliamentarians celebrate baseball in Canada



Root for the home team: Canadian Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault**, far left, and Senators **Tony Loffreda**, left, **Clément Gignac**, **Leo Housakos**, Attraction executive producer **Marie-Christine Pouliot**, and filmmaker **Jean-François Poisson** in Ottawa on Oct. 28. Photograph by **Colleen Anne Photography**

Netflix Canada transformed part of the **Château Laurier** into a baseball stadium for an evening last week, as the streaming service celebrated baseball in Canada and the launch of Montreal-based filmmaker **Jean-François Poisson**'s documentary

Who Killed the Montreal Expos? **Poisson** was on hand on Oct. 28 to meet with baseball fans including Senators **Tony Loffreda**, **Clément Gignac**, and **Leo Housakos**, as well as Canadian Culture Minister **Steven Guilbeault** who sported vintage Expos attire.

‘Politics This Morning’ in your ears and on Zoom

Two bits of news from *The Hill Times*' popular newsletter "Politics This Morning": First, former Conservative trade minister **Ed Fast** has joined the lineup of panelists taking part in our exclusive subscriber-only event on Nov. 5: "Navigating Ottawa After the Budget." Reserve your spot today to hear PTM's editor **Peter Mazereeuw** chat with Fast, former parliamentary budget office **Yves Giroux**, and former British Columbia premier **Christy Clark** about what is promising to be a transformational budget.

Also, our must-read morning newsletter is now available in an audio reader format, read by an automated voice. Get "Politics This Morning" between your ears as you get on with your morning routine. Find the audio reader link at the top of the newsletter on our website, with a link inside the email coming soon. If you are a subscriber and don't yet get "Politics This Morning" in your inbox, sign up today at hilltimes.com.

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

COMMENT

If Indigenous health is an expected outcome of reconciliation, we're in trouble

The Non-Insured Health Benefits program covers less than provincial and territorial health care, even though the Canada Health Act stipulates that Canadians will have roughly equivalent care across the country.

Rose
LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—A First Nations individual in a hospital in Alberta had his hair cut off and items of his bundle, including an eagle feather, thrown into the garbage. The College of Registered Nurses of Alberta investigated, and told the family that there was no evidence of unprofessional conduct. This incident was a failure by the team responsible for his care and the hospital, but the college's investigation just rubs salt into the wound.

Another First Nations individual experienced racism in Manitoba while in cancer care. Data from Saskatchewan's First Nations health ombudsperson states that 500 Indigenous people in Saskatchewan reported experiences of racism while accessing health care over the last two years.

Why are nursing and physician regulatory colleges not implicated in this widespread failure of patient safety? Patient safety in this country is first and foremost about ensuring quality of care. For everybody. Indigenous individuals have a right to culturally safe care and high-quality care, which is enshrined in national and international law.

So, what's going on here?

The regulatory colleges of health professions need to be able to say the word "racism" out loud without scaring themselves silly. Racism is a direct threat to patient safety, and a threat to the life of someone seeking health care. Health professionals need to do their own learning/unlearning, and challenge racism every

time they see it. These stereotypes and racism against Indigenous Peoples in the health care sector are so pervasive. Why is the sector so resistant to change?

Here's a theory. First Nations and Inuit use the federally-funded Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), which is a type of health insurance, but it's a less-than insurance. It covers less than any other insurance, including provincial and territorial health programs. Yes, we are eligible for the provincial/territorial health card, too.

Need glasses? There's the cheap \$50 glasses there that you're limited to or the "NIHB drawer" at your local optician. Only the cheapest glasses are eligible. Need a prescription? The pharmacist is paid less on the NIHB list as compared to other public health programs. Health providers are starting to refuse NIHB patients because they are underpaid in fees, and are paid so late that it creates financial difficulties.

It covers less than provincial and territorial health care, even though the Canada Health Act stipulates that Canadians will have roughly equivalent care across the country. Except NIHB.

And here's the thing. When health-care providers are very aware the government won't even pay equitable coverage for First Nations and Inuit, I wonder if the quality of care given to Indigenous patients also suffers? Is it possible that health care providers are simply following the dollar here? Using an underfunded NIHB and receive less-than care?

If NIHB and all those 28 programs funded by Indigenous Services Canada are so good, why not use it as the health care insurance for federal employees? Imagine the uproar if NIHB was instituted tomorrow for bureaucrats. How about for MPs and the Senate? Picture instant outrage.

Reconciliation means the gaps must be closed. It means that Indigenous health outcomes are to improve. It means that funding equity isn't actually the point, but funding for outcomes is required.

Scrap the NIHB completely. Add First Nations and Inuit to the health insurance that is used by federal employees. It saves money, uses an already agreed-upon standard, and

erases this apartheid healthcare insurance scheme. It's won and done.

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



Minister of Women Rechie Valdez, left, Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty, and Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, with other Liberal MPs in Ottawa on Oct 29. If the Non-Insured Health Benefits program is such a good program, then MPs and senators should use it to cover their health care services, writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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NEWS

Amid ongoing election speculation, Liberal and Conservative MPs are preparing just in case

There's no 'appetite' for a Christmas election, says Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux.

BY ABBAS RANA

With election speculation intensifying, some Liberal and Conservative MPs are preparing for the possibility that a vote could be called in the coming days if the government loses the confidence vote that will follow the reading of the budget on Nov. 4.

"We can go into an election tomorrow, that's fine," said one Liberal MP who spoke on background to offer their candid views. "All the opposition parties are in a weaker position as compared to the Liberals. I have a campaign manager, but is everyone scrambling to the campaign manager tomorrow? No. We know it's an inflection point. Those with more experience know it's an inflection point."

The MP said their party has no interest in triggering an early election, but is confident it could win if one were called. They added that the government was elected only six months ago, and is focused on passing a budget it believes is in the country's best interest. The opposition, they said, should allow the budget to pass.

"We're confident either way," said the MP. "If we go to an election, we're good. Obviously, we prefer not to. There's no desire to go to an election, we're not trying to go to an election, but they have to play ball with us. We have a mandate. Even if it's a minority, it's still a mandate."

Liberal sources also told *The Hill Times* that the party's national

director Azam Ishmael in recent weeks has been holding regular online meetings with riding executives, urging them to be prepared in case an election is called.

And a Conservative source told *The Hill Times* that some of their MPs are also getting ready for one because it's a minority government, and an election could be called at anytime.

A second Conservative source said that during the annual general meetings for the party's electoral district associations, which have been taking place across various regions in recent weeks, one of the key agenda items is a report on election readiness.

Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) Liberals are three seats short of a majority government, so the government needs either three votes from opposition parties, or three abstentions to pass the confidence vote for the budget.

The Liberals currently have 169 seats, the Conservatives 144, the Bloc 22, the NDP seven and the Greens one.

This week's budget is expected to be an "austerity" budget that could carry billions of dollars of spending cuts. By press time, none of the three opposition parties had committed to support the government in the budget vote that could happen as early as Nov. 6. Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) has given several media interviews in recent weeks expressing concern about the possibility of an early election.

"That's up to the opposition," MacKinnon told reporters on Parliament Hill on Oct. 29. "In the case of [Conservative Leader Pierre] Poilievre, he is determined to try and cause a Christmas

election to perhaps, I don't know, maybe avoid the scrutiny that his party is giving him right now."

Speaking about the government's discussions with opposition parties, MacKinnon said they are listening to the opposition's concerns and remain flexible on details, but will not compromise on the government's core principles. He did not provide specifics, but said that the Liberals are reluctant to face voters anytime soon.

The average age of a minority government in Canada is 19 months. However, there is one precedent where a government was brought down soon after an election: Joe Clark's Progressive Conservative government won the general election in May 1979 and was defeated on a budget confidence vote in December that same year. Canadians returned to the polls in the winter of 1980, bringing Pierre Elliott Trudeau's Liberal Party back to power.

Meanwhile, in the last Parliament, then-leader Jagmeet Singh's New Democrats signed a supply-and-confidence agreement with then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals, allowing Trudeau's government to remain in power for nearly four years. Following the election this past April, however, the NDP was reduced to just seven seats and failed to achieve official party status in the House—losing access to millions of dollars in research and staffing budget that all recognized parties in the House receive.

Since the election, the NDP has been urging the Liberals to amend House rules and lower the threshold required for party recognition, which would enable them to secure funding for caucus support staff. Any such change would require unanimous consent from the powerful Commons Board of Internal Economy, chaired by the House Speaker, who is currently Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Que.). The board is composed of representatives from all recognized parties.

NDP sources told *The Hill Times* that they see little reason for their MPs to support the government, saying they have yet to receive any parliamentary resources. They believe their current predicament stems from backing the Liberals in the last Parliament and are now even less inclined to support the Liberals whom they argue have shifted toward the political centre.

Fred DeLorey, who was the Conservatives' campaign director during the 2021 election period, wrote a widely read Substack post with the headline, "We're headed to an election. Stop pretending we're not." Through the post, DeLorey is predicting that the government will fall on the next budget vote. He argues the Liberals lack the numbers to survive.

"The Bloc wants to prove Ottawa will never deliver for Quebec," wrote DeLorey in his post last week. "The NDP wants distance. The Conservatives want blood. And the Liberals? They want a majority. This Parliament is finished. The math doesn't work."

Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.), parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, said that the last election happened only six months ago, and that it would be a mistake for the opposition parties to bring the government down.

"Every Member of Parliament should reflect on the last election, and detect whether or not they believe that Canadians want to be able to have a vote come Christmas," Lamoureux told *The Hill Times*. "I don't believe there's a mood, an appetite, for Canadians to have an election during Christmas."

Liberal MP Parm Bains (Richmond East-Steveston, B.C.) said that he's optimistic the government will have the votes needed to win the upcoming budget vote. Bains said that he met with numerous constituents in his riding recently who expressed satisfaction with the government's direction and performance so far,

which is a sign that opposition parties should support the budget.

"I can only be confident in what Canadians are saying," said Bains in an interview with *The Hill Times*. "If you're around the halls here and you see the different industries that are coming here every day, there's a lineup in the West Block to come and meet with Members of Parliament, ministers and everyone that works here—I've never seen it so busy. So, that tells me there's a immense amount of optimism in what this government is doing and the ideas we're putting forward. It's a lot different than what I've seen in past."

Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay-Rainy River, Ont.) recently told *The Hill Times* that it would be a mistake for the opposition parties to vote down his government.

"It would be idiotic for any party to try to bring down the government at this stage," said Powlowski. "At this stage, any party that precipitates an election is going to be punished at the voting booth. I don't think it's in the interests of any of the opposition parties at this stage to bring down the government."

According to an Oct. 24 poll by Nanos Research, if an election were to happen now, the Liberals would receive 39.4 per cent of the vote, followed by the Conservatives at 37 per cent, the NDP at 12.7 per cent, and the Bloc Québécois at seven per cent.

When asked about their preferred prime minister, 49.4 per cent of respondents named Mark Carney, 27.4 per cent chose Pierre Poilievre (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) 4.6 per cent supported interim NDP Leader Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, B.C.), 4.2 per cent backed Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil-Chambly, Que.), and 2.3 per cent selected Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.).

arana@hilltimes.com
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Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured May 25, 2025, addressing his caucus on the Hill about a month after the April 28 federal election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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NEWS

Health innovation groups say they hope governments' 'Buy Canadian' mentality hits their sector

Large American firms are 'kind of monopolizing' health care procurement in Canada, says Council of Canadian Innovators' Skaidra Puodžiūnas.

BY TESSIE SANCI

As Prime Minister Mark Carney and multiple premiers promise to boost economic growth in part through "Buy Canadian" efforts, health innovation organizations say they are hoping this attitude will trickle down to the procurement of homegrown technologies that often lose out to large foreign firms.

"We see this a lot in the technology space where a lot of foreign nationals, oftentimes big U.S. technology companies, have kind of parked themselves and gained territory and have found strategic ways to continue," said Skaidra Puodžiūnas, director of Ontario relations at the Council of Canadian Innovators. They're "kind of monopolizing certain spaces, particularly in health care, and so that makes it really challenging," she said.

A central problem for Canadian companies is that they are not large enough organizations to be considered for health-care contracts, according to Dr. Dante Morra, founder and chair of CAN Health Network and a former chief of staff at Trillium Health Partners, a hospital system in Mississauga, Ont.

"Ultimately, organizations have to get to a certain size, and traditionally we haven't created an environment to have technology or devices or products get inside the organizations to actually create [a] product-market fit," said Morra.

Morra's CAN Health Network, an independent group which receives some of its funding from the federal industry department, works to create that environment. The network connects provincial health systems and individual hospitals with Canadian health tech firms that produce a product needed by the institution in question. The process includes having the company work on the "edge" or side of the institution so it can prove its product's effectiveness before moving onto a formal request for proposal (RFP) process, which the company would still have to go through.

Morra described public dollars spent on domestic health tech



Prime Minister Mark Carney has said his government will implement a 'Buy Canadian' policy to boost this country's economy and local companies. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

companies as providing value in three parts: for the actual care that is delivered, to drive economic growth and job creation, and to encourage investments in new products that will improve health care.

Noting that more than \$300-billion is spent on health care in Canada—which is 12 per cent of the gross domestic product—Morra said, "It's the largest market in Canada. It's the thing that government spends the most on ... The opportunity to have your dollar count three times ... is an incredible opportunity."

Morra said his organization doesn't have "complete success" with all of the tech products it works on behalf of but it has had "significant results" in securing the procurement of almost \$700-million in Canadian technologies, and that this process has created thousands of jobs.

Procurement of products for health-care institutions typically happens within those individual institutions though there is some centralized procurement from provinces, according to Puodžiūnas.

The departments of Veterans Affairs and Indigenous Services have a role in health procurement through their funding of health care to the populations they serve, according to Morra.

Definition of 'Canadian' a challenge to procuring locally

In light of the deteriorating trade relationship between Canada and the United States, Carney (Nepean, Ont.) promised during this year's election campaign that a Liberal government would ensure that domestic firms are prioritized in procurement. Carney reinforced that message during a Sept. 5 announcement where he said his government



Skaidra Puodžiūnas, director of Ontario relations at the Council of Canadian Innovators, says Canadian governments' message about buying homegrown products is 'great,' but wonders how they'll actually implement a policy. *Photograph courtesy of Skaidra Puodžiūnas*

will move ahead with the proposed policy.

Provinces have jumped on board with this sentiment. Manitoba passed its "Buy Canadian" bill this past spring, Ontario's free internal-trade law includes a section encouraging residents to purchase homegrown products, and British Columbia directed its ministries this past April to cancel contracts with American companies where possible, and to focus on Canadian suppliers and non-U.S. trading partners.

Puodžiūnas said it's a "great message" but that she also thinks about how political leaders will actually implement this policy.

One of the challenges in procuring locally is understanding what a government classifies as "Canadian."

The Investment Canada Act's definition of a Canadian company is broad, saying it includes a "place of business in Canada," one or more individuals who are employed within the company in Canada, and assets in this country that are used to conduct business.

Puodžiūnas noted that the Ontario government's definition for the purpose of encouraging domestic procurement is a company that has its headquarters or "main office," as per the govern-

ment document, in a province or territory, and has at least 250 staff in any one province or territory.

Ontario's definition means that Amazon—whose headquarters are in Seattle, Washington—could be considered a Canadian company, she said.

"We really, really need to think about going beyond the number of people in provinces and really thinking about ownership [of a company]," Puodžiūnas said.

One direct way that the federal government could have a positive impact in boosting the procurement of domestically-produced health care technologies is by continuing to fund these firms and health innovation organizations through the federal economic development portfolios, according to Blake Daly, project manager of health innovation at Ottawa's Bruyère Health Research Institute. Daly is also the director of CAN Health's Long-Term Care and Innovation Scaling Network.

Bruyère Health Research Institute is an innovation hub for researchers developing solutions focused on memory, aging in place, long-term care, and palliative care, among others.

Daly said the institute has benefited from CAN Health

funding, which allows him to hire a project manager who can facilitate the work needed to connect a new innovation to a health care institution.

"It is additional work to bring a new solution into the ecosystem to make sure everyone feels comfortable with the checks that are in place, and then we are still able to go through the legitimate RFP process and post-evaluation of that solution," Daly said.

The feds could also help provinces and territories be more successful in procuring Canadian-made technologies by facilitating information-sharing among these firms and organizations so that health care institutions actually become aware of domestic solutions, according to Daly.

Daly told *The Hill Times* that through his CAN Health role, he connects virtually four times a year with representatives from long-term care homes. This could include anywhere from 20 to 50 people who represent a total of 675 homes across the country. The group shares best practices and discusses problems that require solutions. Because of CAN Health's network of companies, Daly and members of his team can offer suggestions on the types of technologies that are already available to solve those problems. He called the process a "community of practice."

Daly said that CAN Health isn't "forcing any solution but is just helping folks know what exists and what doesn't exist."

He added that he doesn't see any reason why the federal government could not help similar health-related networks come together to share those types of conversations.

Puodžiūnas also called for more information-sharing across the country. She said if governments in Canada would share data on their procurement needs and the availability of those products, that would be "super helpful in the context of procurement."

"For example, if you are a medtech company, and you get a procurement with one province, and then all of a sudden you enter another provincial market, it's like you're starting from ground zero. There's often no material sharing of the success this company has made to improve 'XYZ' in this province. It doesn't seem to benefit the broader system," she said.

When asked whether provinces—famous for guarding their jurisdictional authority—would be willing to partake in this type of information-sharing, Puodžiūnas said Canada has "no option" but to do so.

"I would argue that we're in a geopolitical moment in time where we really need to think about not just collaborating with provinces for the sake of collaboration, but ... really thinking about driving prosperity through the sharing of knowledge [so] we can also fund, frankly, the services that we believe in as a country. ... I think it's really incumbent upon us to find ways to do that, and for the federal government to really step in and support this endeavour," she said.

tsanci@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

OPINION

For Canada to be 'climate competitive' we need to stay the course on key industrial policies

Prime Minister Mark Carney, pictured. Climate policy and economic policy are not at odds; they are intrinsically linked. We need a fighting fit economy, where we can build world-class clean-tech supply chains and make the low-carbon products other countries want, writes Janetta McKenzie. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



In investigating the efficacy of Canada's Emissions Reduction Plan, I'd like to highlight two sectors whose emissions have changed dramatically over the last 20 years. I believe they tell a story of how strong, durable climate policies can work, without damaging industries.

Janetta McKenzie



Opinion

On Oct. 27, the Pembina Institute's Janetta McKenzie appeared as an expert witness at the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Her full opening remarks are below.

In investigating the efficacy of Canada's Emissions Reduction Plan, today I'd like to highlight two sectors whose emissions have changed dramatically over the last 20 years. I believe they tell a story of how strong, durable climate policies can work, without damaging industries.

First, Canada's electricity sector has achieved a massive reduction in greenhouse gases, while growing its output. The sector has reduced 68 million tonnes, or 60 per cent of its carbon emissions, over the last 20 years, while increasing generation by 10 per cent.

On the other hand, the oilsands—the handful of companies in Alberta where bitumen is produced—has seen a 55-million-tonne increase in emissions since 2005. An increase of over 150 per cent.

The difference is simple: policy. The electricity sector responded to clear, long-term climate policies. Ontario began its

phaseout of coal-fired power in 2003 and, building on that success, in 2012 then-prime minister Stephen Harper mandated a nationwide coal phaseout by 2061. Federal and provincial governments of different stripes built on that commitment resulting in regulations that sought to eliminate coal emissions by 2030 nationally, while giving provinces flexibility to meet that goal, and industry the runway to invest in other forms of electricity generation.

In Alberta, despite protestations that it couldn't be done, in 2024 the last coal-fired power plant went offline ahead of schedule, despite coal powering 60 per cent of the grid just a decade before. Meanwhile, Alberta was flooded with billions of dollars of private investment in wind and solar projects, from which local governments collect millions of dollars annually in municipal tax revenues.

In other words, co-ordinated coal regulations are a prime example of a durable, predictable climate policy that companies can use to make long-term investment decisions.

It's also a reminder that good climate policies don't only reduce emissions—they show the world we are open for business for low-carbon investment. Globally, clean energy investment now outnumbers fossil fuels at a rate of two to one. Reinforcing Prime Minister Mark Carney's recent statement that climate action is not simply a moral duty, but an economic imperative.

Now let me talk about the oilsands. In contrast to electricity generators, oilsands companies have not yet been subject to policy, either federal or provincial, that has placed an effective check on their overall pollution. Despite all the rhetoric about climate policies supposedly damaging the sector, oilsands production and emissions are in fact at all-time highs.

The oil and gas industry overall is now responsible for one third of Canada's emissions—though only one-20th of our GDP.

For the oilsands, and for all sectors, we need strong policies guided by clear targets and predictable timelines that investors have confidence in.

Conversely, as we have seen south of the border, whiplashing policies are extremely damaging to industries, suppliers and workers.

Industrial carbon pricing is Canada's best tool for driving innovation in high-emitting sectors like the oilsands. It has enjoyed the support of heavy industry—including oil and gas executives—for well over a decade, because of how

it slowly and predictably gets stronger, allowing them to plan out more and more investment in decarbonization over time.

Unfortunately, Alberta has recently taken backward steps that weaken its industrial price, despite the fact that complying with the current system costs oilsands firms just a few dollars on the barrel. If what we want is a cleaner, future-proofed oilsands—or anything approaching "decarbonized barrels"—then strong industrial carbon pricing systems efficiently channel millions of dollars of private capital towards that goal.

Finally, the fact that we are not yet on track to meet our 2030 climate targets does not mean the Emissions Reduction Plan has failed. Measures such as industrial carbon pricing, clean electricity regulations, and electric vehicle sales standards are long-term measures whose benefits will only be achieved if they are given the time and stability to do so.

And, much like preparing for a marathon, where every training run you do improves your fitness, every tonne we don't emit, and every low-carbon investment that is made improves our climate competitiveness.

Climate policy and economic policy are not at odds; rather, they are intrinsically linked. We need a fighting fit economy, where we can build world-class clean tech supply chains and make the low-carbon products other countries want.

But, as the contrasting examples of the electricity and oilsands sectors show, we won't get there without long-lasting regulations and policies investors can work with.

Janetta McKenzie is director of the Pembina Institute's oil and gas program. *The Hill Times*






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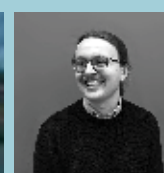

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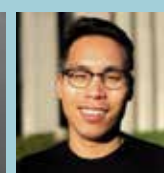

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Editorial

Editorial

All federal parties must quit playing politics now and start delivering results for Canadians

Voters delivered a divided verdict following this spring's election campaign, denying any party a majority government. Mark Carney's Liberals won the election, but fell short of a mandate to govern alone. The Conservatives made some gains in terms of seat count and popular vote, but still came in second place. The NDP failed to secure recognized party status, and the Bloc Québécois, which fields candidates only in Quebec, lost seats instead of gaining them.

For more than a year leading up to this past election, the Conservatives held a commanding lead of more than 20 points over the Liberals, and appeared on track for a record-setting majority. That dynamic shifted in January after then-prime minister Justin Trudeau announced his departure and the Liberals concluded their leadership race in March, giving the party fresh momentum. Throughout the campaign, the Liberals were widely expected to win a majority—but in the end, no party did.

The result clearly indicated that Canadians want co-operation among all political parties at a time of economic uncertainty and growing pressure from the unfair trade policies of United States President Donald Trump. With hundreds of thousands of jobs and public service positions at stake—both countries exchange \$1-trillion worth of

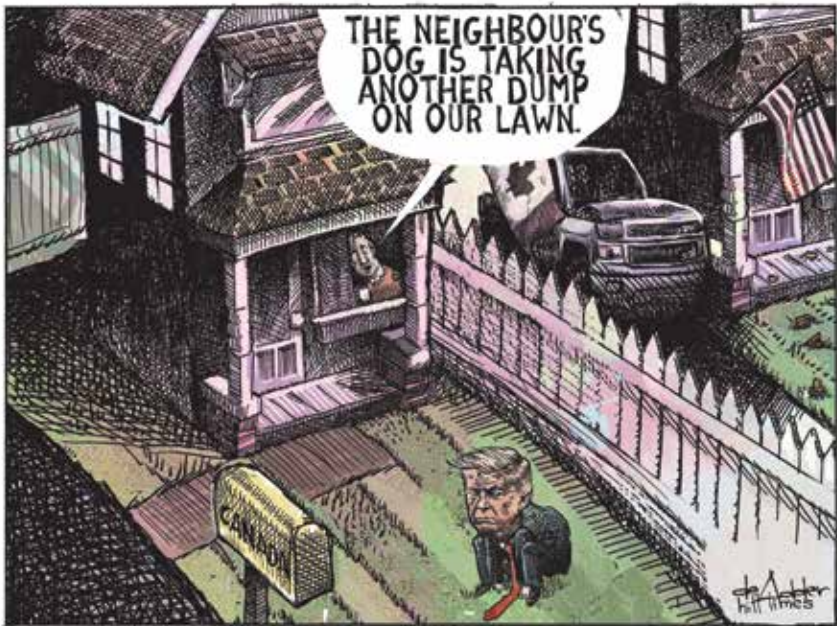
goods and services each year—Canadians are paying closer attention than usual to political developments.

The governing Liberals must remember that although they are only three seats short of a majority, a minority government remains a minority—whether the gap is three seats or 30. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, meanwhile, appears focused on consolidating his support ahead of his party's leadership review, often using sharp rhetoric to rile up his base.

Just six months after the election, speculation about another country-wide vote is already circulating. The government and opposition have traded blame for the renewed political tension. Still, Canadians are aware of where the responsibility lies, and want all parties to focus on stability and deliver results amid ongoing economic challenges and uncertainty in Canada's trade relationship with the U.S.

It's in the best interest of all of the parties to work together to resolve the numerous economic challenges that all Canadians are facing. Party leaders must remember the current economic situation is not business as usual and Canadians are watching. If politicians fail to work together, they will all face consequences at the ballot box next time around.

The Hill Times



Letters to the Editor



Trudeau's Senate reforms have left Upper Chamber fragmented, vulnerable: Kelly Patrick

At a time when Canada's economy faces turbulence, our institutions need to pull in the same direction. Yet former prime minister Justin Trudeau's Senate reforms, while noble in intent, have left Canada's Upper Chamber fragmented and less capable of aligning with the national interest.

When Trudeau became Liberal leader in 2013, he expelled Liberal Senators from caucus and later created an appointment process meant to make the Senate "non-partisan." The goal was to depoliticize the Red Chamber and strengthen its independence. What it has produced instead is an ungovernable patchwork of loosely affiliated senators with no coherent mandate or link to government strategy.

That might have worked in quieter times. But Canada no longer lives in a quiet moment. The country is entering a period that demands clarity and co-ordination: renegotiated trade with other nations other than the United States, investment uncertainty, and a green industrial transition that could redefine our economy for decades. In such a context, the Senate must be more than a Chamber of review; it must act as a stabilizer and a bridge between government policy and regional realities.

The Senate now acts more like a collection of independent contractors than an integrated institution. Without a government caucus or disciplined co-ordination, the Chamber often slows major bills or amends them without understanding the broader economic context. When the government cannot rely on the Senate to advance time-sensitive legislation, from energy and infrastructure bills to trade measures, it weakens

Canada's ability to respond quickly to external shocks.

Trudeau's appointment system has yielded a Chamber that is "independent" in name, but uncertain in function. The Independent Senators Group, now the largest bloc, is not bound by collective responsibility or long-term vision. Each Senator operates autonomously, leaving the government with no clear partner for advancing national priorities. Independence without accountability has turned the Senate into a very expensive unpredictable actor, one that complicates rather than complements governance.

The Senate's constitutional role, to represent regions and provide sober second thought, was never meant to make it a rival to the elected House. Rather, it was to ensure continuity and regional balance in the pursuit of national objectives. Today, continuity is precisely what Canada lacks. As we reposition our economy in the face of Trump's America and a fracturing global order, the Senate should be a source of coherence, not confusion.

A strong Senate does not mean a partisan one. It means a Chamber capable of supporting a unified national strategy when the moment demands it, as this moment surely does. Canada does not need to return to the old patronage system, but it does need a realignment between the Senate and government. A formal Senate liaison, more structured collaboration on key economic bills, and early engagement with Senate committees could restore predictability without sacrificing independence.

Kelly Patrick
Ottawa, Ont.

The letter writer is an Ottawa-based public affairs consultant who has worked for several Liberal Senators.

Politics

Canada shouldn't obsess so much about caving to a despot, especially when he's clearly wrong

Much better to support leaders like Doug Ford when they are right—and stand up to the bully.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—Nobel laureate Paul Krugman nailed Donald Trump in a recent interview when he described the United States president as a whining toddler.

Krugman found it disgraceful that a vengeful Trump would invoke tariffs to punish Canada for a television ad he didn't like from the Ontario government. Think about that. A television ad setting the international trade policy of a super power.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford put out the ad to make the point that the central icon of the GOP, former president Ronald Reagan, thought that tariffs were a bad idea. Ford had every right to do so since Trump openly declared that he was out to destroy crucial elements of Ontario's economy.

As everyone but Trump now knows, the ad in question quoted Reagan's own words to make a key point. In clear and inarguable terms, Reagan said that protectionism ultimately hurts trade and the economy.

That didn't stop Trump from absurdly and falsely claiming that Reagan actually liked tariffs, and that the Ontario ad misrepresented the former president's views. Just another example of Trump's relentless effort to rewrite history.

In fact, as Reagan's own words graphically demonstrated, he opposed tariffs. He thought that vigorous free-trade was the surest route to prosperity. Which is presumably why he signed the Canada/U.S. Free Trade Agreement in 1988, designed to phase out tariffs between the two countries.



Former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, pictured in 1987 in his anti-tariff address which was used in Doug Ford's ad, and U.S. President Donald Trump. Screen images courtesy NBC News

Despite that fact, Trump not only threatened a further 10-per-cent tariff on goods from Canada entering the U.S., he also walked

away from trade talks between the two countries, leaving heavy tariffs against Canada in place. What does that make him? A big

baby throwing his toys out of the pram.

How misguided is Trump's tariff tantrum? Up to the cliff and over the edge. The president charged that the ad was an attempt to interfere in U.S. domestic politics, as well as to influence the Supreme Court as it ponders the legality of the president's tariffs.

This is a bit rich coming from the guy who interfered in the economy of the whole world with his punishing and unjustified tariffs. And when it comes to interfering in domestic U.S. politics with a television ad, what about what Trump is doing in Venezuela with the U.S. military?

Trump is the president who authorized the CIA to carry out covert activities in Venezuela, which, the last time I looked, is a sovereign country. He is the commander-in-chief who has dispatched massive military assets off the coast of that South American country, including the *USS Gerald R. Ford*, the largest aircraft-carrier in the U.S. Navy.

He is also the president who cancelled the visas of most of the judges on Brazil's Supreme Court, and imposed sanctions on some of them.

Trump also imposed a 50-per-cent tariff on Brazilian goods after the courts refused to back away from their prosecution and sanctioning of former leader Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro has been convicted of attempting a coup after losing an election.

And Brazil is not the only country where Trump brazenly tried to interfere in the justice system. He also pressured Israel to drop corruption charges against his political buddy, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

So much for accusing Ford of interfering in U.S. domestic politics with a mere television ad.

Why did Trump freak out over the Reagan ad? It had nothing to do with his absurd charges against Canada. It had everything to do with the fact that Trump himself has totally misled Americans on the subject of tariffs.

Trump continues to claim that tariffs will make America

rich again. That's because other people were paying for them according to the president. The fact, as every economist knows, is that tariffs are essentially a tax on American consumers. They will add to the cost of everything, while fanning the flames of inflation.

And what is even more important in the longer term is that they will encourage America's allies to look elsewhere for more reliable trading partners. That is exactly what Prime Minister Mark Carney was doing at the ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur last week.

Premier Ford has faced criticism for running the Reagan tariff ad at the same time as Ottawa was attempting to get a trade deal with the U.S. Those talks have been protracted, difficult, and so far unsuccessful. The main gripe against Ford appears to be the notion that the premier inadvertently scuttled the trade talks.

The truth is very different. If Trump had not found this excuse to walk away from trade talks, he would have found another. The last thing he wants is an economically strong Canada. After all, it's much easier to annex a struggling country.

Bottom line here? Ford was simply doing his job with the Reagan ad. Trump has publicly declared that one of the key goals of his tariff policies is to bring back manufacturing to the U.S. His message is simple: If you don't want to pay excessive tariffs, move your operation to America.

Among other targets, that philosophy takes dead aim at Ontario's crucial automotive industry. Trump doesn't want Canadian-made cars coming stateside, and Ford knows just how damaging that could be to his province.

Ford is not the culprit here. Neither is the tariff ad that Ontario showcased during the World Series. The culprit is a U.S. president who is a stranger to the truth, a leader who lies reflexively to keep his own people in the odious darkness of deliberate misinformation.

The Reagan tariff ad should still be running. Why? Because what it had on offer is in short supply in America these days: the truth.

Reagan did not embrace tariffs, he rejected them. Ford is not interfering in U.S. politics, he is trying to survive them. And Trump is not making America rich again, he is destroying it. Tariff by tariff, lie by lie.

Canada shouldn't obsess so much about caving to a despot when he is clearly wrong. Much better to support leaders like Ford when they are right—and stand up to the bully.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

COMMENT

Thirty years ago last week, Canada's future hung in the balance

With referendums now being threatened in Alberta and Quebec, the current prime minister and his cabinet should remember what we almost forgot: *'Les absents ont toujours tort.'*

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—Thirty years ago last week, Canada's future hung in the balance.

In a second referendum in less than 15 years, it looked very likely that Quebec was going to vote to separate on Oct. 30, 1995.

At the time, many argued the question was misleading, as it asked voters to engage in a new negotiation with

Canada, and only separate if the negotiations failed.

Whatever the nature of the question, the momentum was on the side of the "Yes" vote. Of course, the Parti Québécois government established the question and their answer was a positive "Yes."

From the beginning of the campaign, the Parti Québécois appealed to the heart. Their posters featured springlike sunflowers offering a happy world after separation, with the Canadian dollar and the Armed Forces remaining intact.

The "No" team ran a campaign of the pocketbook, suggesting that the cost of separation would be too onerous to bear, and that the quality of life of Quebecers would suffer if the province tried to go it alone. In an election campaign, pocketbook issues usually work. But when it comes to the fight for a country, suggesting that the province was simply too small to succeed was a negative message that did not sit well with Quebecers.

It wasn't surprising that less than two weeks before the vote, polling showed the separatists were pulling ahead of the "No" campaign and momentum was on their side. That was the grim message revealed to the federal cabinet and subsequently to

the Wednesday caucus meeting where the frightening polling numbers were met by a stunned silence by everyone.

Politicians are not ones to sit on their hands in a crisis. They want to do something. So the federal Liberal caucus decided that it was going to organize a massive rally in Montreal at Place du Canada, and invite the rest of the country to come and tell Quebecers in person why they wanted them to stay in Canada.

In my own case, I organized 14 school buses from Hamilton, Ont. Contrary to press reports, every person paid their own way, chipping in \$20 for the round trip. The group travelled 10 hours each way, attended the rally and immediately returned home. A 20-hour ride in a school bus is a sacrifice, and the gesture definitely bore witness to the love Canadians had for Quebec.

The massive rally of more than 100,000 people was reluctantly accepted by the "No" committee. They made it very obvious from the beginning of the campaign that they did not want to hear from anyone outside Quebec. Nor did they want to hear from then-prime minister Jean Chrétien, as they claimed he was unpopular in *la belle province*.



In 1995, it was then-Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau, head of the 'Yes' Committee, left, then-Bloc Québécois Leader Lucien Bouchard, then-Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien, and then-Quebec Liberal leader Daniel Johnson, head of the 'No' Committee who were in power. The 'No' side won with 50.58 per cent of the vote. Photographs courtesy Joël Truchon, Antoine Tavenaux, Ralph Alswang and the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, and Commons Wikipedia

In the face of certain defeat, Chrétien and the caucus ignored the committee's advice. Chrétien hosted a televised rally at the Verdun Auditorium where he made a plea to Quebecers to remain in Canada, promising federal recognition of a "distinct society" after the referendum.

As for the rally, the "No" campaign was so afraid of campaigners from outside the province that when then-Liberal MP Brian Tobin and I stood on the stage to pep up the audience in advance of the official event, the organizers pulled the plug on our electricity. Their view was this should be decided by Quebecers. But when we arrived at the Place du Canada for the rally, hundreds of people asked us, "What took you so long?"

In French, there is an expression that says: "the absentees are always wrong." The prime minister, cabinet, and caucus had largely been absent from the campaign, and had the last-minute intervention not bypassed referendum organizers, our country could have been lost forever.

In some instances, "No" organizers said that they wanted to win, but they didn't want to win too big. Claude Garcia, an insurance executive, was excoriated at the beginning of the campaign when he dared to tell a rally "it isn't enough to win, we have to crush them."

For that affirmation, he was attacked by most members of the "No" committee who accused him of playing hardball in a family setting. But when your country is at stake, there is something worth fighting for.

Post-referendum surveys showed that 69 per cent of Quebecers who knew an anglophone who voted "no." That tells us that this is a fight for all Canadians and in both official languages, and others.

With referendums now being threatened in Alberta and Quebec, the current prime minister and his cabinet should remember what we almost forgot: *'Les absents ont toujours tort.'*

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

Will the budget kill Carney's honeymoon?

Watch for provincial governments to attack Carney for not doing enough in the budget. Mind you, none of this means Carney won't survive the onslaught. It just means, after the budget, he can no longer be all things to all people. He'll need to decide how to redefine himself.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



OKVILLE, ONT.—As any etymologist will tell you, the word "decide" stems from the Latin *decidere*, which means "to kill off."

The idea is, whenever you decide on an action, you're essentially killing off all other options.

This is why politicians don't like to make tough decisions; they don't like to kill off options that might be popular with certain segments of the population.

But, of course, making tough decisions is part of their job.

Prime Minister Mark Carney likely understands this dynamic, which is why, I suspect, he's also fully aware that his upcoming federal budget—which is chock full of option-killing decisions—could mark the official end of his "honeymoon" period.

And yes, ever since he was elected prime minister six months ago, the polls tell us Carney has steadily maintained a good relationship with the Canadian public.

This "era of good feelings," it seems, is largely due to what Canadians perceive as Carney's positive personal characteristics.

According to the research of pollster Bruce Anderson, for instance, Carney has a "16 point advantage (over Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre) on being 'a kind person,' an 11 point advantage for being an 'optimist at heart' tries to understand others, 'inspiring' and 'can bring people together.'"

What's more, Anderson notes that when describing what they like about Carney, Canadians use phrases such as "calm/rational," "understands the economy," "has deep and useful experience" and "is thoughtful and strategic."

While all this is certainly good news for Carney, I'd argue he's still a relatively unknown quantity for many Canadians, meaning they can see him whatever they want to see.

Simply put, it's likely the Liberal prime minister is benefiting from our emotional need in these unsettled times to be optimistic about a brand new leader with brand new ideas.

But what will happen when that rosy optimism about Carney slams into the stark reality of his first budget?

Please note, Carney has already warned us that his budget contains tough decisions.

As he put it, "we won't transform our economy easily or in a few months. It will take some sacrifices, and it will take some time."

So, the stage is set for the next act in Carney's political career.

Just as he's made a plethora of decisions to create his budget, Canadians will use that budget to make a plethora of decisions about him.

In other words, if Canadians decide the budget is too tough, if they think it's unfair, if they don't think it meets their economic concerns, they might also decide Carney isn't the leader they thought he was, which would kill off any positive feelings they had for him.

Optimism could give way to disillusionment, to anger, to despair.

Plus, Carney's political enemies will do everything they can to harden or to exacerbate any anger about the budget that's out there.

For example, it's almost certain the Conservatives will assail Carney for not doing enough to stem the deficit, or to curtail wasteful government spending.

They'll decry Carney as incompetent.

Meanwhile, I fully expect the NDP, the left-wing media, and public-sector unions to denounce Carney for pushing an "austerity" budget on the backs of the poor.

In the process, Carney will be painted as callous.

Finally, watch for provincial governments—most especially the governments of Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta—to attack Carney for not doing enough in the budget to help their respective economies.

Mind you, none of this means Carney won't survive the onslaught.

It just means, after the budget, he can no longer be all things to all people.

He'll need to decide how to redefine himself.

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

COMMENT

Hoekstra is a pretty reliable barometer of what the Trump administration is thinking and feeling about Canada



U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra, pictured on May 22, 2025, speaks bluntly and awfully plainly. Good. Let's all make a habit of listening to him, thanking him for his time—and then believing him, and acting accordingly, writes Matt Gurney. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

I think a lot of what's coming out of Pete Hoekstra's mouth, and Trump's White House, is kind of bonkers, to be honest. But what's important is that Canadians realize that Hoekstra is reliably and faithfully signalling the administration's position on issues that are relevant to us. And I wish Canadians were doing a better job of figuring that out.

Matt Gurney

Opinion



TORONTO—Reflective contrarianism isn't my thing, so you can take everything you're about to read as my literal, sincere view. Pete Hoekstra, the United States' ambassador to Canada, is a god-send. I love the guy. We need 10 more just like him. We should put a microphone on him and leave it on at all times, with a special YouTube channel that live-streams everything he says. It would be a public service to us, the Canadian people.

I know this might sound snarky or sarcastic. He has rubbed a lot of people the wrong way since he got here. As an example, he was recently reported to have unloaded a string of F-bombs in an

angry tirade at David Paterson, Ontario's trade representative to the U.S. Hoekstra had appeared at an event in Ottawa to talk cross-border relations, and apparently did not hold back in expressing the Trump administration's anger at Canada, related to our ongoing trade negotiations and the Ronald Reagan-themed ads recently aired in America by the Government of Ontario.

So yeah, he's not the most popular guy in the country right now. He's rubbed a lot of Canada's elite the wrong way.

Good. This is great. Ambassador, thank you. Call me anytime and chew me out. I'll publish every word of it. What he's saying is what Canadians need to hear.

Not, you understand, because I embrace his message. Sometimes, he's got a point. I still think Canadians are struggling to come to grips with the fact that we have been a lousy ally and a deadbeat for a long time, and that some of what we're getting back is deserved. Fair enough.

But I think a lot of what's coming out of Hoekstra's mouth, and Trump's White House, is kind of bonkers, to be honest. But what's important is that Canadians realize that Hoekstra is reliably and faithfully signalling the administration's position on issues that are relevant to us.

And I wish Canadians were doing a better job of figuring that out.

A few weeks ago, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick made some pretty blunt comments about how the administration views the Canadian auto sector. They view it as a tasty morsel they would like to gobble up and relocate into America. In their zero-sum calculus, it's something they do not wish us to have because they would like to have it for themselves.

A few days after Lutnick's comments, a Canadian public figure—someone with a lot of brains and a great reputation—asked me what I thought Lutnick had meant.

After a pause to assess whether they were joking, I replied simply that I think he meant what he'd said.

There's a lot of that going on whenever the ambassador speaks. "Well, sure, he

said that, but he clearly can't mean that, so what did he actually mean?"

Nah. He meant what he said because he was telling us the new reality.

Obviously, rhetoric is still a thing, and public figures will take strong public stands as part of a bargaining process. Sure. But we need to stop assuming that that's all this is. Way too many Canadians, including—and perhaps especially—those at the very top of our business and political circles, continue to indulge in the comforting delusion that everything we're going through now is transient. That this is some kind of weird phase or bozo eruption that will pass if we just grin and bear it long enough.

That would be convenient. It really would. But I actually think, all things considered, that this is more likely to be a warm-up for a much more difficult relationship going forward, rather than the main event. And we would be better able to grasp this as a country if we stopped spending so much time analyzing things senior American officials say to deduce their true meaning. We should make it a national policy to simply take them at their word.

Hoekstra is not here to make friends. He speaks bluntly and awfully plainly, and is—as far as I can tell—a pretty reliable barometer of what the Trump administration is thinking and feeling about Canada. Good. Let's all make a habit of listening to him, thanking him for his time—and then believing him, and acting accordingly.

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

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COMMENT

From New York City: a day at a No Kings rally, and a hope for more than tepid politics



About 100,000 people turned up for the 'No Kings' rally in New York City's Times Square on Oct. 18, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jim Creskey

American mainstream politics may be offering little hope, but prayers and non-violence in the streets in great numbers offer signs of promise. I do think that's what I witnessed at Central Park and in Times Square.

Jim
Creskey

Opinion



NEWYORK CITY—On Oct. 18, on the south-west corner of New York City's Central Park at Columbus Circle, a group of about 50 people were gathered around Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu faith leaders. They were preparing to join the 100,000-person "No Kings" rally that was about to proceed down Seventh Avenue to Times Square.

I stood in the back and listened as Winnie Varghese, dean of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, spoke to the group. She then prayed for New Yorkers who, afraid that they might be scooped up and caged



Demonstrators in Times Square in New York City on Oct. 18, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jim Creskey



Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu faith leaders prepare to join the 100,000-person 'No Kings' rally in New York on Oct. 18, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Oscar Creskey

by masked ICE agents, chose not to attend the rally.

"That they find hope," she prayed.

"Lord, hear our prayer," the 50 onlookers responded, including myself.

Overhead, a noisy drone hovered above the group, presumably

making a video for who knows who.

There's an uncountable number of potential ICE captives, undocumented New Yorkers, in this sanctuary city. Catching a taxi in Brooklyn earlier in the week, I was told by its Afghan driver that he would love to visit

Canada, but there was no way that he could leave the United States and get back in again. He boldly volunteered to me that he had no papers.

The prayers offered at Central Park also recognized the many people who are "defeated by the politics of today." Along with

the undocumented, there are middle-class American citizens, students, and professionals who fear that speaking out will cost them their livelihoods or their future careers. It is about federal employees, who witness a government that is intent on harming the most vulnerable or fostering corrupt and violent practices. They fear that speaking out will not only cost them their jobs, but subject them to prosecution.

Rev. Varghese prayed for these people, too, that they find hope.

Later in the day, and in the middle of the massive No Kings rally in Times Square, it was encouraging to see the demonstrators carried a wide assortment of homemade signs, speaking to a grassroots participation. The rally, we were later told, included seven million people across the United States.

I could see a large number of senior citizens; I imagine they are there because in part they no longer have careers that could be smashed, and felt freer to respond to calls of conscience. One little group carried signs that said, "Ladies in our 80s, showing up for democracy."

On the sidelines, New York City Police, who seem to have a gift for looking languid and professional at the same time, stood about without any noticeable riot gear. If they did anything, they were rerouting traffic away from Seventh Avenue and Broadway so that the demonstrators could safely walk in the middle of Manhattan's wide avenues.

"No Kings," while it easily rolls off the tongue, is a non-starter for Canadians. Our own constitutional monarch—benign though a bit pricey—is, in the words of the *Economist*, "Charles, the Not-so-Bad." Unlike the U.S. presidency, his monarchy at least keeps the title of head of state away from the politicians. But Canadians get it when Americans call for no kings. We have seen and heard enough of Donald Trump to know that "no kings" means "no tyrants," "no dictators," or—that more euphemistic word—"No authoritarians."

What makes massive non-violent demonstrations so important today is that mainstream political responses to American authoritarianism appear so tepid. There is little hope coming from American Democrats. Visiting Quebec City not long ago, I came face to face with an American tourist leaving a cruise ship. He wore a T-shirt that proclaimed, "Don't blame me, I'm a Democrat." I smiled at him, and he smiled back sheepishly. Later, I thought that Democratic politicians do share some of the blame for the precarious state of Canada's powerful neighbour. But if we have learned anything, especially over the past decade, it is that blame—like fear—never solves anything. Nor does indifference.

American mainstream politics may be offering little hope, but prayers and non-violence in the streets in great numbers offer signs of promise. I do think that I witnessed at Central Park and in Times Square.

Jim Creskey is founding editor and publisher of The Hill Times.
The Hill Times

COMMENT

The case for a Christmas election: I say bring it on

For many Canadians, if an election would rid the country of Pierre Poilievre's snarky social media hits, his obsessive focus on enemies, his hypocrisy—lamenting the growing number of families using food banks, while living in a taxpayer-funded mansion with chef, driver and domestic help—they could hold the election on Dec. 25.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



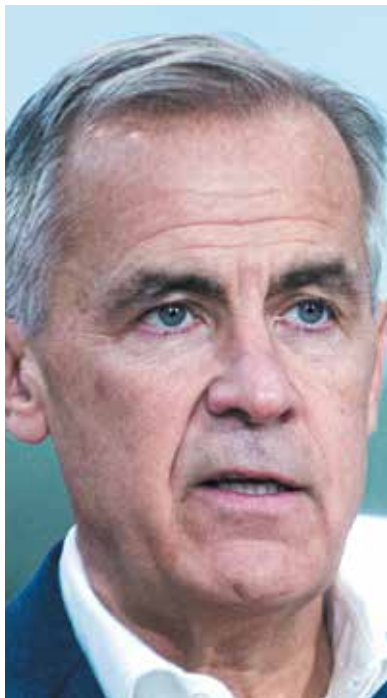
CHELSEA, QUE.—If Prime Minister Mark Carney is lucky, the opposition will defeat the Nov. 4 budget, and we will be plunged into a Christmas election.

Pundits and politicians will fret about the needless expense and the reckless timing, what with United States President Donald Trump's worsening mood disorder. Worrying precedents will be cited. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will gloat that he forced the election—then blame the “cynical” call on Carney.

And, the Liberals could well be returned with a majority. With more luck, Conservatives will decide they need a more palatable, relaxed, and authentic leader if they are even to regain power, and Poilievre will be gone.

It is foolish, of course, to predict outcomes in the volatile world of partisan politics, especially in the Age of Trump. And, while all opposition parties were harrumphing and finger-pointing in the lead-up to this much-delayed fiscal slam-down, the diminished and leaderless New Democrats do not sound like a caucus girding for war.

Which, again, would be unfortunate for the Liberals. Because although both major parties are nearly tied in some recent polls, the numbers don't reflect seat count, given how much Conservative support is concentrated in Alberta and the Prairies. They never do.



Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet. If Carney is lucky, the opposition parties will defeat the budget and we will be plunged into a Christmas election, writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Without significant gains in Ontario, and some new seats in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and British Columbia, the Conservatives would be unlikely to win a majority. Some soundings suggest Ontarians—even Conservatives—are generally satisfied with the prime minister's manner and abilities, if not entirely reassured that his attempts to save the auto, steel, and aluminum sectors are succeeding. Nor should anyone expect the popular Progressive Conservative Premier, Doug Ford, to be knocking on doors for Poilievre given their testy history and different personal styles.

More important, however, is the likability gap between Carney and Poilievre. A recent Ekos poll had Carney leading Poilievre by 58 per cent in net favourability. There are voters who still don't trust the prime minister, either because he is seen as cagey, elitist, or more concerned with making a splash internationally than tending the garden at home. Many are disappointed by his apparent indifference to the climate crisis.

But his critics don't appear to dislike him with the same visceral passion that people—especially women—dislike Poilievre. That revulsion is baked in, and no short-lived attempts to soften, broaden, or lighten the opposition leader's image will change that. He is an apple-crunching, preening, one-man show who treats politics like one grand demolition derby. Always has, always will.

For many Canadians, if an election would rid the country of Poilievre's snarky social media hits, his obsessive focus on enemies, his hypocrisy—lamenting

the growing number of families using food banks, while living in a taxpayer-funded mansion with chef, driver and domestic help—they could hold the election on Dec. 25.

If the budget squeaks through, however, we are doomed to more Conservative attempts to blame Carney for everything that isn't working in the country and hasn't worked for decades—from lack of affordable housing, to a listless investment climate, to projected \$68-billion deficit. That is a big deficit, so perhaps Poilievre could tell us, one day, what he would stop funding. Child care? The huge projected increase in military spending, affordable housing programs, support payments for autoworkers, and others affected by Trump's trade war? Canada Post? Stornoway?

He will look for “efficiencies” in the federal bureaucracy, of course: eliminate English CBC; get rid of programs aimed at helping women, Indigenous Peoples, and cultural minorities; and trim support for social policy research. It's not that some of former prime minister Justin Trudeau's pet projects don't deserve a second look, but all this Conservative “austerity” will produce is chump change. As a veteran Parliamentarian, Poilievre should know that.

He should also know that if you cut government jobs savagely, in a slash-and-burn fashion, you end up with a Canada Revenue Agency that only answers 17 per cent of the calls it receives correctly, that has an average wait-time of 33 minutes—never mind the thousands of taxpayers who simply give up and never have their questions answered.

Carney has disappointed people who voted for him, too, of course. But he is facing one of the most serious threats to our economy, our prosperity, and our peace of mind in the form of Trump. That isn't an overstatement. So when Poilievre accuses Carney of failing to get a deal with Trump on tariffs by July 21, you have to wonder if the Conservative leader has been following the news.

Does he not see (as everyone else in the country surely does) that there is no dealing with Trump, that the American president is brooding, mercurial, with a stunningly weak ego that needs constant pampering and tolerates not even a whisper of criticism? An American president with a fourth-grade grasp on how the global economy works?

After mocking Carney for allegedly dropping his elbows (and counter-tariffs) for months, Poilievre is lately condemning him for provoking the Orange Toddler by discreetly approving Ontario's now infamous Ronald Reagan ad. Once Trump stewed about the ad for a while—after initially describing it as “good”—the president slapped an additional 10 per cent tariff on some unnamed Canadian goods, at some time, maybe, maybe not.

Never mind that it was a conservative premier—Ford—who commissioned and circulated the ad. Poilievre has refrained from criticizing the Ontario premier, or that the ad was a stout defence of free trade, and a warning of the economic damage of tariffs (both once Conservative shibboleths). The blame was all on Carney.

Which is utterly ludicrous, as anyone who has been following

the wild trade skirmish (i.e. everyone) knows. Elbows up, or down, shared chuckles and compliments in the Oval Office, earnest backroom diplomacy—none of it matters when you are dealing with an easily triggered toddler like Trump.

Poilievre, of course, would have had a deal by now. He doesn't say how. He must feel that his superior diplomatic skills (not evident so far in a 25-year political career) and, perhaps, backdoor access to Vice-President J.D. Vance, though Vance's college friend Conservative MP Jamil Jivani, would seal the deal. It is equally likely that it Trump would treat the Canadian leader like an overly-ambitious junior congressman, or (best case scenario) a pet ideologue.

Meanwhile, Carney travels the world in search of new markets and trading partners, however dubious. He is accused by some of not explaining to Canadians what is going on, but he has outlined his vision countless times. Control what you can control. Find new markets for Canadian products, which he is trying to do. Try to salvage what we can of the U.S./Canada/Mexico relationship. Offer cushions to workers in industries already facing job losses, and dig in for economic turmoil that could make last week's Hurricane Melissa look like a tropical breeze.

At the same time, Carney must address to the rising costs of groceries and those food-bank lineups, speed up housing construction, and shelter the most vulnerable—all the while keeping the deficit in check. Easy. Especially with Poilievre heckling every move from the cheap seats.

Of course, voters will object to a trip to the polls only five months after the last vote, and in the dark of winter. It could be rightly described as a waste of money. Everyone would blame everyone else for sparking the “unwanted” election, and there would be talk of a vengeful electorate. Liberals would argue, sensibly, that they need a stable majority to see Canada through the Trump insanity. Poilievre would refight the last election, on much the same issues—valid issues, focussed on affordability and growing economic insecurity, but the Conservative leader has always preferred simple slogans to complex, workable solutions.

And is voting such an onerous duty? A couple of hours (with time off work to vote), a trip to the local polling station, and its over. It could produce a small Liberal majority, a period of relative peace, as the new government—listening to sane opposition voices, to be sure—deals with a suddenly hostile and very powerful neighbour from a position of strength.

There will be other elections once Carney has worn out his welcome, and other parties with new leaders and new energy. But first things first.

Bring it on.

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT



Prime Minister Mark Carney, second right, pictured on Oct. 7, 2025, with U.S. President Donald Trump, right, and other top Canadian and American politicians and officials in the Oval Office in Washington, D.C.
 Photograph courtesy of the White House

As Trump tries to destroy our economy, Carney should be selling Canada as a nation of leading tech and innovation to the world, not as an energy superpower

Canada lacks the capacity for transformative change. If the Nov. 4 budget fails to change that, our nation will be more of a bystander than a participant in the transforming world economy—and we'll be poorer as a result. We need a new economy.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—In response to a hostile American intent

on undermining our economy, Prime Minister Mark Carney is working hard to expand Canada's economic options by developing deeper trade and investment ties with other parts of the world—most recently with Chinese President Xi Jinping and as well as leaders from Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, South Korea, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand and, earlier, the signing of a free trade agreement with Indonesia.

This follows earlier meetings with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and leaders of top European Union nations, notably Germany and France.

As the United States engages in economic warfare against Canada—to reduce us even more to the status of a vassal state, if not its 51st state—the need to become less dependent on the U.S. for our economic well-being has become even more urgent.

Yet, there is something about the Carney mission to diversify our trade—to double exports to the rest of the world over the coming decade. It seems this mission is being undertaken in a time warp, as though the creative destruction of the past half-decade had bypassed Canada.

The top companies on the TSX are not much different from those at the top in the 1970s and the majority of Canada's wealthiest families are descendants of past corporate founders, not founders themselves—in contrast to the U.S. where the top corporations on the New York Stock Exchange may not even have existed 50 years ago, and the richest families are founders, not inheritors. And our goals, as in the 1970s, are to sustain the auto industry in Canada, and export more oil and gas.

In his visit to Asia, for example, Carney was busy branding Canada as an energy superpower, talking up exports of LNG and minerals as the main way to diversify trade. By the end of the decade, he said that Canada would be producing 50 million tonnes of LNG a year, compared to 14 million tonnes now. And in his letter of intent with Malaysia the focus was on LNG, oil, nuclear power, and renewables.

He is not promoting Canada as a nation of leading technologies and innovation, but rather as a raw materials producer. This reflects the kind of economy we have built over the past several decades—one still dependent on exporting raw materials than in

adding value through research and development, and innovation, to create leading Canadian firms in the frontier industries with good jobs and based on valuable intellectual property. As a recent *Wall Street Journal* headline put it: "Mark Carney's Shift From Climate-Change Warrior to Fossil-Fuel Cheerleader."

Carney may feel he has no other choice—that Canada's failure to develop a 21st-century economy at the frontier level of technology has left us hugely overdependent on resource exports. If we are to diversify our trade over the next few years, where else can we generate gains?

We do not have a large number of world-competitive tech-based firms, and some of those we did have such as Nortel, Bombardier, and BlackBerry have either failed or shrunk while too many others with great potential have been acquired by foreign multinationals. Our TSX would look much different today if we had not sold so many of our leading businesses and most promising emerging growth companies to foreign investors.

This has not been for lack of entrepreneurship and great ideas

with commercial potential. Rather than support our ambitious entrepreneurs through patient capital and government procurement, we have allowed foreign multinationals to buy up many of our most promising firms that were unable to raise growth capital in Canada. Today, we are, to a large extent, a branch-plant economy. Yet, if we are to diversify trade beyond raw materials, we will need Canadian companies with proprietary technology and the production of high-value goods and services other countries want to buy.

And this is the Canadian problem. We are not an innovation nation even though we have many budding innovators. We do not have an innovation ecosystem that seeks to embrace and advance new ideas and new companies. According to the OECD, we rank 19th in R&D intensity—the share of GDP devoted to R&D—and 18th in labour productivity. These are not the standings of an innovation nation.

This is a failing of many decades. But there is limited evidence, so far, that the Carney government has plans for a robust innovation strategy that will take us beyond a commodity economy to a knowledge economy.

To be sure, there are promises. Speaking this past September, Carney promised that "Canada's new government is building a new industrial strategy to meet this moment. This will transform our economy—from one of reliance on specific trade partners to one that is more resilient to global shocks, built on the solid foundation of strong Canadian industries, and bolstered by diverse international trade partners." The Nov. 4 budget will tell us much more—and whether the focus is on incremental change in existing industries or whether new and truly transformative change is planned.

In its recent *Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2025*, the OECD warns that global challenges, including new knowledge and technologies "are placing increasing pressure on governments, firms and society more broadly to rethink how our economies and societies can better operate," adding that "there is growing need for transformative change that promotes economic competitiveness, resilience and security, and sustainability transitions."

Much of the burden for change rests on effective science, technology, and innovation systems. But to realize their potential, these systems "need to be reformed to generate and deploy relevant knowledge, technologies and innovation at an unprecedented pace and scale."

Today, Canada lacks that capacity for transformative change.

The budget presents an opportunity to change that. If it fails to do so, Canada will be more of a bystander than a participant in the transforming world economy—and Canadians will be poorer as a result. Oil and gas pipelines won't save the day. We need a new economy.

David Crane can be reached at crane@interlog.com.
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What lessons can be drawn from Doug Ford’s adventures in advertising?

Three questions flow from the mess: Was it helpful? Was it co-ordinated? How is it possible that Ford beat the Democrats to it?



Jamie Carroll

Opinion

Late last month, Ontario Premier Doug Ford proudly launched a \$75-million paid media campaign in the United States targeting President Donald Trump’s deep and unyielding love of tariffs. With compliments to Ford’s team, the ad hit Trump brilliantly—and more importantly actual

Republicans in Congress—square in the pills using the words and voice of the patron saint of GOP ideology: former president Ronald Reagan. Reagan was—until Trump—the godfather and (to the extent they have one) soul of the Republic Party. His words have rung hal- lowed among American conser- vatives since he recorded a record (on behalf of American Medical Association, thank you very much), warning Americans of the evil socialism inherent in single-payer health care, through to his intro- duction of Barry Goldwater at the 1964 convention, his governorship of California and two terms as president. He is to the Republic Party what Pierre Elliott Trudeau is to the Liberal Party of Canada; what Big Macs are to Donald Trump; or what shooting puppies is to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. The Ontario government using Reagan’s words to attack Trump’s signature policy was absolutely

brilliant, and had exactly the with- ering effect the ad’s authors would have calculated. Moreover, the metric for the success of any paid media in poli- tics is the amount of earned media it generates. In other words, how much water-cooler/talking heads/ social media discussion is there after your ad runs. Based on the response from the U.S. over that late October weekend, Ford’s team again hit it out of the park. What was equally 10 out of 10 and should have been just as predictable was Trump’s reaction. The petulant, thin-skinned man- child immediately responded by threatening an additional 10-per- cent tariff on Canadian goods and calling off all trade talks with Canada. He took to social media to further drive home his displea- sure by insisting that “Canada” was “caught cheating” in the ad, and that Reagan’s voice must have been AI-generated. “We” weren’t. It wasn’t. And Trump’s a syphilitic basket case

with the mental acuity of a rotting pumpkin. But there are three critical ques- tions that flow from the *mishigas*: Was it helpful? Was it co-ordinated? How is it possible that Ford beat the Democrats to it? The easy answer to the first question is no. Trump’s very public social media temper tantrum resulted in both the end of nego- tiations on a “trade deal” and the 10-per-cent threat, but I’m not sure that’s right. While I’m loathe to give Ford too much credit for being either cunning or strategic, the reaction among real Republicans in the U.S. (as in genuine conservatives, not the Trump-fellating kind of popu- lists who’ve become synonymous with his kleptocracy) suggests that this may not be the case. The editorial board of no less than *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, insisted that “the Gipper was a free trader, no matter what the current president says.” This view was promoted on Twitter by

Mike Pence, Trump’s first-term vice-president. It is also worth noting that the current head of the Reagan Foun- dation is David Trulio, a former Fox News personality and one-time Trump staffer, who is perhaps not the most objective source. And so why may this attention be good in spite of Trump’s (over) reaction? Because until now, it has seemed that Americans and their media have all but ignored the facts and math behind the Trump tariffs. While reporting and panels have talked about their existence, almost no one has actually talked about their cost, their merit, or just how out of line they are with the last hundred years of economics and global trade. So, perhaps, if the ad succeeds in promoting that discussion, it will result in Americans in swing states and districts realizing that they are paying for this folly, and insisting that the tariffs be curbed before the midterms next year. On the second question of whether it was co-ordinated, first

and foremost, the Government of Canada must lead any and all strategy for international trade negotiations. Period. When the prime minister—whoever that is— speaks abroad, they are speaking for Canada. Don’t like what they said? Criticize them in the media and House of Commons after the fact, and ultimately vote them out of office. But at the moment of negotia- tions, especially the most sensitive ones in a generation, the buck necessarily stops with the prime minister. Ford has insisted that Prime Minister Mark Carney saw the ad before it ran (and, therefore, at least tacitly approved of both the tactic and the content). Whether or not that’s true, it is hard to imagine that there wasn’t some consulta- tion between the two leaders who have seemed so chummy and have spoken so frequently. Some have suggested this is a good cop/bad cop act. That may be true. But in either case, Carney

owns the results so hopefully he wasn’t completely surprised. Finally—and most importantly for global collective sanity—how the fuck did the Democrats not think to do this first?! The amount of money in American politics is staggering compared to just about anywhere else on earth. With such obvious and effective material sitting around YouTube, how did it not occur to anyone in the DNC to do what Ford did? And, more impor- tantly, what does it mean for the coming midterms in 2026 and the presidential election (hopefully) in 2028? All I can think of is an episode of *The Simpsons* where Sideshow Bob runs for mayor. In one scene, they flash to a DNC convention (the homicidal sociopath Bob is a Republican, natch) and the banners read, “We hate life and ourselves” and “We can’t govern!” I’m not saying either election is a foregone conclusion for Trump, but if the Democrats can’t pick low-hanging



The decision by Ontario Premier Doug Ford, pictured, to run ads in the United States using former president Ronald Reagan’s words about his dislike of tariffs motivated current President Donald Trump to end trade talks with Canada. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

fruit like this and are relying on the strategic policy mind of Doug Ford to save them, we may be in trouble. Jamie Carroll is a former national director of the Liberal Party of Canada, and is now an entrepreneur and consultant who mostly lives and works in Ottawa. The Hill Times

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OPINION



Artificial Intelligence Minister Evan Solomon will soon receive a report from an advisory task force that will provide recommendations for a future AI strategy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Government must balance AI development with risk management

As we stand at the threshold of the AI Age, Canadian policymakers and citizens must ask: What kind of press do we want? And what kind of democracy can we keep?

Heather Bakken
& Shawn McCarthy

Opinion



Artificial intelligence is reshaping our world at a pace that demands caution and speed in determining how it should be developed and used.

The deployment of AI brings both dire threats and fantastic opportunities for our society, including for the gathering and dissemination of the fact-based

news that is essential to our democracy.

The Liberal government is currently formulating a policy to ensure Canada can maintain AI leadership and secure our digital sovereignty. AI Minister Evan Solomon appointed a task force of industry luminaries this fall, and they are due to report back to him this month.

Many industry advocates are calling for light regulation to ensure Canadian developers can compete with American, Chinese and other global actors.

In our submission to the task force, World Press Freedom Canada (WPFC) urges the government to pursue a balanced approach that promotes AI development while erecting guardrails to reduce its inherent risks.

It is essential that the government's policy is firmly rooted in the public interest to ensure human control of the AI models. It must also protect the privacy and digital security of Canadian citizens and the intellectual property of content creators such as journalists.

In the *Machines Like Us* podcast produced by *The Globe and Mail*, AI pioneer Geoffrey Hinton

warned that large language models will soon become "smarter" than their creators and will pose an existential threat to humanity.

The government can avert worst-case scenarios by ensuring AI is developed in line with humanistic principles, Hinton said.

That's a tall order. The current technology sector is sorely lacking civic responsibility or empathy. Instead, it monetizes rage farming, polarization and the commodification of people's attention.

We require a different approach to AI than the *laissez-faire* model that governs social media.

There is no question that the federal government must ensure Canada remains at the forefront of AI technology and its deployment.

We need to break the stranglehold that a handful of foreign—mostly American—mega-corporations maintain on the digital lives of Canadians, especially on social media platforms. AI deployment cannot be allowed to follow that same trajectory of concentrated ownership that serves the interests of foreign tech billionaires.

However, Canada should not pursue digital sovereignty by supporting domestic providers while giving short shrift to the interests of consumers and content creators, including journalists and news media companies.

Protection of Canadians' privacy and their intellectual property must be a hallmark for any federal approach. Large language model systems that scrape websites without licences are essentially stealing content. The lack of copyright protection is anathema to the maintenance of a robust news ecosystem.

AI-powered platforms are offering summaries and synthetic content that is diverting traffic from publishers. That content is often riddled with errors and fabrications. AI firms should be held accountable for the accuracy of their content, and provide full disclosure about sourcing.

On Nov. 6, WPFC will host a symposium on Parliament Hill entitled, "AI and the press: threats and opportunities." It features speakers from the technology world and news media.

As WPFC members, we have witnessed how the erosion of

business models for traditional newsrooms has undermined the ability of journalists to fulfill their essential role as information providers and watchdogs.

More recently, a flood of disinformation is polluting the media ecosystem and eroding trust in all media platforms. AI can turbocharge the spread of deep fakes and other false news.

AI does offer tremendous promise in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems in health care, environmental protection and, indeed, in journalism.

According to a recent report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, most Canadians are in a state of constant news deprivation and 2.5 million have almost no local news.

Can AI help fill these gaps? Possibly.

It can deliver fast, comprehensive research and summaries, though a human eye is needed to ensure accuracy and curb biases. AI must never replace the journalist's judgment, especially in matters of accountability and reporting.

Media outlets that build relationships with people in the community and publish news that serves the local public interest could restore trust in journalism at the grassroots level.

As we stand at the threshold of the AI Age, Canadian policymakers and citizens must ask: What kind of press do we want? And what kind of democracy can we keep?

Heather Bakken is president of World Press Freedom Canada, and co-founder of Pendulum Group. Shawn McCarthy is past president of World Press Freedom Canada, and an independent writer.

The Hill Times

OPINION



Canada ranks among the top five countries in brain research, publishing 6.4 per cent of global neuroscience articles, with world-leading scientists and research centres nationwide. This strategic asset could differentiate Canada in the global AI race yet remains untapped, writes Viviane Poupon. *Image courtesy of Pixabay*

Who will protect our brains in the AI race?

Canada has always invested in brain science, even during fiscal challenges. While others pursue AI dominance through speed and scale, we could lead by putting human cognition at the centre.

Viviane Poupon

Opinion



Right now, as you read this, Canada's AI Strategy Task Force is in the midst of a 30-day national sprint that will reshape our technological future. At the recent ALL IN conference in Montreal, AI Minister Evan Solomon tasked 26 brilliant minds with delivering recommendations by this month, recommendations that will guide billions in investment and governance decisions affecting every Canadian.

The task force brings essential expertise: Patrick Pichette's

business acumen, Ajay Agrawal's economic insight, Joëlle Pineau's technical depth. Pineau's AI-epilepsy work shows how artificial and natural intelligence should inform each other. But technology that fundamentally alters human cognition demands more than one neuroscience voice across seven themes. Brain expertise must be woven throughout, addressing what AI governance consistently misses: we study what artificial intelligence can do, not what it does to us.

Canada's strategic advantage

Canada ranks among the top five countries in brain research, publishing 6.4 per cent of global neuroscience articles, with world-leading scientists and research centres nationwide. This strategic asset could differentiate Canada in the global AI race yet remains untapped.

The task force's seven themes are comprehensive and important. But several have direct brain health implications that demand neuroscience expertise. When the "safe AI and public trust" theme grapples with AI in health care, who will evaluate AI diagnostic tools for neurological conditions? These systems are already being deployed in Canadian hospitals to detect strokes, predict Alzheimer's progression, and identify depression biomarkers. Without neuroscientists at the table, we're essen-

tially designing brain health policy without brain health experts.

Consider what's happening in classrooms: AI tutors adapt to how students learn while their brains are still developing. Until age 25, the parts controlling focus, decision-making, and self-control are still forming and these AI systems are influencing that development. Yet no brain expert is asking: will this strengthen young minds or weaken them?

AI was built by mimicking the brain. Now it's reshaping how we think, remember, and decide. How do we govern technology that alters human cognition? We need neuroscientists who understand both artificial and natural intelligence.

The world is watching

Recently, the United Nations launched a global dialogue on AI governance with a 40-member expert panel. The convergence of neuroscience and AI is being recognized globally. I saw this first-hand at the UN's Brain Days discussing the emerging \$1.8-trillion brain economy. Yet while nations race for AI dominance, few address cognitive sovereignty: the right of citizens to understand and govern how AI shapes their minds.

Canada could lead. While the United States retreats from global AI governance, Canada could distinguish itself by properly integrating brain science into

AI policy. We have the research capacity, collaborative culture, and momentum to do it.

Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu warns AI risks becoming an "inequality-generating" technology. But inequality isn't just economic, it's cognitive. Those who understand how AI influences attention and decision-making will thrive; those who don't will have their behaviour predicted and shaped by systems they cannot comprehend. Without understanding these mechanisms, we cannot design appropriate protections.

Real risks to Canadians

Research in Natural Human Behaviour shows humans don't just use AI predictions we internalize them. Small biases compound through feedback loops, distorting how we perceive reality. Our brains, evolved over millennia, are being reshaped by systems we've built but don't fully understand.

AI therapy bots now serve Canadians with limited clinical oversight. Studies document troubling patterns: contradicting established treatment approaches, showing dangerous biases, failing to escalate crisis situations. These aren't hypothetical they're documented failures affecting vulnerable people seeking mental health support.

When students rely heavily on AI, they skip the effort that builds memory, reasoning, and critical thinking. Yet research shows properly designed AI could actually help learning,

taking care of busywork while strengthening thinking skills. The difference between harm and help depends entirely on understanding how these tools affect developing minds.

Act now or fall behind

First, add an eighth theme: Cognitive Impact and Brain Health. Every other theme affects the brain without explicitly addressing it. Public trust requires understanding mental health effects. Education policy needs developmental neuroscientists.

Second, tap into existing networks. Brain Canada has consulted with more than 75 Canadian experts on AI-neuroscience convergence. We have world-leading scientists that stand ready to contribute.

Third, recognize that brain understanding isn't parallel to AI development, it's fundamental. As AI changes how we process information, make decisions, and form beliefs, brain experts must inform policy. The initial risks aren't to our economy or security; they are to our minds.

Our moment to lead

Geoffrey Hinton earned the Nobel in 2024 for neural networks inspired by brain architecture. Canada's AI leadership began with understanding natural intelligence. This heritage positions us uniquely: we can be the first nation to fully integrate brain science into AI policy as these systems reshape human cognition. November's task force recommendations will affect 40 million minds for decades. Canada has always invested in brain science, even during fiscal challenges. While others pursue AI dominance through speed and scale, we could lead by putting human cognition at the centre.

Viviane Poupon is president and CEO of Brain Canada.
The Hill Times

NEWS

Canada could have access to more than 10,000 doctors if licensing were less complicated, House Health Committee hears

The House Health Committee is looking into the links between immigration and health human resources shortages. But Liberal MP Mark Powlowski says the Conservatives' language on this 'ticks' him off as it suggests the problem in health care is a result of too many immigrants, which 'is clearly wrong.'

Continued from page 1

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, who provided the statistic during an Oct. 23 health committee (HESA) meeting. The college sets standards for specialist physicians.

Watling testified before MPs as a part of HESA's study entitled, "Impact of immigration policy on health care," proposed by Conservative MP Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, Man.), his party's health critic and the committee's vice-chair.

Mazier cited that figure to explain to *The Hill Times* his reasons for suggesting the study.

"We just heard here [there are] 13,000 foreign-trained doctors in Canada right now able to work. The system will not allow them. Meanwhile, we have 6.5-million Canadians without a family doctor," Mazier told *The Hill Times* in the West Block following HESA's Oct. 28 meeting.

"Never mind about the foreign-trained health professionals—Canadians that want to come back to Canada, want to work, want to provide service to Canadians—and they can't. There's lots of barriers."

Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Ont.), a member of HESA and a former emergency-room physician, said he "absolutely" has concerns about the high number of foreign-trained professionals who find it difficult to become licensed in Canada, but noted that licensing falls to the provinces.

"This has been the case for a long time. We've never properly



addressed it," said Powlowski, in West Block following the Liberals' Oct. 29 caucus meeting.

"Having said that, most of the authority for licensure lies with the provinces, and that's a big impediment. And, yes, our government has been doing things and putting money in to make it easier for foreign-trained professionals to get credentials, but it's a huge problem."

These foreign-trained individuals include Canadian citizens who studied abroad and chose to return to Canada, but have been unable to become licensed.

During the Oct. 28 meeting, MPs heard the story of Scott Alexander, a Canadian who earned his medical degree in Australia in 2017. Alexander said he is now a "non-licensed physician in Canada" because he was unable to obtain a medical residency. Contributing to the difficulty were changes to exam requirements in his home province of British Columbia "which effectively erased my progress ... and prevented me from applying to residency in further years."

Alexander now works in the pharmaceutical industry.

Rosemary Pawliuk, president of the Society for Canadians Studying Medicine Abroad, said 3,500 Canadian citizens study abroad each year, with 800 graduating on an annual basis. In 2024, just 181 applied to work as physicians in this country.

These graduates feel unwelcome even after proving they have the required knowledge and skills, according to Pawliuk, who also testified at the Oct. 28 HESA meeting. "[They] are segregated from graduates of Canadian medical schools when applying for residency. [They] are limited, for the most part, to a small



The House health committee study was proposed by Conservative health critic Dan Mazier, left, who says there's a 'disconnect' between immigration and the health care system. But Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski says the Conservatives' framing of the issue 'ticks' him off and that the health-care system relies on immigrants who work within it. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

number of residency positions in small numbers of medical disciplines."

Eva Slawewski, representing a group that supports immigrant and refugee health-care professionals in seeking related work in Canada, said at the Oct. 28 meeting that there are 260,000 immigrants who received their medical education outside of Canada. Only 58 per cent of those work in health care.

"The rest are driving taxis, working in retail, or sidelined entirely; their talents wasted while our health care system suffers severe staffing shortages," said Slawewski, who appeared on behalf of Internationally Educated Health Professionals in Canada.

The study comes amid a health human resources shortage that both the previous and current Liberal governments have promised to tackle.

In 2022, the government under then-prime minister Justin Trudeau announced it would invest up to \$90-million in projects to make it easier for foreign-trained health-care professionals to become accredited in Canada. In 2023, the Liberals used an existing express immigration pathway to specifically encourage health workers who wanted to move to Canada to apply.

The Liberals under Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) promised in this year's election platform that they would—in collaboration with provinces, territories, and Indigenous Peoples—increase the number of medical school and residency spaces. They also said they would "recruit qualified doctors through a new global recruitment strategy that will fast-track the arrival of doctors into Canada." This includes Canadians practicing abroad.

Mazier told *The Hill Times* that the Liberal government should focus on making it easier for foreign-trained Canadians and immigrants who already live here to work in health care.

"They're the low-hanging fruit as far as I'm concerned, and I think that's being proven out here in the study," Mazier said.

The Conservative health critic said he proposed the HESA study in part because of the "disconnect" between immigration levels and the possible impact that high population growth has on health care systems.

"What about the people that are coming into working and adding that extra load onto our health care system as well? No one is addressing that. There is a definite disconnect between immigration and the health care system," Mazier said.

Concerns with the impact of high immigration levels also came from the Trudeau Liberals, who in 2024 announced they would reduce the number of temporary residents, and permanent residents. The plan "alleviates pressures on housing, infrastructure and social services so that over the long term we can grow our economic and social prosperity through immigration," reads the press release for the announcement.

Carney's Liberals also promised during the 2025 election campaign to "return immigration to sustainable levels."

Powlowski said that while it is a "huge problem" for foreign-trained professionals to become licensed, his government has been investing in efforts to make that easier.

He also said that the Conservative Party's language regarding the impact of immigration on health care "ticks" him off.

Acknowledging that his own party has been looking at ways to reduce immigration, Powlowski said, "But to suggest the problem in health care is a result of too many immigrants, I think, is clearly wrong. We've had shortages of doctors and people for years beforehand, and, yes, you do have to account for rising population numbers, but they're kind of scapegoating and blaming it on immigrants. It is something which bothers me."

HESA to study antimicrobial resistance, 'pharmaceutical sovereignty'

The committee has allotted at least six meetings—three of which have taken place—to the current study. This will then be followed by a study on antimicrobial resistance, proposed by Bloc Québécois health critic and committee vice-chair Luc Thériault (Montcalm, Que.), and then a study on "pharmaceutical sovereignty," proposed by Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Ont.), parliamentary secretary to Health Minister Marjorie Michel (Papineau, Que.).

HESA members voted on moving ahead with these studies during a Sept. 23 meeting.

Powlowski questioned Chi on the meaning of pharmaceutical sovereignty during that meeting. She said it's about "how we make sure that we have enough supplies when we experience extraordinary circumstances."

A decision was not made during that meeting on Powlowski's request to have a cancer study, which he proposed and was set to go ahead in the previous session, added to this fall's agenda.

Powlowski told *The Hill Times* that the cancer study should "go to the front of the line."

Saying he doesn't know of anyone who has died from antimicrobial resistance, Powlowski added that he learned as a doctor that cases have to be triaged based on their importance.

"Absolutely, the number one, I think, health-care issue facing Canadians is cancer. It's a major cause of death," he said.

The committee will also return to a study about opioids and the toxic drug crisis that had not been completed in the previous session.

Mazier told *The Hill Times* that he is focused on the current study and hasn't had much of a chance to consider other possible studies.

The Conservative MP, elected for the first time in 2019, takes on the health file after serving as critic for rural economic development and connectivity in the previous session.

Mazier said he comes to the health file as a curious person who is experienced in looking for solutions to problems.

Noting his pre-politics work experience as a farmer and engineer, Mazier said, "I look at things of how to solve [something]. What's the problem, and then how to solve it, right? So, I'm very pragmatic that way."

tsanci@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Women's groups hail ongoing funding for gender-equality programs, but warn the 'devil is in the details'

After fears of sizable cutbacks, the money only came 'because frontline organizations fought for it,' says NDP MP Leah Gazan of the \$660.5-million coming in the budget for Women and Gender Equality Canada.

BY RIDDHI KACHHELA

Women's advocates are hailing the government's decision to earmark long-term and stable funding for gender equality and other programs as a "significant" step.

At a National Art Gallery event in Ottawa on Oct. 30, Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Que.), Women and Gender Equality Minister Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Ont.), and Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, Que.) gave a preview of the \$660.5-million coming in Budget 2025 for tackling issues facing women and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

An emotional Valdez said the funds come with "stable, predictable, and ongoing funding to advance gender equality inclusion across Canada," after advocates raised concerns about the future of some of her department's programs.

In the summer, groups like Canadian Research Institute for Advancement of Women raised the alarm over projected cuts at WAGE, saying that work was essential to support an "inclusive and fair economy."

Executive director Jackie Neapole was in the audience for the announcement, and described the pledge for ongoing funding as almost an "unheard of" step.

"Using the language of permanent budget increases is very significant," said Neapole, who noted the language ministers used recognizing that "if women aren't participating, we can't have a thriving economy."



The upcoming budget will give Women and Gender Equality Minister Rechie Valdez's department \$660.5-million over five years after advocates feared for significant cutbacks to WAGE's work. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"This was a very positive announcement, especially given that we're in difficult economic times," she said.

Anuradha Dugal, executive director of Women's Shelters Canada, welcomed the funding as "historic," and said she agreed with Valdez's comments that funding for diverse groups is "essential to make Canada strong."

"That's exactly what the message that we were putting across, and we believe it's been heard," said Dugal.

NDP MP Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, Man.), her party's women and gender equality critic, credited women's groups for getting the government to commit substantial funding.

"This funding only happened because frontline organizations fought for it," said Gazan in a statement on Oct. 30. "For months, it looked like the Liberals were ready to gut WAGE and wipe out essential programs protecting women and gender-diverse people. I'm relieved their voices were finally heard, but this fight isn't over."

Gazan said the government's decisions on Nov. 4 tied to child-care, pharmacare, or reproductive health will offer a clear picture.

"If this government truly believes in gender equality, it needs to prove it in the budget."

Dugal also said she is waiting for Budget 2025 to understand what the specifics look like.

"Always for me the devil is in the details," said Dugal, speaking after the announcement at the National Gallery that brought out Liberal MPs from the party's women's caucus and a room full of women's rights and gender equality advocates.

"I am very interested to hear more and see more."

The Nov. 4 budget is expected to hand the money to Valdez's department over five years starting 2026-27. More than half, \$382.5-million, will be earmarked for "advancing women's equality in Canada," through schemes like the Women's Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund.

About \$223.4-million will go towards "strengthening federal action" to deal with gender-based violence. A further \$54.6-million towards "supporting 2SLGBTQI+ communities," including \$7.5-million for security for Pride events. All three buckets also have a portion of ongoing funding totalling \$132.1-million.

A teary-eyed Valdez told the room that the funding structure is based on her consultations with gender rights advocates over the past six months, and that their cause is "personal to her."

"I speak today, not only as a minister, but as a mother, a daughter, and a former small-business owner," she said, her voice choked with emotion. "I've seen what happens when we remove barriers in this country. People step up, they build, they

lead, and they open doors for others."

Both Champagne and Valdez spoke of the importance of the funding by invoking Prime Minister Mark Carney's (Nepean, Ont.) comments that Canada is at a "hinge moment" and will offer a budget focused on "generational" investments.

"We cannot build 'Canada strong' without the full and equal participation of women and gender-diverse Canadians," she said.

Champagne said the "sustained funding to advance equality and inclusion" will ensure "constant progress" toward safety for these communities. He commended the "vital work" towards this goal at Valdez's department, which was launched in 2018 by the Liberals.

"This is a moment in our nation's history," said the finance minister, adding that gender equality is something the Liberals "deeply believe in" and "want to make a difference."

The funding for several of WAGE programs was scheduled to end in the next few years, with the department's most recent annual plan forecasting a funding reduction of 81 per cent by 2028. The preliminary picture of the department's future was also set against the backdrop of Champagne's directive for departments to find savings of 15 per cent by 2028.

It is not clear if the allocation of \$660.5-million will be the only new funding for the department to make up for this big drop in the coming years. If it is, WAGE's spending for 2027-28 would still represent a 49 per cent drop compared to the funds planned for 2025-26. It would, however, increase 2026-27 spending to \$416-million compared to the \$407-million planned for this fiscal year.

The *Toronto Star* has reported that, as per Champagne's office, the new funding will go towards fully topping up three of the department's programs, but the decision on the rest are still due.

Advocates seek clarity on plan to tackle gender-based violence

The National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence is one such example of a program that had time-limited cash offered for its implementation. It was launched in 2022 with \$539-million over five years in that year's

budget, and \$601.3-million earmarked in Budget 2021. That funding is set to expire by 2027 prompting widespread concern about how much of it will be replenished. The 10-year plan involved 2023 bilateral agreements with provinces and territories, who then funded a range of grassroots organizations, including women's shelters and sexual support centres.

Valdez said the government is "reaffirming our commitment" to work with the provinces and territories on the "continued implementation" of the action plan.

"This is what you've asked for," said Valdez.

Gull-Masty highlighted the work of Indigenous groups who have "carried the work for generations." Some of these funds are set to aid specific vulnerable populations, including Indigenous women.

"The economy is only as strong as the people it includes and protects," she said.

Valdez also pointed out the Liberal's pledge to allocate \$1-billion towards supportive and transitional housing for survivors as part of Build Canada Homes.

"Safe housing is often the first step towards, as we all know, healing and a fresh start," she said.

Dugal said she was "incredibly heartened" by this aspect of the government's plan, announced this past September, which helps those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and involves working with provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous partners.

"This is something that we've said," Dugal noted, "housing needs to be supportive, it needs to be affordable, it needs to be safe, and we need a dedicated fund for women and children in those situations."

At the event, the ministers did not clarify whether the \$223.4-million includes any transfer payments to provinces and territories under the bilateral agreements for the National Action Plan or if it is funding meant for federal initiatives for gender-based violence.

"That's the big question we need to ask," Dugal said, and the budget should answer those questions.

Valdez has committed to supporting the 10-year plan—a pledge also made in Carney's Canada Strong election platform.

"We are still waiting for clarity on what the plan is to renew it for 10 years," said Dugal, noting Valdez's commitment, but adding "we still don't know the numbers."

The government may put those details off until the 2027 budget, she noted, "but we need indicators."

A version of this piece first appeared in Politics This Morning, your go-to source for insider news, analysis, and updates on where all the key political players are that day. Get more insider coverage directly to your inbox from The Hill Times' editor Peter Mazereeuw and reporter Riddhi Kachhela in this subscriber-only daily newsletter.

rkachhela@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS



If Pierre Poilievre is forced out as leader, it won't be because of internal caucus dissent, but rather mounting criticism from outside of the party, say Conservative sources. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

If Poilievre goes down as party leader, it will be due to external pressure, not caucus dissent, say senior Conservatives

To stop outside sniping, Poilievre will have to get more than 80-per-cent support in the upcoming leadership review, says Keith Beardsley, a former high-level staffer in Stephen Harper's PMO.

Continued from page 1

said that they don't see any significant threat emerging from within its caucus at this time.

They acknowledge that Poilievre (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) no longer wields the same firm grip over Conservative MPs as he did before the election, and that while a handful of MPs would like a change in leadership, they are not enough to pose a serious challenge.

Erin O'Toole, the party's previous leader, was forced out following a caucus vote under the Reform Act, which allows MPs to trigger a leadership review if 20 per cent of caucus members sign a petition. Conservative sources say that the number of MPs currently dissatisfied with Poilievre's leadership falls well short of that threshold.

Parliament Hill was rife with speculation two weeks ago that one or more Conservative MPs

were preparing to leave the caucus. In the end, no one did. Most of the rumours centered on some members of the party's Quebec caucus.

"This isn't out of the realm of possibility," said the senior Conservative. "I know that that group has been quite upset for some time. There's been an increasing number of decisions where I have seen they've not been happy. I do think it's getting too much for them."

The catalyst for caucus unrest was Poilievre's interview last month with Northern Perspective, a YouTube channel. Poilievre told the interviewers that if the RCMP had done its job, former prime minister Justin Trudeau would have faced criminal charges for his 2016 vacation on the Aga Khan's island, and for his actions during the 2019 SNC-Lavalin controversy. The Conservative leader went on to describe the organization's leadership as "despicable."

After the interview drew national attention and push-back from both inside and outside of the party, Poilievre issued a clarification through his office, saying his comments were specifically referring to former RCMP commissioner Brenda Lucki, and not the current leadership.

A day after Poilievre's interview was posted, Dimitri Soudas, former director of communications to then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, wrote a critical op-ed in *The Toronto Star*, questioning Poilievre's leadership and his ability to lead the Conservatives to victory in the next election.

"Leader Pierre Poilievre is dismantling the principled, serious and credible Conservative Party Harper worked so hard to lead and bring to power, one of substance, maturity and integrity," wrote Soudas.

"As a senior aide to prime minister Harper, I had the privilege to witness first-hand his leadership style: serious, principled, steady and deeply committed to

the country's long-term interests. He was the embodiment of what Canadians should expect from a national leader, governing with discipline, competence and a profound respect for Canada's institutions."

Through a spokesperson, Harper made it known on X that he does not agree with Soudas' views.

On Oct. 22, CBC/Radio-Canada published an article quoting some Conservative MPs who anonymously voiced their concerns about Poilievre's leadership. This article gave more credence to rumours that some caucus members might quit.

Now two weeks later, no Conservative MPs have left the caucus.

Conservative sources said that no one is organizing against Poilievre, and that the delegate selection meetings for the party's convention in Calgary early next year are going smoothly. It appears party officials are watching these meetings carefully, riding by riding, and ensuring that delegates do show up at the convention, according to the sources. So far, they say everything is going as expected.

Each of the 343 ridings can send up to 12 delegates, including 10 who are elected, plus the incumbent MP or candidate of record, and the Electoral District Association president. *The Hill Times* reported last week that the EDA president of the Abbotsford-Langley South riding in British Columbia recently conducted a survey to gauge Poilievre's support because the "party offices" were concerned about the leader's level of support in the riding.

"He's [Poilievre] not facing a challenge or an organized coup," said a second senior Conservative. "And I do think that there are just some people that have some trepidation about going forward, but none of those people have said that publicly."

Keith Beardsley, former deputy chief of staff in the Prime Minister's Office under Harper, predicted that more high-profile Conservatives who are critical of the leader would likely speak out close to the biennial policy convention taking place between Jan. 29 and Jan. 31, 2026, to call for a change in leadership.

"There's no Conservative MP who has the profile to challenge [Poilievre], so it's going to come from somewhere else," said Beardsley. "Would it come from a premier? Would it come from some other business leaders or people who have a background in politics? That's where it's probably going to come from. ... No one wants to move too soon, because then the people in power, you're able to stamp it out."

Beardsley said that if Poilievre wants to remain as leader without facing public criticism from his detractors, he will need to secure more than 80 per cent support in his review at the convention. Anything in the 60 to 70-per-cent range, he added, would still invite criticism from outside the caucus.

"If people really want you gone in politics, there's so many different ways to do it," said Beardsley. "So he has to win

with a huge majority. In my opinion, he has to come up ... with a super high majority. Otherwise, he's going to be walking around with knives sticking out of his back."

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, Conservative sources opined that there's no one organizing against Poilievre, and so his level of support in the leadership review should be higher. These sources said that if Poilievre does not get a high level of support in the review, the criticism from outside of the party will be damaging enough that he will lose the next election.

"You damage him enough so that Carney is favoured to win the next election," said a third senior Conservative. "That would be the strategy more than anything else. These guys are essentially doing the media lobs."

According to the Conservative Party's constitution, when an incumbent leader fails to form government after an election, that leader has to go through a leadership review. In the last election, the Conservatives won 144 seats with 41.3 per cent of the popular vote — their strongest showing since 1988. The Liberals secured 169 seats with 43.8 per cent of the vote, just three seats shy of a majority. The Bloc Québécois captured 22 seats with 6.3 per cent, and the NDP won seven seats with 6.3 per cent of the vote.

The Conservative Party's constitution does not specify what percentage of votes an incumbent leader must secure in a review. The threshold is left to each leader's discretion.

In 2022, then-United Conservative Party leader Jason Kenney resigned as premier of Alberta after receiving just 51.4-per-cent support in his leadership review. In 2016, then-federal NDP leader Tom Mulcair stepped down after receiving only 48 per cent. And in 1983, then-Progressive Conservative leader Joe Clark triggered a leadership election after securing 66.9 per cent of the vote.

Two months ago, Ontario Liberal Leader Bonnie Crombie announced she would step down after receiving 57 per cent support in her leadership review. Although the party's constitution allows a leader to remain in office with a simple majority of more than 50 per cent, she chose to step down despite clearing that threshold.

In an interview with CTV's Question Period in mid-September, Poilievre was asked what level of support he considered a "magic number" in the upcoming leadership review. "No, I don't believe in magic," Poilievre said in response.

Pressed again about what level of support he needs to stay on as leader, Poilievre still declined to offer a definitive answer.

"I'll be working to win over the people of the Conservative Party who will be there. Our message will be that I'm the leader that will bring forward the Canada that will restore the promise of the country," he said.

arana@thehilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NDP 'lost the gut' of the party, losing working-class voters to Conservatives, say leadership hopefuls looking to rebuild

Three of the leadership contenders took part in an Oct. 28 panel before party faithful gathered for the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation event.

BY ELEANOR WAND

NDP leadership candidates contrasted their visions for a party rebuild during a panel where they pointed to a breakdown in communication, saying the party needs to “meet people where they’re at,” and stop allowing the “Conservative Party to steal our members.”

The Oct. 28 panel, hosted by the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation in Ottawa, began with podium speeches from the five leadership candidates who have officially entered the race. Three-time NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.), activist and filmmaker Avi Lewis, and Canadian International Longshore Workers Union president Rob Ashton addressed the crowd in person, with British Columbia city councillor Tanille Johnston, and farmer and environmentalist Tony McQuail delivering their remarks via pre-recorded videos.

McPherson, Lewis, and Ashton were then interviewed in a discussion, moderated by former NDP strategist Jordan Lechnitz, who now works for the German non-profit Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

McPherson focused on expanding the NDP umbrella to more Canadians, a pitch that she’s been advertising since her leadership campaign launch. She emphasized the need for the party to change the way it speaks to Canadians, but without changing the core New Democratic values.

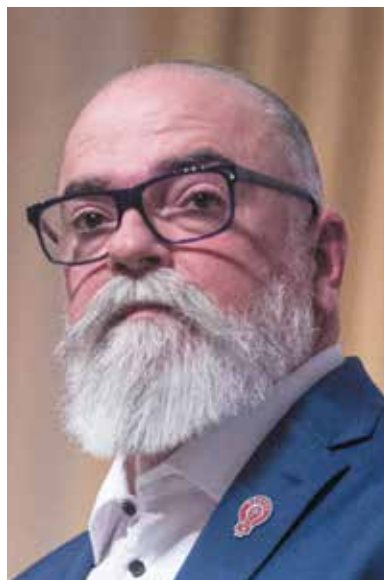
“People around this country are ... so excited about the chance to be part of this rebuild,” she said, “but when I asked them, like, ‘what excited you about the last election?’ often they couldn’t tell us.”

“We do need to meet people where they’re at,” she said. “We do need to be talking about the issues that are most important to them. ... That does not change our values.”

It’s something Ashton keyed in on, too.



NDP leadership candidates Heather McPherson, left, Rob Ashton, and Avi Lewis addressed the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation gala as part of a panel in Ottawa on Oct. 28. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



The decade-long union president told the crowd he’s listened to his membership turn from the party in favour of the Conservatives as the NDP has stopped “speaking our language.”

“They’re telling me, ‘you don’t hear us, we don’t see ourselves in that party,’” he said.

“The collective ‘we’ as the NDP have allowed the Conservative Party to steal our members,” he said.

“Members of the working-class rank—they’re pissed off, they’re afraid,” he said, accusing Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Battle River—Crowfoot, Alta.) of telling workers it’s not the Conservatives’ or the government’s fault that they’re “in such bad shape,” and fueled blame and hate against immigrants instead.

Lewis also said he thinks the party has “lost the gut and the direct connection of the lived reality of people” and needs to communicate solutions “plainly.”

In a scrum with reporters after the panel, Lewis said “there’s a lack of grassroots democracy in the NDP,” saying it’s “one of the reasons we’ve lost a lot of our supporters.”

“There’s a whole lot of people who have gotten frustrated with the NDP that are ready to come home if we can throw a beacon up in the sky and say we’re going to be a party of clarity, we’re going to be a party of solutions and straight talk,” he said.

In recent months, there have been tensions between the party’s grassroots and the central management. Some ex-NDP MPs, including former MP of 21 years

Peter Julian, have since launched a rebuilding effort to try and bridge some of that disconnect.

This comes after the NDP suffered a devastating electoral defeat in April’s election, shrinking its caucus to seven—the lowest number of MPs since the party’s founding. The defeat led to the resignation of then-NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, who came third in his riding on election night, and dropped New Democrats below the 12-seat threshold for party status in the House of Commons.

NDP ready for ‘rejuvenation,’ says ex-MPP Joel Harden

The panel was one of the first public opportunities for candidates to directly address one another. Though the five candidates assembled in-person for an Oct. 22 forum in Ottawa, it was for 10-minute one-on-one interviews. The first formal debate of the leadership race is not until Nov. 27 in Montreal, and will be held primarily in French.

Former NDP MPP Joel Harden told *The Hill Times* that he’s supporting Lewis’ pitch for leadership, adding he’s been a friend of the leadership hopeful for 30 years. Harden ran unsuccessfully in the riding of Ottawa Centre, Ont., in April, coming second to incumbent Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi.

But speaking before the event, Harden said he was “excited for some rejuvenation and new thinking” in the party more generally,

as well as the shift to “looking at politics with big horizons.”

Longtime NDP supporter Kathryn Langley told *The Hill Times* she is supporting Lewis, too, because of his credentials, calling him “incredibly smart.”

Still, she said “everybody else can be under the tent,” pointing to Johnston as a “marvelous cheerleader” and “promoter of bringing more people in,” as well as McQuail’s electoral reform pitch, which would axe the first-past-the-post system for proportional representation.

Anne McGrath, former president and national director of the NDP, who attended the event, said she wants to hear “clear choices” from the leadership hopefuls, stopping short of committing to any of the candidates at this point in the race.

‘We have to want to win,’ says McPherson

During the panel, McPherson said New Democrats need to focus on winning, and getting as many NDP MPs elected as possible, pointing to the need to share resources at the riding-association level to support more candidates in federal elections.

“We have to want to win,” she said. “When we get more folks elected, we make real change for Canadians. We make this country better.”

McPherson is the only member of the NDP’s seven-person caucus in the race. Most of the group—including the party’s interim leader Don Davies (Van-

couver Kingsway, B.C.)—have bowed out.

Speaking about the differences between the federal NDP and its provincial parties, Lewis said provincial NDPs “have to face off against extremists,” pointing to provincial Conservatives in his home province of B.C.

“That is not our challenge for the federal NDP,” he said. “In the federal NDP with a goddamn Liberal Party which runs from the left and governs from the right, and comes and eats our vote for 10 days left before E-day every single time.”

He said the party needs “really straightforward policies” to distinguish itself from federal Liberals.

McPherson pushed back on the claim, however, noting that there are seats in the country—like in her Alberta riding—where NDP candidates are facing off with Conservatives, saying that “each riding is different.”

Jennifer Pedersen, who is McPherson’s legislative assistant, told *The Hill Times* she hoped the night demonstrated solidarity in the NDP.

“We’re all one, we’re all here together in the same fight,” she said. “We might have different visions here and there, of like, how do we get to that point, but I think in the end, all of us are working together in the same direction.”

‘I’m not a politician,’ says Ashton

Ashton drilled down on his framing of his campaign thus far: that he’s not a politician, and that he understands the reality of everyday Canadians.

“I’m not a politician, never wanted to be one, but here I am,” he told the crowd. “I’m a worker.”

“I’m done watching the ruling class in Ottawa pretending that they know what it’s like to wake up before sunrise to go to work, or to work shift work, day in and day out, or to fight through layoffs, to work overtime just to make the ends meet.”

“We’re not just props for their speeches,” he said. “We’re the people who built this country.”

In her video, Johnston said that it was time for a “renaissance of the working class,” committing to abolishing the NDP’s membership fee to make the party more accessible as one of her first moves as leader.

“A \$10 membership fee might not sound like much to some,” she said, “but it’s a barrier to entry, so let’s tear it down.”

She also pointed to policy moves like capping rental increases, establishing a national housing authority, and democratic reform.

Democratic reform is also a central campaign pitch for McQuail, who wants to abolish the first-past-the-post system for proportional representation.

In his video, McQuail told the crowd that “people have to feel that they have a voice,” saying the NDP needs to reach out to “those people who have given up on the political system,” noting that there’s a reason they’ve done so.

ewand@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

NEWS

Current and former MPs call for united front to fight back against Trump's continuing threat to the country, but say House is too polarized

As U.S. President Donald Trump upends decades of progress in the world, it also creates an opportunity for Canada to show global leadership, say politicians. But Canada also needs to be united.

Continued from **page 1**

discussions to achieve Canadian unity and avoid Quebec's separation from Confederation. But they also say MPs and Senators likely won't unite because Parliament is too fractured right now, and one political expert says Mark Carney has to start acting more prime ministerial and less like a chief executive officer, and needs more "political piss and vinegar" right now.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May (Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.) said that, before the spring

federal election, she suggested to Prime Minister Mark Carney (Nepean, Ont.) the idea of forming an all-party "war cabinet," much like British prime minister Winston Churchill assembled during the Second World War. May suggested such a cabinet would focus on the "security threat and sovereignty threat" facing Canada from the Trump administration.

"We need to make sure that Trump sees a united Canada—that Trump sees a country that has its act together," said May, who was born in Hartford, Conn., but is no longer an American citizen.

"We should be doing more under the Team Canada banner. So far, Mark Carney's time as prime minister is marked by trying to pull the premiers together on Team Canada, but he hasn't tried to pull opposition parties together on Team Canada."

May said opposition leaders could join with government ministers "with a specific focus on protecting Canada during Trump-generated crises, so that there's no daylight between any of us as parties in terms of where we

stand as Canadians dealing with Trump," she explained.

"Can we put aside differences long enough to actually talk about what we need to do and make sure Canadians know that we're keeping our eye on the ball, and protecting Canadian jobs and strategic reserves of Canadian natural resources?" said May.

May said she prefers the idea of a special all-party cabinet committee to deal with the Trump administration that "would have legitimacy in a minority government," and which could function if a parliamentary session was suspended due to a snap election—rather than a standing committee that would not include party leaders.

Forming an all-party committee "or something that would institutionalize cross-party co-operation to build political consensus for what will be huge changes" on the Canada-U.S. file should be a priority, according to Lori Turnbull, a political science professor at Halifax's Dalhousie University.

But she said creating such a body might be "impossible right now. The politics of the day won't allow for that."

"The partisan situation is so competitive, and there just doesn't seem to be a way for parties to come together," said Turnbull, who also serves as a strate-

gic adviser at the Ottawa-based Institute on Governance.

She added that it's unhelpful for any display of unanimity when Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Battle River-Crowfoot, Alta.) utters statements such as "Carney is even worse than Justin Trudeau."



Lori Turnbull. *The Hill Times* photograph by Kate Malloy

Former federal cabinet minister Perrin Beatty said that "we need to speak with one voice—there's no question about that."

"But I don't know that, given how intensely partisan this Parliament is, whether that would be constructive or not," said Beatty, who served in the cabinets of former Progressive Conservative prime ministers Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney, and Kim Campbell.

Beatty said, however, that "Canadians need to understand that Donald Trump senses when there's division and he exploits it. So anytime that Members of Parliament or provincial premiers go their own way, he's going to take advantage of it—and that's to Canada's disadvantage."

"My advice would be that we speak with one voice. Anything that is said in the House of Commons is heard in Washington," said Beatty.

"There's only one government at a time, and Parliament should be trying to ensure that we have a

unified Canadian message. Every politician has an obligation to put citizenship ahead of partisanship when the fate of the country is at stake—where our economic well-being is being affected and the president has indicated that he doesn't believe that our country should exist."

Former Liberal deputy prime minister John Manley said that a "lack of co-ordination" highlighted by the trade imbroglio with the U.S. "has been one of our drawbacks for many years, starting with interprovincial trade barriers."

"We definitely need a Team Canada approach to things," he said, but noted that could also be difficult to achieve with the Conservative leader.

"Mr. Poilievre is planning to hold onto his job, so he's not going to be particularly basking in a wave of co-operation. He's making a case that the country made a mistake and would have been better off electing him," said Manley.

"The NDP is not a factor at this moment in time, and the Bloc is always playing a different game."

"There may be more Conservative MPs who are more aligned with Carney right now than they are with Poilievre, and I'm sure some of them are contemplating their futures. But I don't see anything like a war cabinet. We haven't convinced ourselves that we are at war yet," said Manley, referring to May's idea.

However, Manley said he doesn't "think this moment is any

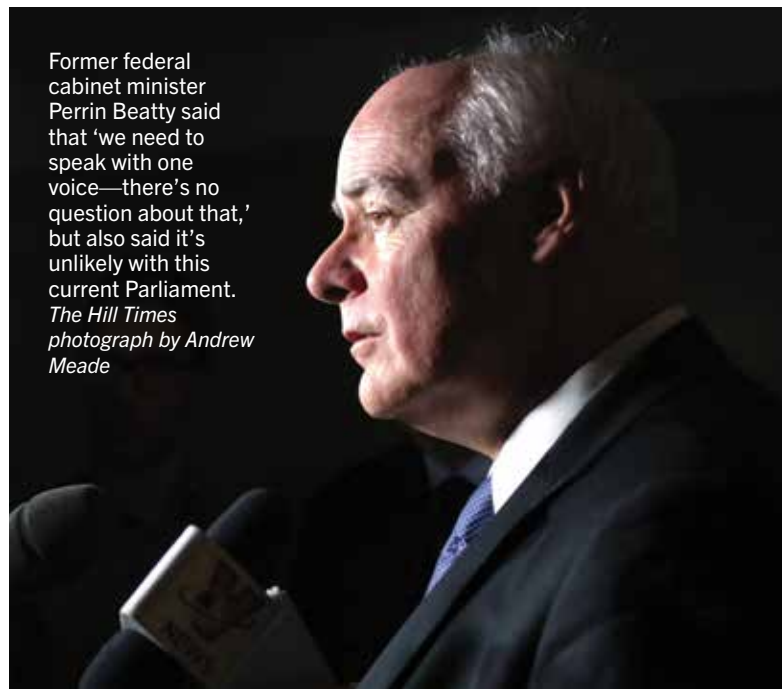
Continued on **page 25**



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, needs to start acting more like a prime minister and less like a chief executive officer to protect Canada from crises generated by U.S. President Donald Trump. *The Hill Times* photograph on Mark Carney by Andrew Meade; Photograph of Donald Trump courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, pictured, says Prime Minister Mark Carney should form an all-party "war cabinet," much like British prime minister Winston Churchill assembled during the Second World War. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Former federal cabinet minister Perrin Beatty said that "we need to speak with one voice—there's no question about that," but also said it's unlikely with this current Parliament. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Carney needs to be more prime ministerial, less ‘CEO-ish’: Turnbull

Continued from **page 24**

more critical just because Trump has had this tantrum.”

“We should be less concerned about what he’s doing moment by moment, and more focused on the things we need to do to make ourselves more resilient and our economy more diverse,” said Manley, who as foreign affairs minister in then-Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien’s government chaired a special cabinet committee on security and who, with former U.S. Homeland Security secretary Tom Ridge, created the Smart Border Declaration following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the U.S.

That level of co-operation with the administration of then-Republican president George W. Bush—whom Manley got to know well—is absent under the Trump White House, according to Manley.

“The United States is being run by a toddler. We are dealing with somebody who is not a reliable partner. He’ll agree to something and then revoke it, as he has done with us,” said Manley. “We need to try to do things that we can control.”

“There’s pressure on Carney to do something, and I think it’s time for him to be methodical in his approach. Trump is following a pattern which we should not get sucked into. We’re a sovereign country and we need to reinforce that with the Americans,” said Manley, who noted that while he “enjoyed” Ontario’s anti-tariff Ronald Reagan ad he would have considered a similarly pointed American ad appearing on Canadian television “an egregious interference in our domestic affairs.”

“We need to make our economy as resilient and as diversified as possible—and not to expect all of this is going to pass. We have to recognize that there have been tectonic shifts in the United States that are going to be challenging for us, and we’ve got to figure out who we are and what kind of country we want to have, and we’ve got to pull together,” said Manley.

Beatty said he doesn’t think “that people should overreact to Trump’s latest play, which was to call off the talks again. The Ontario ad was an excuse, not a reason.” Beatty noted that the president threatened to end negotiations in late June before the scheduled implementation of the digital services tax.

“As long as Donald Trump is in office, there will be a succession of these issues. The difficulty is he believes that he has the ability to declare an emergency simply on a whim and that he can then take whatever measures he wants to,” said Beatty, who served as secretary of state for external affairs in Campbell’s short-lived government in 1993.

“The suggestion that somehow there is an emergency that Ontario ran an ad that featured Ronald Reagan is disconnected from the world in which most people live. But that’s what we’re going to have to be dealing with—that’s just the reality,” said Beatty,



Then-U.S. president George W. Bush, left, and then-prime minister Paul Martin, pictured at a joint press conference in Ottawa Nov. 30, 2004. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright



Then-Mexican president Enrique Peña Nieto, left, then-prime minister Justin Trudeau, and then-U.S. president Barack Obama in Ottawa for the North American Leaders’ Summit in 2016. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

who as national defence minister in Mulroney’s government, was in the House on April 6, 1987, when Reagan addressed a joint session of Parliament.

In his speech, the 40th president highlighted Mulroney’s proposal for what would later that year become the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which Reagan noted would create “the largest free trade area in the world, benefitting not only our two countries, but setting an example of co-operation to all nations that now wrestle against the siren temptation of protectionism.”

“To those who would hunker down behind barriers to fight a destructive and self-defeating round of trade battles, Canada and the United States will show the positive way,” Reagan said.

Beatty, the former president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said that “Americans should know that the position that’s being taken by the [current] president is entirely at variance with what Ronald Reagan stood for.”

The “strategic issue” now for the federal government is to determine whether to “avoid anything” that Trump “can possibly choose to take offence at—or make its case,” offered Beatty.

Meanwhile, Turnbull said she believes that Carney needs to shift his behaviour from being “more CEO-ish to more prime ministerial,” and illustrated her point by referring to a comment he made to reporters at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Kuala Lumpur last week.

Carney said that “every Canadian is a stakeholder” in this country’s trade talks with the

U.S. Turnbull believes that the prime minister should be calling Canadians “citizens” instead, and that reveals his “lack of political mojo,” which “Justin Trudeau had.”

“You could see, at the end of his time as prime minister when Trump started this tariff nonsense, Justin Trudeau would get up to the microphone and he was mad, and he was capturing the mood of the country,” she said.

“Even people who hated the guy really started thinking this was the best moment Justin Trudeau ever had because he’s got that political piss and vinegar.”



Former U.S. president Bill Clinton in Ottawa on March 6, 2006. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

“Mark Carney doesn’t have that passion—and if he does, he hasn’t shown it,” Turnbull said.

However, should Trump halt any trade negotiations, which could include next year’s scheduled review of the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement, the result could be “at least as impactful if we had passed Meech Lake,” said Turnbull, who made the comparison to the ultimately unsuccessful 1987 Meech Lake Accord that the Mulroney government proposed to amend the Constitution to strengthen provincial powers and recognize Quebec as a “distinct society.”

“We’ve totally wrapped ourselves around the U.S. economically over the years,” she said. “Even if Donald Trump goes when he’s supposed to go, I don’t think anyone is going to be running their presidential campaign on renewing the relationship with Canada.”

“I don’t know that the U.S.’s relationship with Canada will be reset once Trump leaves.”

Manley’s “number-one concern” is about the damage the president has inflicted on his country.

“I feel that I may be watching the demise of the American republic with its institutions, its checks and balances, its respect for the rule of law,” he said.

Manley, who also served as finance minister and industry minister in the Chrétien government, said he worries about that erosion of democracy crossing the border into Canada.

“Some of the MAGA [Make American Great Again] attitudes are being picked up, and a lot of Conservatives are concerned about hearing echoes of Trump from Pierre Poilievre—and that affected him greatly in the election campaign and a lot of Conservatives are commenting that he hasn’t learned from that experience,” said Manley.

“There are a lot of people who are feeling left out of our economy and they’re looking

for scapegoats. It may be irrational, but it is potentially very worrisome.”

May, meantime, said she views Trump as not just causing a crisis for Canada and the U.S., but also for the entire world.

“A lot of people thought the kinds of policies we’re seeing from Trump were in the rearview mirror, in terms of protectionism, isolationism and rejecting multilateralism—all things that successive U.S. presidents, regardless of party” have rejected, she said.

May said that during the 1980s, neoliberalism was embraced by Reagan, Mulroney and then-British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, and “heralded a time of trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation that was achieved through greater international cooperation.”

“What Trump is doing is upending decades of deepened multilateral connectivity in the world in environmental treaties as well as trade agreements and security agreements,” said May.

“So, we’re going backwards on nuclear disarmament, we’re going backwards on protecting the biosphere, we’re going backwards on the notion of anything like shared responsibilities of the poorest of the poor, or to feed the world’s hungry or to provide health protection globally.”

She recalled a time when the U.S. was more engaged in the world, specifically when Democrat Bill Clinton—whom May has known since she was 17 and who provided her with a letter of reference to Dalhousie University’s law school—occupied the White House.

It’s a far different time with Republican Trump who currently sits in that office—a man who is “violently violating the U.S. Constitution” in the country he heads and who has paved over the Rose Garden and demolished the East Wing for a golden ballroom in the historic residence in which he lives, said May.

“The desecration of the White House is, in some ways, a metaphor for what he’s all about,” she said.

It is, in May’s opinion, also time for Canada to play a more prominent role on the world stage as America’s primacy in that role wanes under its present leadership.

“Canada stands on a bulwark of the rule of law,” she said. “We drill down firmly on our commitment to the United Nations, on our commitment to the International Criminal Court.”

“Trump has withdrawn the U.S. from the Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer, much less pulling out of the World Health Organization and destroying USAID to help the poorest of the poor globally,” said May.

“As Trump upends decades of what we thought was a world order that was stable, that creates an opportunity for Canada to show global leadership because the community of nations needs to be able to look to a subset of modern democracies of wealthy industrialized countries that are prepared to stand up for shared values,” said May.

The Hill Times



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on May 6, 2025. *Official White House* photograph by Emily J. Higgins

FEATURE

Douglas Roche: why ‘much been marked by dissent, and

I dissent from the wild disproportion of what the world spends on arms and what it spends on development. I dissent from the anti-humanitarian policies of war for peace. I dissent from the perpetuation of poverty through the greed of the rich. I dissent from the despoliation of the planet by short-sighted industrialism. Most of all, I dissent from the fabric of lies spun by the proponents of nuclear weapons who would have us believe that these heinous instruments of mass murder make us safer.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



More than 1,000 members of the Order of Canada, from Nobel laureates, to historians, authors, and diplomats, belong to the Canadian Leadership for Nuclear Disarmament. Every year, the group presents a single distinguished service award. On Oct. 23, the award was presented to Douglas Roche, author, former MP, Senator, ambassador for disarmament, and frequent contributor to The Hill Times. His acceptance speech is personal, spirited, and filled with the kinds of historical and political details that stir memories and awaken a conscience. Printed here in its entirety, Doug Roche's speech also offers a clear challenge to the Government of Canada.

—Jim Creskey

OTTAWA—I thank Canadian Leadership for Nuclear Disarma-

ment for the honour conferred on me today. I accept it not as a reward, but a spur to action, to do more in my own small way to help move the world closer to peace. I also want to salute the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the Canadian Pugwash Group, and Project Ploughshares. The four organizations reach out into many corners of Canadian society with a single message: the Government of Canada must do more to fulfill its legal obligation to work for a nuclear weapons-free world. I am grateful to my colleagues for this joint work, and I pledge never to quit, at least willingly, until the last nuclear weapon on Earth has been dismantled.

Amazingly, I'm still here. Good times and bad times, I've seen them all in my years and I'm here. The first prime minister I remember was Mackenzie King, whom I used to see walking his dog when I was a boy growing up in the Sandy Hill area of Ottawa in the late 1930s. I was 16 when the atomic bombs were used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I remember Gandhi, Churchill, and JFK. I was first elected to Parliament a few days before Lester Pearson died, and sat in the House of Commons a few rows behind John Diefenbaker. I've been through Trudeau, twice. Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien all deeply affected the course of my life. I'm not much attached to politics these days, but I'm here. Perhaps I'm still hanging around because I love this beautiful and troubled planet so much, and am not in a particular hurry to leave it.

You see, one day many years ago, I made a great discovery. As a young journalist in the 1960s, I travelled through the emerging Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and wrote the life stories of an Ibo teacher in Nigeria, a Communist labour leader in Venezuela, and a farmer in Kerala, India. Suddenly, one day, I realized that most of the world was non-white, non-Western and non-Christian, and that I was in a distinct minority in the world. The bold thought entered my mind: maybe we better all get along.

Years later, when I started going to the United Nations—an institution I revere and proclaim to the rooftops as the indispensable instrument for peace in the world and deeply lament how shabbily the major powers treat it—I could see on a crowded day in the General Assembly the faces of the modern world: non-white, non-Western and non-Christian. And that, yes, since many of the UN meetings I have participated in for half a century revolved around the fate of nuclear weapons, we better get along.

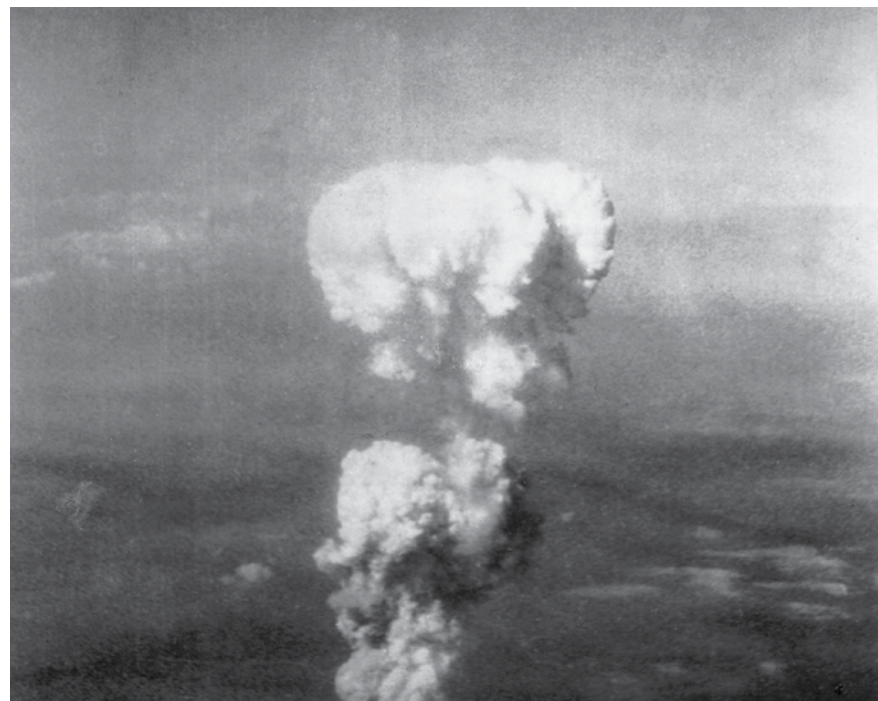
Never thought about nuclear weapons until first elected to Parliament

I didn't think about nuclear weapons when I was first elected to Parliament. In fact, my mind was on the development process. I went to Bangladesh to do a study on the effects of Canadian-aid projects, and there I met a mother named Kumu. Though I only spent an hour or so with her, she changed my way of understanding the modern human condition.

Since I was accompanied by a Catholic sister, Kumu invited me into her village home, a simple hut made of a mixture of clay and mud with grass for a roof. There was no electricity. The nearest source of clean water was several hundred metres away. The cooking seemed to be done over small outdoor fires. Kumu and I sat on plain wooden chairs, her eight children gathered around her. There was enough food at the present time, she said, although the children's faces and bellies clearly revealed nutritional deficiencies. The date palm juice that flows from trees like maple sap was very good for them, Kumu said, pointing to the fire outside where a pot of juice was being heated.

After a while, I left, circling through the compound and talking to some of the elders sitting in the sun. As I started down the trail leading out of the village, Kumu came running after me, carrying a pitcher. She wanted me to have a glass of the warm palm date juice, which she had been heating for me while we talked. Suddenly, it dawned on me that, through the date juice, which was all she had to offer, this woman was extending her friendship to a strange white Westerner who had dropped into her life for a moment. I knew it was a memory I would treasure and learn from.

The statistics on poverty, to be fully understood, need a human face. So, too, the statistics on nuclear weapons. What does it really mean to recite that nine states today possess 12,240 nuclear weapons, each many times more powerful than the atomic bombs that killed an estimated 210,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki? My travels in the 1970s took me to both Japanese cities and there, in the museums, I saw photos of entire blocks completely obliterated, the charred clothing and the depictions of survivors, their burnt skin hanging from their arms and heads. I talked to some *hibakushas*, and was stunned to learn from personal testimony the great wrong that had been done to them. I started writing and speaking about the horrors of nuclear weapons.



I returned to Hiroshima and Nagasaki several times over the years, each time deepening my commitment to the abolition of these instruments of pure evil. My friend mayor Tad Akiba made me an honorary citizen of Hiroshima. At the ceremony, I shared a platform with Keijiro Matsushima, who told the audience about his experience of the attack when he was 16. "There was an orange and yellow flash followed by a huge explosion and an intense heat wave," he said. "There was blood all over me. I thought I was going to die." Had he been on the other side of the room, where the ceiling collapsed on students, he would have. When Matsushima finished speaking, I said to the audience, "He is my brother. I, too, was 16 when the bomb exploded. He has suffered enormously. Now I must help him to ensure that this never happens again."

‘Here are decent godless people. Their only monument the asphalt road and a thousand lost golf balls’: T.S. Eliot

The two themes of development and disarmament have driven my political thinking since my early days as a parliamentarian. I became preoccupied with a central fact of modern life: we were entering a totally new period of our planet's history. For the first time, the opportunity existed to bring about a better life with larger freedom for the world's people, but never was the world so hungry and the threat of war more monstrous. Yet, we went on, seeking our self-interest, oblivious to the depths of the

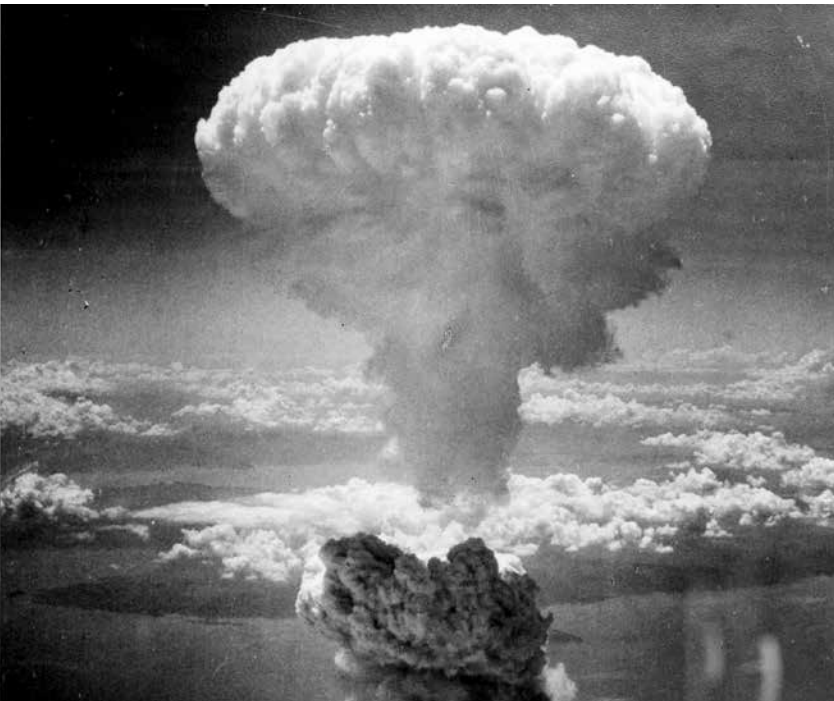
danger or the magnificence of the challenge. I found the words of the poet T.S. Eliot stunningly accurate: "Here were decent godless people. Their only monument the asphalt road. And a thousand lost golf balls."

I found parliamentary life in Ottawa to be not very conducive to the expression of such thoughts. Then one day in 1980, I received an invitation that was to shift the focus of my entire public career. The Canadian Association of the Club of Rome, a global think tank, invited me to give a paper, *Development in the Year 2000*. I felt challenged. How did I know what would happen so far in the future? I decided to take a couple of months to research the subject as best I could. The more I pored over statistics and reports, the more I found the world painfully off balance: opulently rich in the forces of death, yet poor in providing for the needs of human lives. I found this social deficit a threat to world security because the festering problems, neglected in favour of armed might, promised rising public anger and social upheaval. I wrote that we would not find order in the post-2000 era if governments continued to divert money needed for human development to the accumulation of more arms. In short, development demands disarmament.

The relationship between development and disarmament came to a head in 1987 when the UN held an international conference on this very subject. By this time, I was ambassador for disarmament and chaired the Canadian delegation. The conference chairman was ambassador Muchkund Dubey of India, and we became good friends. Personally, I supported his proposal for

FEATURE

of my public career has [why] I'm not stopping now'



Atomic bomb mushroom clouds over Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 6, 1945, left, and Nagasaki, Japan on Aug. 9, 1945, right. Photographs courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

a fund to be set up for a portion of the funds released through disarmament measures to be transferred to development in the name of greater security for all. But this idea was considered too radical by the Western countries, and the most they would settle for was a final statement legitimizing the relationship between disarmament and development. So, at least the final document achieved a consensus that disarmament and development are two of the most urgent challenges facing the world, and also are the two pillars on which enduring international peace and security can be built.

The final document was a breakthrough at that time because it said: "Security consists of not only military but also political, economic, social, humanitarian and human rights and ecological security." That is the very definition of common security, and my hopes soared when, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the Security Council met at the summit level for the first time and used that precise language in its communiqué. I rejoiced that the world was coming to a new understanding of what security was all about. Security could not be obtained by large numbers of arms: rather it could only come about by attention to meeting human needs.

Common security theme became a central tenet of my political life

This theme of common security became and stayed the central tenet of my political life even though the major governments

cast cooperation aside in the post-9/11 world. The 1990s presented a golden moment to solidify a peace dividend for the world. But it never happened. NATO began its fateful expansion. The military-industrial complex, which president Eisenhower had first warned about, increased its dominance of American politics. Global military spending has increased every year for the past decade and in 2024 exceeded \$2.7-trillion.

Think about the contradiction the political order is foisting on us. The total amount of money countries annually spend on arms is now 750 times what they spend on the UN. The NATO countries are planning to spend five percent of their GDP on defence while the UN is now cutting its budget and laying off staff. The arms trade thrives and people starve.

The world is now swirling around us. International humanitarian law is flouted as authoritarianism spreads. I am totally with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's cry, "We have entered into an age of reckless disruption and relentless human suffering," and, he adds, leaders must decide now "what kind of world we choose to build together."

Much of my public career has been marked by dissent, and I'm not stopping now. I dissent from the wild disproportion of what the world spends on arms and what it spends on development. I dissent from the anti-humanitarian policies of war for peace. I dissent from the perpetuation of poverty through the greed of the rich. I dissent from the despoliation of the planet by short-sighted industrialism. Most of all, I dissent from the fabric of lies spun by the

proponents of nuclear weapons who would have us believe that these heinous instruments of mass murder make us safer.

We must keep the world's conscience alive

Soon there will be no more living *hibakusha*. Who will carry forward their message that what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never happen again? We and our colleagues and the next generation must keep alive the conscience of the world protesting against such evil.

Already, the global conscience against nuclear weapons is weakening as

arms-control treaties break down and new nuclear arms races start up. Threats to use nuclear weapons are chilling reminders of how dangerous the world has become. We now envision future wars being run by artificial intelligence. And even our own Government of Canada, giving militarism a higher priority than diplomacy, has joined the Western pretence that a Golden Dome missile defence system will save us. We must stop making the same old mistakes as the world hurtles into a new era. The "wooden-headedness" of governments, as the historian Barbara Tuchman called it, must stop. Governments must cease pretending that military might and bombing innocent civilians will bring us security.

Where shall we turn to to get our bearings? With John F. Kennedy, I believe we can find peace not through a revolution in human nature, but the gradual evolution of the institutions we have already built. The Charter of the United Nations is an anchor for us. So, too, are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. These are more than documents. They are milestones in the human journey and we need to protect them no matter the vicious political storms attacking them.

They teach us that every human being has the sacred right to peace. In fact, on Dec. 19, 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right to Peace by a vote of 131 states in favour, 14 opposed and 19 abstentions. The Western states led the opposition. The opponents fear that formalization of the right to peace will pave the way

for a future comprehensive law against warfare. That is exactly the point. As humanity continues to mature with each new generation, we must aim for a world without war. As our understanding of the universality of human rights grows, we will come to understand that the existence of weapons of mass destruction is absolutely incompatible with every human being's right to live in peace.

Though we cannot—at least not yet in the moving history of the world—implement the right to peace, we can practice a culture of peace. A culture of peace revolves around non-violence, sustainable development, respect for all human rights, education, and the development of a strong public opinion. Our goal must be nothing less than the mobilization of a strong public opinion to move governments to a common security agenda. Never doubt that this can be done.

Set 2045 to free the world of nuclear weapons

I turn to the next generation to keep alive the dream of a nuclear weapons-free world as the basis of common security. At first, the idea of the abolition of slavery was just a dream, but it happened. So did the dream of freedom from colonialism. And the dream of ending apartheid. All these evils were ended because enough people rose up and demanded governments end them. Aim high. Set the year 2045, the 100th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and also the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, as the year that the peoples of the world will be free of the spectre of nuclear weapons.

We *can* obtain a world that is human-centred and genuinely democratic, a world that builds and protects peace, equality, justice and development. We *can* obtain a world in which human security, as envisioned in the principles of the UN Charter, replaces armaments, violent conflict and wars. We *can* obtain a world in which everyone lives in a clean environment with a fair distribution of the earth's resources and international law protects human rights.

The politics of the past have brought us untold wars and suffering. Isn't it time to try something better? Isn't it time to bring our heads and hearts together to produce true human security? Isn't it time to raise the standards of civilization for the sake of survival? Spare me the charge that this is mere idealism. The agenda for survival is no longer a dream but a pragmatic demand of the human race.

I have found that, for me, personal creativity is the best way to overcome political intransigence—especially today as we stumble through a dark valley on the long human journey from a culture of war to a culture of peace. Dissent can become creative when we care enough about failed public policies to do something to move forward. The organizations I have been involved with over many years have helped to strengthen the fabric of peace, and they have strengthened me on the journey. Out of our griefs and anxieties, we build a new basis of hope.

I see hope as more than a blind assumption that things will turn out all right. Hope is best understood as a verb, connoting an active desire with the expectation of fulfillment; we long for something and will it, through our actions, to happen. That very process generates hope. It activates us in the search and provides a pathway from vision to reality.

I feel a strength within me. I feel it when I look at a map of the world and recall all the beautiful places I have seen through decades of travel. I feel it when I read the history of the world and see how far humanity has traveled. I feel it when I see the benefits of science, medicine, and technology. I feel it when I see the face of an infant, knowing the challenges that lie ahead for the baby. I feel deeply about the development of this new human being—and all human beings—in a world at peace. That is why I do this work.

What I feel most is that the human journey cannot be stopped. We are, often in spite of ourselves, lifting up our civilization. An alliance of civilizations lies ahead—if we can avoid blowing up the earth. Though often in turmoil at the news of the day, I am at peace with the world, and I think I have found peace within myself. I could not stand here and lecture about peace or write books about it if I did not feel a certain peace within me. The words of Isaiah guide me: "Peace, peace to the far and near, says the Lord, and I will heal them."

We live at a powerful moment. The movement from a culture of war towards a culture of peace is unquestionably one of the greatest human shifts of all time. We are part of this movement. It is a privilege to do this work. We are claiming the future. We are building a better world. This is the basis of hope. Hope is how we survive.

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

The Hill Times

Hill Climbers

By Laura Ryckewaert



Breaking down the staff behind Mark Carney's PMO: part one

Prime Minister Mark Carney enters the House of Commons foyer on his way to the Chamber, followed by his director of issues management Jeff Costen. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Ex-cabinet chiefs of staff Alexandre Boulé and Anthony Laporte are among those who've landed roles in the PMO, as senior adviser and strategic adviser, respectively.

Ring a bell: **Hill Climbers** has a long-awaited, comprehensive breakdown of the team in Prime Minister Mark Carney's office.

With a total of 76 staff currently on deck, this dive into the PM's shop has been broken up into two parts. For those curious, this staffing level is a step down from the 90-some staffers who worked in then-prime minister Justin Trudeau's office at the end of his tenure.

Hill Climbers has already covered some members of the senior-most PMO team, including chief of staff **Marc-André Blanchard**, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations and more recently executive vice-president and head of Quebec-based pension

and insurance investment management firm Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec Global. Blanchard stepped into the role last July, replacing former Liberal minister **Marco Mendicino**, who'd led Carney's office since he was elected Liberal leader last March.

Andrée-Lyne Hallé and **Braeden Caley** both serve as deputy chiefs of staff, and were both co-campaign directors during the federal race

this past spring. Hallé is an ex-Trudeau PMO staffer and former deputy chief of staff and operations director to then-deputy PM **Chrystia Freeland**, and had most recently been a director with Alstom in Quebec. Caley, meanwhile, ran Carney's successful Liberal leadership campaign, is a past senior communications director for the

Liberal party, and most recently was president and CEO of Canada 2020.

Scott Gilmore, an ex-diplomat and former president of advisory and management services firm Anchor Chain, is senior adviser for foreign, defence, and security policy to Carney.

Tom Pitfield remains as principal secretary in the PMO. He was executive campaign director for the Liberals last election, and is a past CEO and founder of Data Sciences, and

former chairman and co-founder of Canada 2020. Though he was initially only set to be in the PMO to help Carney & Co. transition into office, he's now expected to stay on.

Pitfield briefly shared the title of principal secretary with former Liberal justice minister **David Lametti** between July and mid-September, but—as reported by *The Hill Times*' **Abbas Rana**—with Pitfield staying on, Lametti instead left the PMO. He is now set to take over as Canada's ambassador to the UN later this month.

Alexandre Boulé, an ex-chief of staff to then-foreign affairs minister **Mélanie Joly**, is on board as a senior adviser, as previously noted.

Dunerci Caceres, a former cabinet chief of staff who had been in the PMO as a special adviser for special projects, has since left the top office.

Another Trudeau-era cabinet chief of staff, **Anthony Laporte**, has likewise landed in the PMO, in his case as a strategic adviser for implementation and delivery. A ministerial staffer since 2017, his more recent roles include serving as director of strategy and outreach to Freeland as then-deputy PM and finance minister, and as chief of staff to **Jean-Yves Duclos** first as then-public services and procurement minister and most recently as then-Quebec lieutenant. He's also previously worked for multifaceted minister **Dominic LeBlanc**, including as director of policy to LeBlanc as then-intergovern-



Anthony Laporte, left, with Chrystia Freeland. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

mental affairs and internal trade minister.

A veteran staffer, Theis held a number of titles over the years in Trudeau's PMO including as policy director, director of the office's COVID-response unit between 2020 and 2021, and strategic adviser for special projects. He's previously advised on policy for then-Liberal leaders **Michael Ignatieff** and **Bob Rae**, and was a senior adviser to Trudeau when he first took the party helm in 2013. Theis is also an ex-chief of staff to then-Indigenous and northern affairs minister **Carolyn Bennett**, among other past roles.

As previously reported, **Sylvie Peterson**, a longtime aide to Carney pre-political life, is manager of the now-PM's executive office.



Kaitlin Power is executive assistant to the PM. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

The executive office includes: **Kaitlin Power**, executive assistant to Carney; **Louise Imbeault**, executive assistant to chief of staff Blanchard; **Jordan Perry**, executive assistant to deputy chiefs of staff Hallé and Caley; **Geneviève Thibault**, senior executive assistant; **Connor Poirier**, senior co-ordinator; and **Christina Benson**, driver to Blanchard.

Power, who's been seen at Carney's side since March and describes herself as having been a "body person" during the 2025 Liberal campaign on LinkedIn, was previously director of communications to then-Indigenous services minister **Patty Hajdu**. Prior to joining Hajdu's now-former office in September 2024, Power had worked for now-Canadian Identity Minister **Steven Guilbeault**

in various roles, through multiple portfolios, since 2021, including as senior press secretary and communications adviser in his office as then-environment minister. Imbeault is a

seasoned ministerial assistant and scheduler, having previously done so for then-environment and later infrastructure minister **Catherine McKenna**, Guilbeault as then-environment minister, and then-defence minister **Anita**



Geneviève Thibault is a senior executive assistant. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Chief of staff Marc-André Blanchard. UN photograph courtesy of Manuel Elias

HILL CLIMBERS

Continued from [page 28](#)

Anand. And prior to the Trudeau government, she'd likewise been a scheduling assistant to Conservative ministers, including then-foreign affairs minister **John Baird**.

Perry is a past executive assistant to Liberal Party national director **Azam Ishmael**.

Thibault has worked for both Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Bank of Canada, including as a planning analyst and visits, technical assistance, and consultations co-ordinator during Carney's time as the Bank's governor. Most recently a protocol co-ordinator with GAC's Summits Management Office up until this past May, Thibault's last role with the Bank was as project manager for physical security and corporate security services.

Poirier is an ex-aide to Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Mike Kelloway**, and according to his LinkedIn profile was part of both Carney's leadership campaign, and his subsequent transition team. He's also been active with the Canadian Armed Forces, most recently as a Cadet Instructor Cadre officer with the Regional Cadet Support Unit (Eastern), and is a licensed commercial pilot.

Earlier this fall, **Jessie Pierre** was tapped as director of human resources and administration for the PMO. Pierre has been on the Hill since 2016, and more recently ran the offices of Secretary of State for Seniors **Stephanie McLean** (stay tuned for an update on that team soon), then-democratic institutions and Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (Fed-Dev Ontario) minister **Ruby Sahota**, and then-FedDev Ontario minister **Filomena Tassi**.

Working with Pierre on human resources and administration adviser **Griffin De Giacomo**. He's been with the PMO's HR team, previously as a special assistant, since October 2023, and is a past assistant to Hajdu as the MP for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.

The PMO policy shop, as already reported, is led by director **Tim Krupa**, who worked on policy for Carney during his leadership campaign and this year's federal election, and is an ex-economist with Goldman Sachs and past investment associate with

Bridgewater Associates, among other things.

Likewise already noted are deputy directors of policy **Shaili Patel** and **Katharine Heus**, who both previously ran cabinet offices under the Trudeau government. Patel had been chief of staff to then-Crown-Indigenous relations (CIR) minister **Gary Anandasangaree**, and before then director of policy Bennett as both then-CIR minister

and then-mental health and addictions minister.

Heus was chief of staff to Hajdu as then-Indigenous services minister, policy director to **Marc Miller** during his time in the portfolio, and operations director to **Seamus O'Regan** as then-Indigenous services minister.

Working under them are senior policy advisers **Shawn Grover**, **Alan Cliff**, **Miled Hill**, **Yash Nanda**, and **Mathew Hall**, and special assistant for policy **Alyth Roos**.

Grover is a former associate with Dentons, but has been working in the federal public service since 2017, largely as a senior policy analyst with Finance Canada, as noted on his LinkedIn profile. He's also done the same as part of Infrastructure Canada's Canada Infrastructure Bank Transition Office, and at Employment and Social Development Canada. Most recently, he was a director of Finance Canada's infrastructure team.

Cliff was previously identified as a PMO "legal counsel" in federal lobbying communications filings from this past summer, including in meetings with Telus representatives.

Hill is another ex-cabinet chief of staff; he ran then-transport minister **Pablo Rodriguez's** office

between 2023 and 2024, at which point he stepped away from Parliament and spent time as an adjunct professor at McGill University. A former assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Peter Schiefke**, Hill overall worked on the transport file from 2018 to 2024, and has also been policy director to then-minister **Omar Alghabra**, and senior policy adviser to then-minister **Marc Garneau**.

Nanda and Hall previously worked in tandem as deputy directors of policy to Freeland as

then-deputy PM and finance minister. Nanda had been working for Freeland since 2021 and previously tackled policy for **Mary Ng** as both then-trade minister and then-small business and export promotion minister. Hall was likewise hired by Freeland in 2021 and is a past policy aide to then-international development minister **Karina Gould**; he's also an ex-assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Jean Yip**, and did policy work for Gould as then-democratic institutions minister.

Roos is an ex-Parliamentary Internship Programme (PIP) intern, and worked on Carney's successful campaign in Nepean, Ont., this past election. After her PIP internship, Roos earned a master's degree in international social and public policy from The London School of Economics and Political Science, and

subsequently returned to the Hill as a regional adviser to Anandasangaree as then-CIR minister.

As previously reported, **Lisa Jørgensen**, a former chief of staff to then-public safety minister **David McGuinty** and then-justice minister **Arif Virani**, is Carney's director of global affairs. Prior to coming to Ottawa to do policy work for Lametti as then-justice minister in 2020, Jørgensen had been a criminal and regulatory lawyer with Ruby Shiller Enenajor DiGiuseppe Barristers in Toronto. She's also previously worked for McCarthy Tétrault, and Lockyer Campbell

Posner, among other past jobs. Working closely with Jørgensen is global affairs adviser **Sarah Manney**. Aside from a six-month run as a policy adviser to Garneau as then-foreign affairs in 2021—where she focused on Africa, India, Central Asia, and COVID-19 related policy—Manney has been on the Hill since the start of this year, first as senior policy adviser for Canada-U.S. trade and Indo-Pacific affairs to then-trade minister Ng, and more recently as policy director to Trade Minister **Maninder Sidhu**. Manney also previously worked for McKinsey & Company between 2018 and 2020.

Jeff Costen is director of issues management in the top

office, working closely with director of parliamentary affairs **Kathleen Legault-Meek**.

Costen ran issues management for Carney's leadership campaign, and the Liberals' general election campaign, and spent the last almost eight years working for Navigator in Toronto. Prior to joining the firm in 2017, he'd worked at Queen's Park, including as press secretary to then-Ontario tourism, culture, and sport minister **Eleanor McMahon** and as issues manager to then-government and consumer services minister **David Orazietti**, among other roles.

Legault-Meek previously ran parliamentary affairs for Guilbeault as then-environment minister, and before then was a legislative assistant and later policy adviser to Guilbeault as then-heritage minister. Along with time spent as an assistant to the Liberal MP **Michel Picard** and current

Leader and Transport Minister **Steven MacKinnon** as the MP for Gatineau, Que., Legault-Meek is an ex-legislative aide to then-senator **Dennis Dawson**.

Supporting Costen is deputy director of issues management **Alexann Kropman**. Kropman previously led parliamentary affairs and issues management for then-housing

minister **Sean Fraser**, and according to her LinkedIn profile, she spent this year's election doing issues management for the national Liberal campaign. Kropman has, among

other things, also tackled parliamentary affairs for Freeland as then-deputy PM and finance minister.

Jenny McElwain is a senior issues management adviser. McElwain, like Costen, comes fresh from Navigator's Toronto offices where she'd worked for the last roughly three-and-

a-half years, ending as a senior consultant. She also brings some public service experience both federally—as an ex-commercial trade analyst with the Canadian High Commission in Australia—and provincially from a short stint as a policy analyst with Ontario's Ministry of Transportation.

Rounding out the team are issues management and parliamentary affairs advisers **Malek-Michel Jamali** and **Nicholas Lovrics**, and issues management and parliamentary affairs co-ordinator **Nati Pressman**.

Jamali was a speechwriter for the Liberals during this year's campaign, and previously—briefly, just before its end—worked as a speechwriter in Trudeau's PMO. He's formerly done communications related work for both Rodriguez as then-Quebec lieutenant, and then-agriculture minister **Marie-Claude Bibeau**, and is an ex-aide to Liberal MPs **Mona Fortier** and **Angelo Iacono**.

Lovrics joined the PMO fresh from the foreign affairs minister's team, having started there under then-minister Joly in 2023 where he tackled parliamentary affairs and issues management. His LinkedIn profile indicates he stayed on for a time as an issues manager to current foreign minister Anand. Lovrics has also previously worked for Liberal MP **Ali Ehsassi**.

Finally, Pressman is a past assistant to Mendicino both during his time as the MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont., and more recently in his capacity as chief of staff to Carney. She volunteered on Carney's start-of-the-year leadership campaign, and is the founder and past president of the Canadian Union of Jewish Students. That's

35 staffers down, and 41 to go—stay tuned to **Hill Climbers** for a look at the rest of Carney's PMO team.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Jordan Perry is executive assistant to the deputy chiefs of staff. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Miled Hill is a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Lisa Jørgensen is director of global affairs. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Mathew Hall is a senior policy adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Sarah Manney is global affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Griffin De Giacomo is a senior HR and administration adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Tim Krupa is director of policy. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Nicholas Lovrics is an issues management and parliamentary affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Alexann Kropman is deputy director of issues management. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Nati Pressman is a parliamentary affairs co-ordinator. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Party Central

By Stuart Benson

McPherson, Ashton, Lewis pitch anti-cat credentials in Mouseland

Hundreds of New Democrats painted SJAM orange on Oct. 28 at the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation's annual gala.

Despite missing United States Ambassador to Canada **Pete Hoekstra**'s fireworks at the Canadian American Business Council's State of the Relationship gala and minor sleep deprivation due to the Blue Jays' extra-innings loss to the L.A. Dodgers the night before, **Party Central** rallied on Oct. 28 for the swanky Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation's third annual Mouseland Gala.

Surrounded by hundreds of New Democrats packed in the Sir John A. Macdonald Building, the leadership contenders gave their best pitch to be the party's next Reepicheep. (If you don't know who Reepicheep is, how have you gotten this far in life without reading *The Chronicles of Narnia*?)

For those unfamiliar, the gala takes its name from the eponymous fable made famous by New Democrat founding father **Tommy Douglas**. The central figure in the tale is a little fellow from Mouseland who proposes that cats should no longer govern his fellow compatriots. You can find an animated narration of Douglas' fable on YouTube, foreword provided by his grandson, actor **Kiefer Sutherland**.

While many attendees in the room were also suffering varying degrees of baseball-related sleep deprivation, the crowd was buzzing right from when the doors opened at 5:30 p.m., eager for the night's candidate panel, moderated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's **Jordan Lechnitz**.

Fortunately for this World Series-weary reporter, **Party Central** was able to secure a seat at a table, accompanied by *The Hill Times*' colleagues **Marlo Glass** and **Puran Guram**. But luckily for you, dear reader, indomitable *Hill Times* reporter **Eleanor Wand** declined the open bar and braised beef short ribs—or roasted Harissa eggplant for the vegetarians—to tackle the meat-and-potatoes news coverage of the leadership panel, with a photography assist from the tireless **Andrew Meade**. The CBC's **David Thurton**, *The Canadian Press*' **David Baxter**, *The Toronto Star*'s **Mark Ramzy**, and *Press Progress*' **Luke LeBrun** were also spotted racking up the overtime hours while valiantly resisting the free booze until they had filed. You can also watch the entire gala and the last two live-streamed recordings on the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation's (DCLF)'s YouTube channel.

Despite the all five NDP leadership candidates having gathered in Ottawa less than a week before on Oct. 22 for a candidate forum hosted by the Canadian Labour Congress, Tuesday's gala was the first opportunity for NDP MP **Heather McPherson**, Canadian International Longshore Workers Union president **Rob Ashton**, and activist and filmmaker **Avi Lewis** to go nearly head-to-head. Unfortunately, British Columbia city councillor **Tanille Johnston** and environmentalist farmer **Tony McQuail** were unable to attend in person, but delivered their remarks via pre-recorded video.

During the pre-program reception, **Party Central** spotted NDP MPs **Leah**

Gazan, and **Gord Johns**; former London-Fanshawe, Ont., MP **Lindsay Mathysen**; Proof Strategies' **Matthew Dubé**; Senator **Andrew Cardozo**, Catalyze4's **Anne McGrath**, former party president and national director; former NDP MPP **Joel Harden**; **Emilie Taman**, a former Ottawa-area candidate; Freedom Convoy lawsuit-litigator **Paul Champ**; Horizon Ottawa's **Sam Hersh**; the Public Service Alliance of Canada's **Alex Silas**; and Wright Strategies' **Kim Wright** in an unmissable bedazzled Jays' jacket.

McPherson sported a fashionable orange jacket and orange pumps, while Ashton and Lewis stuck with more traditional blue suits. However, both men also had their partisan colours on display, via Orange Crush socks and an open orange collar for Lewis, though **Party Central** has docked Ashton a few sartorial points for bailing on his bowtie before taking to the stage.

To kick off the night's program, DCLF vice-president **Brad Lavigne**, a former senior campaign adviser to then-leader **Tom Mulcair** and now president of Counsel Public Affairs, had the unenviable task of hailing attendees to their seats and away from the open bar. However, in the spirit of his duty to keep things on schedule, he vowed to have things wrapped up "around the top of the fifth inning."

After some quick housekeeping to highlight the DCLF's work over the past year, including new initiatives like the **Ian Reid** national scholarship to be awarded annually to students promoting "the values and goals of social democracy" while in politics, and a new fall Carleton University lecture series, Lavigne handed the microphone over to Kitigan Zibi's **Shirley Tolley** for a land acknowledgement, followed by the event's parliamentary sponsor, NDP MP **Lori Idlout**, the party's interim leader **Don Davies**, and DCLF's **Josh Bizjak**.

Before the panel, all three candidates gave brief opening statements, but it was advantage Ashton as the first speaker, granting him the chance to initiate the first on-command standing ovation at the mention of Alberta's Teachers' Association. However, McPherson played to her strengths when casting Alberta Premier **Danielle Smith** as the villain of the story. Ashton will have a bit more work to do with his French before then, having stumbled over the pronunciation of "bientôt" with a very loud "t" and reverting to the anglicized pre-2022 pronunciation of the Conservative leader's last name.

Sandwiched between the two, Lewis played up his rapidly improving French skills, though presumably there is an applicable Québécois-ism for "corporate welfare bums" he can use in the formal debate in Montreal next month. He also received his share of sizeable applause breaks, though his appeals to anti-Zionism in the spirit of the Jewish Labour Bund drew slightly more division than the pro-union appeals.

Without retreading Wand's thorough panel coverage, having followed the three previous leadership races since 2022, **Party Central** will offer some brief analysis: for those who seem to believe this will be another runaway coronation, get those laces tied and watch out—these little mice have some ideas.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



The Hill Times photographs
by Stuart Benson
& Andrew Meade

1. NDP leadership candidates Rob Ashton, left, MP Heather McPherson, and Avi Lewis participated in a panel discussion, moderated by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Jordan Lechnitz on Oct. 28, at the third annual Mouseland Gala. **2.** Press Progress' Luke LeBrun, left, and *The Toronto Star*'s Mark Ramzy. **3.** *The Hill Times*' Eleanor Wand, left, interviews former NDP MPP Joel Harden. **4.** Proof Strategies' Matthew Dubé, left, and Lechnitz. **5.** Horizon Ottawa's Sam Hersh, left, the Council of Canadians' Dylan Penner, and PSAC's Alex Silas. **6.** PAA Advisory's Will Darragh, left, Sasha Kardos-Machado, and Maryam Mughal. **7.** Senator Andrew Cardozo, left; Emilie Taman, former NDP candidate and lawyer; and community organizer and lawyer Paul Champ. **8.** NDP MPs Leah Gazan, left, and Lori Idlout. **9.** Ashton, left, McPherson, Lewis, and Lechnitz, right. **10.** NDP MP Gord Johns, left; John Anderson, former NDP policy director; and Counsel Public Affairs' Brad Lavigne. **11.** NDP interim leader Don Davies. **12.** Josh Bizjak, DCLF executive director.



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.

Champagne to table federal budget on Tuesday, Nov. 4



Minister of Finance and National Revenue François-Philippe Champagne speaks with reporters before the Liberal cabinet meeting in West Block on Oct. 21, 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MONDAY, NOV. 3

House Schedule—The House of Commons will sit Oct. 27-31; Nov. 3-7; Nov. 17-21; Nov. 24-28; Dec. 1-5; and Dec. 8-12. 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.

Webinar: 'Outlook for Budget 2025'—Former parliamentary budget officer Yves Giroux will take part in a webinar, "Deficits, Debt and Defence: The Outlook for Budget 2025," hosted by the Toronto Association for Business and Economics. Monday, Nov. 3, at 12 p.m. ET. Happening online: cabe.ca.

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will take part in a fireside chat on "State of the Canadian economy" at The Logic Summit. Monday, Nov. 3, at 1:30 p.m. ET at Arcadian Court, Toronto. Details: bankofcanada.ca.

TUESDAY, NOV. 4

Federal Budget to be Tabled—Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne will table his first federal budget today in the House of Commons. Tuesday, Nov. 4.

Canola Parliamentary Reception—The Canola Council of Canada and Canadian Canola Growers Association hosting their post-budget reception for MPs, Senators, and staff. Tuesday, Nov. 4, at 6 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, O'Brien Room, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Contact: ccga.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 5

Post-Budget Breakfast 2025—The Ottawa Board of Trade and *Ottawa Business Journal* host a Post-Budget Breakfast 2025, featuring a detailed analysis with former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at 7 a.m. ET at the Westin Ottawa's TwentyTwo, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Conference: 'Enhancing NATO Allied Interoperability in the Arctic'—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts a half-day conference, "Enhancing NATO Allied Interoperability in the Arctic," exploring how Canada and key NATO allies can better partner for North Atlantic security. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St., Ottawa. Details: cgai.ca.

Webinar: 'Navigating Ottawa After the Budget'—*The Hill Times* hosts an exclusive subscriber-only webinar, "Navigating Ottawa After the Budget." Executive editor Peter Mazereeuw hosts former parliamentary budget

officer Yves Giroux, former Conservative trade minister Ed Fast, and former British Columbia premier Christy Clark in a discussion about Budget 2025. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at 10 a.m. ET happening online.

Post-Budget Briefing with Deputy Finance Minister—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts the Duncan Munn Roundtable Luncheon with Chris Forbes, deputy minister at Finance Canada, who will deliver a post-budget briefing. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at 12 p.m. ET, at C.D. Howe Institute, 110 Yonge St., Suite 800, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

Vimy Gala—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute hosts its 33rd annual Vimy Gala. This prestigious black-tie event honours Canada's fallen heroes and celebrate exceptional Canadians who have shaped the nation's defence and security landscape. The 2025 Vimy Award Laureate, Col. Michelle Douglas, will also be honoured. Wednesday, Nov. 5, at the Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Pl. Register: cdainstitute.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 6

GreenPAC's Breakfast on the Hill—GreenPAC hosts a special 10th anniversary edition of its Breakfast on the Hill, bringing together parliamentarians from all parties with leaders from business, academia, non-profits, and youth movements to connect over shared environmental priorities. Featuring the first-ever alumni reunion for the Parliamentary Internship for the Environment, and a to-be-announced keynote speaker. Thursday, Nov. 6, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Symposium: 'AI & the Press'—World Press Freedom Canada hosts a half-day symposium, "AI & the Press: Threats & Opportunities." Hugo Larochelle, scientific director at Mila, the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute, will deliver a keynote address, followed by panel discussions with Craig Silverman, founder of Indictor; Nikita Roy, founder, Newsroom Robots Lab; Grant Ellis, The Toronto Star's executive editor; Wilf Dinnick, co-founder, GetFact.ca; David Skok, The Logic's CEO and editor-in-chief; Anita Li, founder and publisher, The Green Line; Aengus Bridgman, assistant professor, McGill University; and Rignam Wangkhong, AI projects adviser, CBC News. Thursday, Nov. 6, at 8:30 a.m. ET in Room W-180, 1 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register: worldpressfreedomcanada.ca.

AFN National Chief to Deliver Remarks—National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Cindy Wood-

house Nepinak will deliver remarks and take part in a fireside chat hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. Thursday, Nov. 6, at 11:30 a.m. MT, at BMO Centre, 1912 Flores Ladue Parade SE, Calgary. Details: calgary-chamber.com.

Youth Parliament of Canada Reception—CIVIX welcomes 75 young leaders from each province and territory for the Youth Parliament of Canada, a four-day immersive parliamentary simulation. Thursday, Nov. 6, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Rossy Pavilion, National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. RSVP: rep@civix.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 7

Conservative Leader Poilievre to Discuss the Budget—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will take part in a keynote address and fireside chat titled "The Federal Budget Unpacked: Insights from Pierre Poilievre," hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Friday, Nov. 7, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto, 145 Richmond St. W., Toronto. Details: economicclub.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 10

Dollar a Year Men Book Launch—Build Canada hosts the launch of Allan Levine's new book, *The Dollar a Year Men*, celebrating the builders who helped transform Canada's wartime economy into an engine of growth. Featuring a fireside chat with the author, lunch, and networking. Monday, Nov. 10, 11:30 a.m. ET, at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., Ottawa. Register: luma.com/xpd7mzht.

Liberal MP Maloney to Attend Fundraiser—Liberal MP James Maloney will take part in a fundraising event hosted by the Etobicoke—Lakeshore Federal Liberal Association. Monday, Nov. 10, at 4:30 p.m. ET at the Steam Whistle Roundhouse, 255 Bremner Blvd., Toronto. Details: liberal.ca.

Toronto Launch of Sergio Marchi's Book—The Canadian International Council's Toronto Branch hosts the Toronto launch of *Pursuing a Public Life: How to Succeed in the Political Arena* by former cabinet minister and ambassador Sergio Marchi. Monday, Nov. 10, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Centre for Social Innovation, 192 Spadina Ave., Toronto. Details: thecic.org.

TUESDAY, NOV. 11

2025 Diefenbaker Lecture—First Freedoms Foundation and Augustine College host author Bob Plamondon who will deliver the 2025 Diefenbaker Lecture celebrating the legacy of former prime minister John Diefenbaker. Copies of Plamondon's latest book,

Freedom Fighter: John Diefenbaker's Battle of Canadian Liberties and Independence, will be available for purchase. Tuesday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. ET at St. Peter and St. Paul's Anglican Church, 152 Metcalfe St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, NOV. 11—WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting—Foreign Minister Anita Anand will host the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the second time this year Canada will host such a meeting as it holds the G7 presidency. Tuesday, Nov. 11, to Wednesday, Nov. 12 in Ontario's Niagara Region.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 12

Defence Procurement Conference—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts its Defence Procurement Conference 2025. Details to follow. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 8:30 a.m. ET at The Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details: cgai.ca.

Celebrating the Michaille Jean Foundation—Twenty years ago, Michaille Jean made history as Canada's first Black woman to serve as governor general. Celebrate her transformative work with her namesake foundation throughout the years, and the enduring impact it continues to have featuring distinguished guests, live musical performances, and a cocktail reception. Wednesday, Nov. 12, at 6 p.m. ET at the National Gallery of Canada, 380 Sussex Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

THURSDAY, NOV. 13

Webinar: 'Federal Budget Post-Mortem'—The Toronto Association for Business Economics hosts a webinar, "Living on the Edge: Federal Budget Post-Mortem," with William Robson, president and CEO, C.D. Howe Institute; and Pedro Antunes, chief economist, Conference Board of Canada. Thursday, Nov. 13, at 12 p.m. ET happening online: cabe.ca/events.

REEL Politics Film Series—Rescheduled from Nov. 6, the 2017 film *The Death Of Stalin* is the second screening in the REEL Politics Film Series, an eight-night fundraiser for the Jaimie Anderson Parliamentary Internships happening monthly through April 2026. Thursday, Nov. 13, at the ByTowne Cinema, 325 Rideau St., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOV. 14

Seminar: 'Parliamentary Committees'—The Canadian Study of

Parliament Group hosts the first in its latest series of three seminars. "Parliamentary Committees" will explore how parliamentary committees in Canada function and evolve including the roles of parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, how public servants prepare for appearances while maintaining political neutrality, and the impact of minority governments, digital tools, and emerging technologies. The next seminars will take place in 2026. Friday, Nov. 14, at 8:30 a.m. ET at 111 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, NOV. 17

Book Launch: A New Blueprint for Government—Carleton University hosts the launch of Jim Mitchell's new book, *A New Blueprint for Government: Reshaping Power, the PMO, and the Public Service*, featuring a panel discussion with former Treasury Board secretary Graham Flack, Institute on Governance president and CEO Allen Sutherland, and Carleton professor Jennifer Robson. Monday, Nov. 17, at 11 a.m. ET at Carleton University, Dunton Tower, Room 2017, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Panel: 'Investing in Children's Health in Canada'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a panel discussion, "Thrive: The Economic Case for Investing in Children's Health in Canada," featuring Emily Gruenewoldt, CEO, Children's Healthcare Canada; Bruce Squires, president, McMaster Children's Hospital; and Matt Stewart, partner, Deloitte Consulting. Monday, Nov. 17, at 12 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St., Ottawa. Register: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Lunch: 'Perspectives on the Policy Process in IRCC'—Carleton University hosts a lunch event, "Perspectives on the Policy Process in Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada," featuring Carol McQueen, director general for Settlement and Integration Policy at IRCC. Monday, Nov. 17 at 12 p.m. ET at Richcraft Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr., Ottawa. Register: events.carleton.ca.

AmCham's Thanksgiving Dinner—The Toronto chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada hosts its annual American Thanksgiving Dinner featuring an address by Ontario Premier Doug Ford and remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Canada Pete Hoekstra. Monday, Nov. 17, at 6 p.m. ET at Arcadian Court, 401 Bay Street, 8th Floor, Toronto. Details: amchamcanada.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 17—TUESDAY, NOV. 18

Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum—The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy hosts the fifth Indo-Pacific Strategy Forum. Senior policymakers, economists, corporate executives, diplomats, and academic experts from across Canada, the United States, and the Indo-Pacific region will examine how Canada can recalibrate its Indo-Pacific approach amidst shifting geopolitical and economic headwinds. Monday, Nov. 17, to Tuesday, Nov. 18, in downtown Ottawa. Details: peacediplomacy.org.

TUESDAY, NOV. 18

PSAC Day on the Hill—Join the Public Service Alliance of Canada and representatives of its nearly 240,000 workers in celebration of the public service. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 5:30 p.m. ET at the Ottawa Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St. Register via Eventbrite.

Timothy Caulfield to Deliver IRPP Lecture—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts its fall lecture featuring University of Alberta professor Timothy Caulfield on "How to Escape the Fake: Making Good Policy in the Age of Misinformation." Reception to follow. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 5 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

Ottawa Launch of Sergio Marchi's Book—Join former Liberal cabinet minister Sergio Marchi for the Ottawa launch of his new book, *Pursuing a Public Life*. Tuesday, Nov. 18, at 7 p.m. ET, at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa. Register via Eventbrite.

POLICY BRIEFING

DEFENCE

Publication date: **Wednesday, November 19, 2025** | Advertising deadline: **Thursday, November 13, 2025**

What progress is being made on Canada's pledge to reach five per cent of annual GDP on defence by 2035, along with NATO allies? Is Canada spending enough on national defence, or too much?

What are the challenges facing Canada's military procurement system, and how can they be addressed?

How prepared is Canada to respond to emerging threats, including cyber-warfare, space defence, or drone technology?

What are the most important issues Canada must address in terms of Arctic sovereignty? How can the country rise to meet these challenges?

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