



'Labour turmoil' not over yet p. 4



Nominations: central party pressure 'poisons the well' p. 12



Tariffs

not the answer on EVs: Crane p. 14

Michael Harris

p. 10

Exclusive news: inside



THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR, NO. 2155

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024 \$5.00

NEWS

Nearly half of Canada's public servants are now millennials, but Gen X holds onto management reins

BY SOPHALL DUCH

Millennials now form nearly half of Canada's public service, according to the latest government data, with the demographic shift offering the chance for the federal government to target younger generations seeking a greater sense of purpose in their careers.

"This is a huge opportunity for the federal government because a lot of private sector employees struggle to align with bigger societal purpose, and attract these generations to that purpose. But the federal government has a purpose," Stephen Harrington, Deloitte Canada's national lead for workforce strategy.

The annual report from the clerk of the Privy Council, released on Aug. 21, offers a glimpse into the makeup of the federal public service. It found that nearly 49 per cent of federal public servants are aged 25 to 44 years old.

Millennials are classified as people born between the years 1980 and 2000 in the Treasury Board Secretariat's public service demographic snapshot— but this range can vary, depending on who is asked.

Continued on page 19

NEWS

Liberal caucus off to B.C. for annual summer retreat to brainstorm fall parliamentary game plan

BY ABBAS RANA

With the Liberals trailing by double digits in the polls for a year, facing two byelections this month, and dealing with 52 political staffers voicing their opposition against their own government over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the 155-member Liberal caucus is heading to Nanaimo, B.C., for what is likely their last national summer retreat before next year's federal election to strategize for the fall sitting of Parliament.

"National caucus is always important, given where we are in the polls, so I'm waiting to see what happens," said Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay-Rainy River, Ont.), in an interview with *The Hill Times* last week.

"Obviously the polls show that a fair number of people are dis-

Continued on page 21

NEWS

Some Grit staffers try to 'get ahead of the curve' in private sector outreach before next election

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Some government relations firms are experiencing a sharper than normal uptick in political staffers asking about trading in their positions on the Hill for other job opportunities, which lobbyists argue could be in response to factors such as the Liberals' poor performance in the polls, and how long the current government has been in office.

"[There's] just a big spike pre-election because for everyone there's a feeling that there won't be a job this time next year," said a lobbyist who agreed to speak with *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis to allow more candid comments. "It's much more than the past elections."

The next federal election is scheduled for October 2025 at the latest. In advance of an election, political staff will typically assess the chances that a current government will stick around, and plan accordingly, according to the lobbyist.

The lobbyist told *The Hill Times* that inquiries to their firm this past year from political staffers about possible job openings have been higher than normal "because everyone's watching the polls."

"I field tons of calls from folks about that transition off the Hill. What does it look like? What's the

Continued on page 20



The 155-member national Liberal caucus is heading to Nanaimo, B.C., from Sept. 9-11 for what is likely their last summer retreat before the next federal election. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

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Christina Leadlay
Heard On The Hill

Retired Senator Lilian Dyck and ex-GG Adrienne Clarkson among Chinese Canadian Legends



Former governor general Adrienne Clarkson, pictured with her nephew Justin Poy, and former Senator Lilian Eva Quan Dyck, right, are among six people who were honoured at the 2024 Chinese Canadian Legend Award Gala in Toronto on Aug. 17. Photograph courtesy of Senator Yuen Pau Woo and The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Retired Senator **Lillian Eva Quan Dyck** and ex-governor general **Adrienne Clarkson** were among six people honoured at the 2024 Chinese Canadian Legend Award Gala in Toronto on Aug. 17.

Dr. **Wayne Chiu**, **Frances Chung**, **Kai Liu** and **Peter Liu** round out the list of honourees.

Clarkson's nephew **Justin Poy** posted on X (formerly Twitter) on Aug. 18: "An incredible evening... I was very honoured that my Aunt Adrienne Clarkson was among the recipients tonight. We are so proud that she received the award and that my uncle **John Ralston Saul** and niece **Talia** could join to celebrate!"

Born in Hong Kong, Clarkson came to Canada as a child and

had a career in broadcasting before serving as governor general from 1999 to 2005.

Dyck was unable to attend the event due to health issues, but Independent Senator **Yuen Pau Woo** read some remarks on her behalf to some 400 guests, including former lieutenant-governor of Ontario **Elizabeth Dowdeswell**, Liberal MP **Leah Taylor Roy**, and **Luo Weidong**, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Toronto.

"She [Dyck] told me of the importance that the award means to her, and to the memory of her father, from whom she derives her Chinese heritage," Woo said at the gala, who explained that Dyck was raised thinking she was Chinese from both parents,

despite her mother being from the George Gordon First Nation in Saskatchewan, who wanted to protect her daughter from prejudice.

"Lillian's mother judged that the misery of being Chinese in Canada was better than the misery of being Indigenous," said Woo. "It is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in Canada at that time, but in some ways also an uplifting one about how many Chinese immigrants to Canada found solidarity, succour, friendship, and love from their First Nations brothers and sisters."

Woo then read Dyck's own words: "I accept this prestigious award in honor of my dad, **Quan Leen Yok**, known affectionately as Happy Quan, who died in 1962. He was always proud of me, his little girl, and had no idea that she would go on to become a neuroscientist and senator of Canada."

Dyck was appointed to the Senate by then-prime minister **Paul Martin** in 2005, and served until her retirement in 2020. She celebrated her 79th birthday on Aug. 24.

Of note, another former Senator **Vivienne Poy**—who is Clarkson's sister—is one of the award's honorary advisers.

National Cartoonist Society honours de Adder

The Hill Times' editorial cartoonist **Michael de Adder** has



Michael de Adder. Photograph courtesy of L. Manuel Baechlin

won the 2023 Reuben Award for Editorial Cartoonist of the Year.

"Thank you, National Cartoonist Society, for naming me Editorial Cartoonist of the Year for my work at the *Washington Post*," de Adder posted on X on Aug. 27.

The Halifax-based de Adder has been drawing for *The Hill Times* for decades, and his work has been syndicated across North America, including with the *Toronto Star*, and at the *Washington Post* from 2021 to 2024. He has won many awards during his career, including the National Newspaper Award for Editorial Cartooning for 2020.

Considered among the most prestigious awards in the cartooning industry, the Reuben Award recognizes "outstanding achievement in the field of editorial or political cartooning," according to the NCS's website. This award "specifically acknowledges a cartoonist who has demonstrated excellence in creating editorial commentary on political, social, or cultural issues, often with a humorous or satirical edge."

This isn't the first commendation de Adder has received in 2024, having also been inducted as a Member of the Order of Canada for his "artistic contributions and pointed commentary" this past January.

New heads of mission to El Salvador, Colombia, Barbados and Seattle

Two ambassadors, one high commissioner, and one consul general were among the latest batch of diplomatic appointments that Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly** announced on Aug. 27.

Mylène Paradis replaces **Daniel Ahmad** as ambassador to El Salvador. Paradis was most recently director general of the Canadian Partnerships for Health and Social Development Bureau at Global Affairs Canada.

Outgoing ambassador to Colombia **Marianick Tremblay** takes over from **Geoff Gartshore** as ambassador to Cuba. This is Tremblay's fourth head-of-mission posting, having previously

served as Canada's top diplomat to El Salvador and to Ecuador.

Brenda Wills succeeds **Lilian Chatterjee** as high commissioner in Barbados. Wills, who is Red River Métis from Manitoba according to her departmental biography, has previously been posted to Washington, D.C., Chile, Colombia and Mexico City. She is finishing a stint as senior trade commissioner and counsellor at Canada's mission to Singapore.

And former president of the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers **Craig Weichel**, who until recently was at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., is headed to the Pacific Coast to become consul general in Seattle. He replaces **Mia Yen**.

Liberal MP Fortier crafts politics quiz at Vanier Sugar Shack



Liberal MP **Mona Fortier** is contributing to a bilingual politics trivia night at Muséoparc Vanier on Oct. 4. The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

Political debate recently could be classified as more salty than sweet, but that could change when the Vanier Sugar Shack plays host to a bilingual politics quiz night early next month.

Muséoparc Vanier is hosting a Soirée Quiz Night on Oct. 4 that challenges contenders who think they "have what it takes to be the ultimate quiz champion" to take "put your knowledge to the test and enjoy a friendly bilingual competition."

Contributing to the quiz will be the area's federal and provincial MPs—Liberal MP **Mona Fortier** and Ontario Liberal MPP **Lucille Collard**. According to the event description, the Ottawa-Vanier representatives "will be testing your knowledge on municipal, provincial, federal and international politics all evening long. Get together and take on the challenge as we explore the many facets of politics!"

Registration is free and open to anyone aged 19 and over on Eventbrite. If bragging rights are not enough to entice you to join, the Muséoparc will also award a "gift pack of maple products" to the night's winner.

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The Hill Times



Independent Senator **Yuen Pau Woo**, left, and former Conservative Senator **Victor Oh** were among the attendees at the CCLA gala. Photograph courtesy of Senator Yuen Pau Woo

Lobbying change requiring more detail in comms reports draws concern about advocacy ‘chill’ from GRIC and PAAC

Starting on Oct. 1, lobbyists will need to tie the subject in a communication report to the matching details in a lobbyist’s registration file.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

A rule change coming up in October requiring lobbyists to be more specific in reports about what they discuss with public office holders—a move intended by the lobbying commissioner to improve transparency—is raising concern among some government relations professionals who argue this could have a chilling affect on advocacy.

“I think this will certainly, for some, create an unease,” said Kyle Larkin, vice-president of the Public Affairs Association of Canada (PAAC), and also executive director of the Grain Growers of Canada. “While the commissioner of lobbying believes this will increase transparency, I actually think it’ll decrease transparency.”

Currently, lobbyists list details about the subjects they wish to discuss such as specific policies or legislation in their registry files, but in communications reports the subject matter discussed with specific public office holders is listed in broad terms, such as agriculture, international trade, or transportation. Starting on Oct. 1, lobbyists will need to tie the subject in a communication report to the corresponding details in a lobbyist’s registration file.

“While this is new to the communication reports, these details already exist in the registration. However, a given subject matter can have several subject matter details associated with it. When submitting their communication reports, registrants will simply be required to select the appropriate existing subject matter detail from their registration,” said Manon Dion, the manager of communications services for the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying (OCL), in an emailed statement to *The Hill Times* on Aug. 28. “Those consulting the registry will no longer have to guess which subject matter details were discussed during the communication.”



Lobbying Commissioner Nancy Bélanger announced an intention to ‘work toward enhancing transparency by creating mechanisms to identify both the general subject matter as well as the related details in communication reports,’ in her office’s annual report. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Larkin told *The Hill Times* that he’s concerned that some MPs may be hesitant to accept meetings with lobbyists after the rule change if the subject matter to be discussed is sensitive.

As an example, he cited Bill C-234, a private member’s bill by Conservative MP Ben Lobb (Huron-Bruce, Ont.) which proposes an exemption for farmers on the federal carbon tax for propane and natural gas used for some farm activities. Larkin said that most Liberal MPs are in opposition to the bill, but “a small cadre” are supportive “behind the scenes.”

“Those MPs may not want to meet with us to discuss C-234 because now, on the lobby registry, it’s going to say X MP met with X organization to discuss X. For some MPs who may be politically sensitive, that may be a bridge too far for them,” said Larkin. “They don’t want to get a call from their House leader’s office or even their leader’s office to say, ‘hey, why’d you meet with this organization and discuss XYZ?’”

Bill C-234 was passed in the Senate with amendments on Dec. 12, 2023, and the amended bill is currently awaiting consideration in the House.

Larkin is also concerned that the upcoming communication report rule change could have an adverse affect on the competitive business environment.

“If you think of our banks, or you think of our telecommuni-

cations companies, or even our railways ... they need to be able to lobby on different laws or legislation or regulations on a regular basis, and need to keep those details as tight as possible because of the sensitivities around the business environment,” said Larkin. “You can imagine if too many details were published about what they were talking about, another company in that space could take advantage of that situation and there could be sensitive data that is at risk with some of these changes.”

Hunter Doubt, the president of the Government Relations Institute of Canada (GRIC) and also Expedia Group’s manager of government and corporate affairs, told *The Hill Times* in an emailed statement on Aug. 28 that he agrees including subject matter details in communication reports could adversely affect competitiveness in the business environment. He also raised concern that more detailed communication reports could result in the public jumping to conclusions regarding meetings between lobbyists and public office holders.

“Public office holders know that making informed policy decisions requires hearing multiple viewpoints, [and] that includes communicating with lobbyists who share information and perspectives from interested stakeholders. However ... it would be a mistake for the public to think that just because a public office

holder met with a lobbyist to discuss a certain topic that is why they made a particular decision,” said Doubt in the emailed statement. “We are concerned that going forward, the public will leap to these conclusions erroneously based on specific subject matter details and information attached to each communication report in the registry, and that it will put a chill on the open communication required to develop informed public policy, while doing little to further transparency.”

In the OCL email, Dion said the change is not retroactive, and only applies to communication reports taking place on or after Oct. 1, 2024.

“In the continued absence of a review and changes to the Lobbying Act, Commissioner [Nancy] Bélanger will continue to identify and pursue improvements aimed at enhancing the transparency, fairness, clarity and efficiency of the federal lobbying regime,” said Dion in the email. “As the Registry of Lobbyists is the primary tool for transparency in the lobbying of federal government officials, Commissioner Bélanger and the office continuously maintain and enhance the registry to further support transparency.”

In contrast to Larkin and Doubt, Duff Conacher, the co-founder of Democracy Watch, described the upcoming change in reporting requirements as “too little, much too late,” in an emailed statement on Aug. 28.

He said that the disclosure of “particulars” of lobbying has always been required by the Lobbying Act, and for monthly returns, the disclosure of details has been required since 2007.

“The [Lobbying] Act has always allowed the commissioner to enact a regulation requiring even more details to be disclosed,” said Conacher in the emailed statement. “Very unfortunately, the current and past commissioners have always failed to enforce the act properly by allowing lobbyists to disclose only vague, general information about their lobbying activities, especially about the subject matter of their lobbying, and have also failed to enact any regulation requiring even more details to be disclosed.”

The upcoming change was previously alluded to in the OCL’s annual report, published on June 13, stating that the office would “work toward enhancing transparency by creating mechanisms to identify both the general subject matter as well as the related details in communication reports.”

On Aug. 1, 2024, the OCL sent an email to all registrants with active registrations and their representative advising them of the upcoming change, according to Dion in the email.

Dion also said that a notice was added to registrant dashboards, which appears once they sign into their registry account.

“As registrants are responsible for certifying registrations and communication reports, they were our target audience,” said Dion in the email. “Commissioner Bélanger also shared the upcoming changes during several presentations to various stakeholders in 2024, including at the Government Relations Institute of Canada’s annual general meeting on May 22, 2024.”

Despite these measures, Larkin told *The Hill Times* that he doesn’t think the OCL has done enough to spread awareness regarding the change.

“I haven’t seen anything else except the one email. One email is all we’ve received,” said Larkin. “And I tell you that day when registered lobbyists received that email, I got a lot of calls from different folks asking exactly what this meant, because I think for a lot of lobbyists it wasn’t clear exactly what the changes were.”

Larkin said that the OCL plays a role in raising awareness amongst registrants regarding rule changes, and that most registered lobbyists are not GRIC or PAAC members, he said.

“For a lot of directors or managers at companies or even associations, many of them didn’t receive the email either, because it was only the highest officer of the corporation that received the email through the lobbying commissioner system,” said Larkin. “Those who are actually maybe on the Hill doing the day-to-day lobbying, for example, they weren’t aware of this change unless their superior forwarded them the email.”

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News

'Period of labour turmoil' not over with end to rail shutdown, observers warn

Whichever party next forms government could 'designate big chunks of the transportation sector as essential,' says Carleton University's Ian Lee.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

The shutdown of Canada's two major railways might have ended a week before Labour Day, but other work stoppages are on the near horizon, including one involving Air Canada pilots next month as part of what a former federal cabinet minister and the now-former head of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce characterize as "a period of labour turmoil."

"We've seen both in the United States and Canada that labour unions have been more assertive in the past year than they have in recent memory," said Perrin Beatty, who ended his 17-year term as president and chief executive officer of the 200,000-member Chamber of Commerce on Aug. 31.

Teamsters Canada will appeal the Canada Industrial Relations Board's (CIRB's) decision to allow Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Que.) to impose final binding arbitration to the Federal Court in the railways dispute. But more industrial action is possible in other areas.

In August, 98 per cent of the more than 5,400 Air Canada pilots represented by the Air Line Pilots Association voted in favour to authorize union leaders to call a strike, which could find them off the job as early as Sept. 17.

Beatty noted that there are "very difficult negotiations underway" involving the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association regarding the renewal of two collective agreements, which expired last year, with the International Longshore & Warehouse Union Canada on behalf of the Longshore Locals and Local 514 Ship & Dock Foremen.

"We have a very shaky situation at the Port of Montreal, and ongoing problems at the Port of Quebec," he said.

In August, MacKinnon appointed conciliators to help Canada Post Corp. and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers reach new collective agreements.

Beatty said that in the last quarter of 2023, Canada lost



Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon intervened in a rail shutdown late last month by ordering the resumption of activities and sending the parties to binding arbitration. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

926,400 hours to labour disputes—"more than any previous quarter in the past 18 years"—and with just days of the recent rail shutdown, the Canadian economy lost "hundreds of millions of dollars."

Beatty, who was responsible for Canada Post Corp. in the mid-1980s as national revenue minister in the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, said that following the COVID pandemic, unions' bargaining power and demands were "dramatically increased because of a shortage of workers."

More recently, in late June, Bill C-58, which amended the Canada Labour Code governing federally regulated industries to ban employers from using replacement workers during a strike or lockout, received royal assent.

The legislation garnered unanimous support—including from the Conservatives—in Parliament.

Before the law was passed, Employment and Social Development Canada released a discussion paper, which referred to studies that found an increase in strikes and lockouts in Quebec and British Columbia, both of which prohibit replacement workers.

C-58 "arms one of the parties in a negotiation with a loaded weapon," said Beatty. "The only way that it would lead to fewer and shorter strikes is that if management simply capitulated as opposed to having the very carefully constructed balance that we've had in labour relationships over

the years where governments have been very careful to make sure they didn't favour either business or labour, which would encourage them to reach deals at the bargaining table."

He recalled how another Trudeau government intervened in a labour disruption soon after Beatty was first elected to the House of Commons in 1972 at the age of 22.

It was Aug. 28, 1973, and then-Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau called for the House and Senate to hold a special session to end a four-day-old rail strike.

On Aug. 30, then-labour minister John Munro introduced Bill C-217, the Maintenance of Railway Operations Act, which was "to provide for the resumption and continuance of operations of railways, and for the settlement of the disputes with respect to terms and conditions of employment between railway companies and their employees."

Within 24 hours, the legislation was passed by both houses of Parliament, and received royal assent after midnight, Aug. 31, 1973.

It marked one of 32 times a federal government moved quickly to end a strike in the federally regulated transportation and communications sectors between 1950 and 2011, according to a paper Ian Lee, an associate professor at Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, penned in 2012 for the *Journal of Parliamentary and Political Law*.

The first bill adopted during this period was not unlike C-217 in that it involved a railway strike and received royal assent on Aug. 30, 1950, 24 hours after it was introduced in the Commons by then-Liberal prime minister Louis Saint-Laurent.

Sixty-one years later, Lisa Raitt, then-labour minister in Conservative Stephen Harper's government, introduced Bill C-6 on June 20, 2011, to order the resumption of postal services after Canada Post imposed a lockout on 48,000 workers. It received royal assent six days later.

It took four days for similar legislation to come into force in 2018.

During the current Trudeau government's time, Bill C-89 facilitated "the resumption and continuation of postal services and impose[d] a mediation process to resolve matters remaining in dispute between the parties, [while] empower[ing] the mediator-arbitrator to impose an arbitration process to resolve matters that cannot be resolved through mediation."

In 2021, then-labour minister Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Ont.) introduced Bill C-29, back-to-work legislation that ended a one-day walkout by Port of Montreal dock workers.

In late June 2024, West-Jet mechanics went on strike despite then-labour minister Seamus O'Regan (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, N.L.) having directed the CIRB to impose final binding arbitration, without specifying there could be no work stoppage as was the case with the recent rail lockout, to resolve the outstanding collective-agreement issues between the airline and the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association.

Lee expects that the Trudeau government will resolve the pending Air Canada pilots' strike in similar fashion as "there is no way the country will tolerate the strike."

Last year, when he introduced Bill C-58 to ban replacement workers, O'Regan said "we believe in collective bargaining," and that "our economy depends on employers and workers negotiating an agreement at the table."

Lee highlighted that the federal NDP has never supported back-to-work legislation, and in the latest arbitration order regarding the railways, issued a statement in which the party's leader, Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) called "the Liberals' actions [as] cowardly [and] anti-worker."

"Every employer knows they can get exactly what they want from Justin Trudeau by refusing to negotiate with their workers in good faith," Singh said in the statement.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) stayed silent during the recent rail lockout. But one of his deputy leaders, Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.), told reporters in Halifax during the Liberal cabinet's summer retreat that under the Trudeau government "labour strife has never been worse except previously under his father."

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, about 46,000 of the 120,000 federal jobs represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada "have been deemed essential" during a strike, and involve such services as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension and Old Age Security payments.

Lee said he would not be surprised if, following the next federal election, whichever party forms government will amend the Federal Public Sector Canada Labour Relations Act "to designate big chunks of the transportation sector as essential and set up an alternative-dispute resolution mechanism for binding arbitration—which is what you have with the RCMP, military, and border and prison guards."

"The impact of a strike in the transportation sector is devastating to thousands of communities across Canada," he said, adding that the impact of the latest rail disruption also generated international headlines.

Lee also noted that CN and CPKC ship \$1-billion in goods every day, "which shows the magnitude of the reliance, from farmers for fertilizer to finished automobiles."

Jim Vena, CEO of American railroad operator Union Pacific, warned that a Canadian rail strike would have "devastating consequences" on the North American economy.

Lee said the United States will be keeping an eye on how Canada handles labour disruptions and their impact on cross-border trade, particularly when the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement is up for review in 2026.

Beatty agreed. "Our economies are so deeply integrated that a disruption on this side of the border affects the other side as well, so we need to be demonstrating to the Americans that we're reliable partners in the continental supply chains," he said.

Lee said that the prime minister will receive support for the path he took with the recent railway shutdowns, "especially for workers' rights because his government didn't legislate back to work, the most hated option for unions."

However, Lee also said that going forward, any government, regardless of party, will have to use either binding arbitration or back-to-work legislation, to end a strike "because society will not tolerate" labour disruptions in transportation.

The Hill Times



Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth Marc Len. Government funding needs to work smarter—not harder—to address the growing challenges and realities of youth employment, writes Owen Charters. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada can't afford to leave its youth behind

Youth employment is vital to a thriving Canadian economy.

Owen Charters

Opinion



When I was in high school, most of my friends had part-time jobs. Many of us saved for post-secondary education while earning some extra pocket money for the things teenagers like to buy: concert tickets, Tim Hortons, and brand-name clothes our parents scoffed at.

Others contributed regularly to household expenses when money was tight. Part-time work was relatively easy to get, and many of us worked at fast-food restaurants and retail stores, or at camps and recreational programs. We gained life skills, and learned the value of a dollar.

Now, in addition to declining mental health and academic challenges, rising unemployment is keeping youth locked out of the labour market. Since January 2023, the Fraser Institute estimates a 3.8 percentage-point drop, making youth employment levels nearly as bad as during the 2008-2009 recession. July 2024 numbers were particularly ugly: the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 was 14.2 per cent. Recent immigrant youth—often most in need of work—faced a sharp increase in unemployment, bringing that number to 22.8 per cent, up 8.6 percentage points from one year earlier.

Those are the numbers, but what do they mean? We surveyed youth working summer jobs at BGC Clubs last year, and found that more than two-thirds rely on

their summer wages to cover the essentials: food, rent, and medication. In this cost-of-living crisis, youth employment isn't a 'nice to have'—it's necessary for many youth and their families.

It is not just that more youth are unemployed year-over-year, but the share of youth who have never worked is also increasing. This means that youth are missing out on their first job opportunities, and the experiences and skills that will help them find their careers.

The first 10 years of your career are also typically when you see the most pay growth, so there is the worry that youth

who can't find work will end up with lower lifetime earnings. The Future Skills Centre warns that could have lifelong negative impacts on young Canadians' job prospects and the broader economy at a time when Canada's overall productivity is sluggish at best.

Solving this crisis is not impossible.

One particularly important solution is the federal government's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS), which meets 20 per cent of the overall demand for youth employment support across the country. Helping more than 140,000 youth through YESS is a crucial pillar for pro-

viding the training, employment services, and volunteer placements that help young people—particularly those from marginalized communities—gain the skills and experience needed for successful careers. Budget 2024 committed \$351.2-million to the program through to 2026, but YESS is planned to sunset in 2026. It's time to make it permanent, and to fund it in a way that shows our commitment to youth. Youth employment is vital to a thriving Canadian economy.

Government funding needs to work smarter—not harder—to address the growing challenges and realities of youth employment. Careful consolidation of youth employment programs and the continued funding of initiatives that have proven benefits for youth will benefit the economic future of our country while empowering young people to see a brighter future.

Youth simply cannot afford another jobless summer, and neither can Canada.

Owen Charters is the president and CEO of BGC Canada.
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News

Cabinet retreat policy announcements show Liberals ‘waking up,’ but lack ‘unique vision,’ says pollster

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Policy announcements from the Liberal cabinet retreat are a “rear-guard action” aimed at “stealing their opponent’s thunder,” but fall short of “a unique Liberal vision” to move the country forward, says pollster Greg Lyle.

The Liberals wrapped up a three-day cabinet retreat on Aug. 27 in Halifax, where several key policy announcements tackled similar issues or ideas to those highlighted by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) as his party has risen in the polls.

For governments, Lyle said it’s “never a mistake to steal your opponent’s best ideas,” and that’s why “opposition parties are reluctant to get into too much detail before the election.”

“If they have a good, practical, implementable idea, the government will just do it,” said Lyle.

‘That does nothing for you’: Trudeau seeks contrast with Poilievre on housing

An announcement by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) on the retreat’s first day shared a key element with a marquee Poilievre policy initiative: converting federal buildings into new housing.

In a video released on Aug. 25, Trudeau said Canadians can “all agree” that “we need more housing in Canada.”

Trudeau said the federal government owns buildings and land across the country where “a lot of homes” could be built, and contrasted his government’s vision from the Conservative approach.

“Take federal lands,” said Trudeau. “The Conservative Party leader wants to sell it all off to make a quick buck. That does nothing for you.”

Instead, Trudeau said a Liberal government would long-term lease the land. This would allow the government to play a role in determining what kinds of units are built, leading to the construction of “homes you can afford,” he said.

Poilievre has said he would sell federal lands to be converted to housing. The plans also differ in scope. The Tory leader said he would sell over 6,000 federal buildings and “thousands of acres of federal land,” while the Liberal government announced it is preparing to lease 56 public buildings.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s cabinet gathered for a retreat in Halifax, N.S., from Aug. 25-27. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The Liberals have floated similar ideas in the past—as early as their 2015 election platform which said they would “conduct an inventory of all available federal lands” for this purpose.

Their 2021 election platform did not discuss the use of government lands, but the idea returned in Budget 2024, which said Ottawa is “conducting a rapid review of its entire federal lands portfolio to identify more land for housing.”

Conservative housing critic Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, Ont.) said Trudeau is “repeating the same promise that he has been breaking for a decade as he doubled housing costs.”

“It took nine years after he promised to build homes on federal land for Justin Trudeau to actually identify the few parcels of land he would build on,” said Aitchison by email. “By their own admission, it will take years more to actually build anything.”

Liberal plan is stronger on the details: Cullen

Former Liberal ministerial staffer Olivier Cullen said “there might be a political risk” if Trudeau’s announcement is deemed too similar to the Conservative policy plank, but this is outweighed by the fact that “it’s actually a greater benefit to Canada.”

“I think people will see past the fact that Mr. Poilievre tweeted out an idea or suggested an idea versus the government actually taking action,” said Cullen, who is now a senior adviser at Summa Strategies.

Cullen said the key contrast is the government took time to develop details to implement the policy, while the Conservative proposal was written “on the back of a napkin.”

“Actually building a house takes time, and takes a thorough, thoughtful policy,” said Cullen. “That’s what it takes to run a country.”

He said leasing the lands is “an extremely sensible idea” that would build homes quicker and at a lower cost. He said federal lands cannot be sold quickly.

Conservatives beating Liberals ‘over the head’ with housing issue: Chambers

Former Conservative staffer Shakir Chambers said the government’s housing announcement shows Conservatives have been “beating the Liberals over their head” on that issue.

He said it will be difficult for Liberals to convince voters they are ready to take action because they have made similar promises in the past.

“It’s going to be hard for a voter to ... say ‘they’re actually going to do this,’” said Chambers, who is now a principal at Earncliffe Strategies. “One of the biggest issues that the Liberals have is that people say they announce things but don’t implement.”

He said even if the Liberals move quickly, it’s unlikely any impact would be felt before the next election.

Whether selling or leasing, let market set prices: Davidoff

Thomas Davidoff, an associate professor at UBC’s Sauder School of Business who specializes in housing policy, said there are pros and cons to both selling and leasing government lands for new housing.

Davidoff said the downside of leasing is that “it’s tidier to have a single owner of a property who has full control,” which means selling may be more efficient. However, when it comes to selling, “you’re giving up all the benefits down the road for taxpayers.” The government might be better off over time with revenue from leasing, rather than a one-time hit of cash from a sale, he said.

In either scenario, he said, requiring use of the land as affordable housing is not the best way for Ottawa to help those who most need a home.

Instead, he suggested using the land to increase the housing supply, while letting the market decide the price so the government could maximize revenue. Ottawa could use that money to help those most in need of housing so they don’t fall through the cracks, added Davidoff.

In an email statement, the office of Public Services and Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que.) said “it is not enough to build more housing, we need to ensure that it remains affordable in the long term, and leasing will help us achieve this.”

‘Absolutely nothing new’: Lantsman

The cabinet retreat also saw the Liberal government announce a new 100 per cent tariff on all Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs), and 25 per cent tariff on imports of steel and aluminum products from China.

Poilievre had come out in support of the same tariffs on Aug. 9. He also called for a 50 per cent tariff on Chinese semiconductors and solar cells, a step which the government has not yet taken.

Conservative deputy leader Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, Ont.) told reporters in Halifax that Trudeau had “followed” Poilievre’s position, and the prime minister “certainly hasn’t gone as far” to include the additional tariffs sought by the Conservatives.

“This is another cabinet retreat where there is absolutely nothing new,” said Lantsman.

Katherine Cuplinskas, a spokesperson for Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), said by email the government had been looking into the issue “for months.”

“It is incredibly rich for Pierre Poilievre to attempt to repackage the government’s position that action is necessary to protect Canadian auto workers from unfair Chinese trade practices in electric vehicles and claim it as his own,” said Cuplinskas. “Poilievre was two months late to the conversation.”

The statement said the government was “already looking” at additional tariffs on semiconductors and solar products, and “a consultation notice will be released in the coming days.”

Poilievre ‘driving forward’ Liberal mistakes on immigration: Chambers

The government also announced changes to the temporary foreign workers program.

In regions where unemployment is six per cent or higher, employers will no longer be able to hire low-wage temporary foreign workers, except for sectors like agriculture, construction, and health care.

Employers will no longer be allowed to hire more than 10 per cent of their total workforce through the program, and contracts will be limited to one year instead of two.

Chambers said Poilievre has “staked out” the issue of immigration. He said Poilievre is successfully “driving forward” a narrative that the Liberals have made mistakes related to immigration targets, and “this is an issue that people are going to pin on the Liberals.”

At a July appearance at a factory in Windsor, Ont., Poilievre raised concerns about the temporary foreign workers program, but did not propose specific changes.

Cullen said the Liberal government had identified a problem with the program, and moved to fix it, while the Conservatives again had the luxury of being in opposition and not needing to put details behind their proposals.

“There was a problem with the program, and the government recognized it, and they did what they could to fix it as quickly as they could,” said Cullen.

Not a ‘reset,’ but Liberals are ‘waking up’: Lyle

Lyle said that overall the cabinet retreat did not amount to a “reset” for the struggling government.

“They haven’t fundamentally said, ‘This is what’s wrong with Canada, and here’s how we’re going to fix it, and here’s why the Conservatives can’t,’” said Lyle. “That would be a fundamental reset.”

However, he said, it did show the Liberals are “waking up and smelling the coffee.”

“They’re actually now showing a responsiveness to public concern about particular issues,” said Lyle.

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The Hill Times



It was a breath of fresh air to hear the righteous outrage about the crimes voiced by a judge, albeit couched in legalities, writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

perhaps we as a society can do better this time around? Perhaps we don't sweep it under the carpet, like Germany did in the 1930s? Perhaps we don't make light of it, as if it's just the crazy conspiracy of a token few?

How about we don't repeat the mistakes of the past. How about we name it and stop it before it infects our whole democracy because there is really no other way to maintain a democracy.

The truth is that white supremacy is indeed on the rise, and it threatens all of democracy. It threatens all of us.

One might wonder when the safety of Indigenous women will be taken up by all Canadian women. Could you imagine the power of Canadian women if they stood up for Indigenous women? Could you imagine the force of a collective that took up the cause for Indigenous women, to keep them safe, to stop MMIWG?

We all mourn for the families of the victims. And we all need to do the work to ensure that all women are safe to thrive in this country.

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

We all need to do the work to ensure that all women are safe in this country

The sentencing of a serial killer to concurrent life sentences breached the strong resistance in this country to punish those who commit crimes against Indigenous Peoples.

commit crimes against Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous women. It's almost like they all think we're just drunk or lying or something, the way that police and the justice system acts.

If there is any doubt, can we talk about the lack of effort to stop the continuing loss of Indigenous women and girls, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls? Is this still a crime that goes without punishment?

This sentence has some particular backdrop and context. The remains of two of the victims are believed to be buried in the Prairie Green landfill. Let's all take a minute to remember what former Manitoba premier Heather Stefanson of Manitoba did: she campaigned to never search for the remains. She said it would be too expensive, even as—and one might shudder to say it out loud—searches of landfills happens pretty routinely across North America.

Stefanson said we won't do it for those Indigenous Peoples. Imagine any politician stating that we're never going to search for your daughter? Your sister? This racist refusal to act on behalf of one's citizens is almost as bad as the murders themselves. There, I said it.

If we don't name racism for what it is, it lives on for another day.

Justice Joyal also explicitly named white supremacy as part of the perpetrator's motive, and this is something Canada needs to face head on. White supremacy was all the rage back in the mid-1800s, when Indigenous Peoples were viewed as less than human. It led to the Indian Act, which is a racist piece of law, and it led to residential schools. We fought our way

back to human rights in the 1950s, and on to reconciliation in the 2000s.

All that to say, we've been through this thing about white supremacy before, so

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Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—On Aug. 28, Justice Glenn Joyal sentenced a serial killer to concurrent life sentences for the murders of Indigenous women in Winnipeg.

The families of the victims said after that it should have been consecutive life sentences due to the horrific nature of the crimes. They were crimes that do not bear repeating.

There are a number of takeaways from this historic sentencing, not the least being that it may be the first time courts in Canada gave the harshest sentence possible for harming Indigenous women. Indigenous Peoples rarely got fair treatment in the past—and not the far distant past, either. It was a breath of fresh air to hear the righteous outrage about the crimes voiced by the judge, albeit couched in legalities.

This judge breached the strong resistance in this country to punish those who

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Editorial

Status-quo summer drawing to close

As students head back to school and Ottawans eagerly await the return of the city's most boisterous hybrid workers on Sept. 16, it's hard to say that much has changed amid all the noise that the summer pseudo-campaign has brought.

As demonstrated by the Halifax cabinet retreat last week, the top figures in the Liberal Party seem content to keep on keeping on despite about a year of disastrous polling results.

The Conservative Party has continued to campaign across the country presenting its case for the government to be turfed out, exemplified by leader Pierre Poilievre's now-familiar call for an early election.

And the NDP continues to walk a fine line between calling out the Liberal government on issues such as its intervention in the rail shutdown late last month, and continuing to hold the levers that could decide the governing party's longevity.

The way things are going, we won't know how effective each party's messaging has been until the evening of the first day back in Parliament when two byelections will be held in LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que., and Elmwood-Transcona, Man.

The major test for the Liberals will be in the Quebec riding where they will attempt to retain the seat held by former justice minister David Lametti for eight-

and-a-half years. This paper and others have reported that it could be a tight race between the Liberals, the NDP, and the Bloc Québécois, which could erase the term "safe Liberal seat" from the lexicon come the next general election.

The Manitoba byelection will be more of a two-horse race between the NDP and the Conservatives. The New Democrats have held the riding for all but four years since 1988, so this byelection could prove a test of how much of a help or hindrance the party's supply-and-confidence deal with the Liberals has been in its heartland.

In a summer that has included both the Olympics and the surprise dropout of an incumbent U.S. president from a re-election attempt, it's not clear how many Canadians have been paying attention to domestic politics.

Will the result of the Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont. byelection back in June—in which the Conservatives beat the Liberals in a riding that the latter had held for three decades—be an outlier, or will it merely be an early warning from an electorate that is ready to show the Liberals the door? We'll get a better idea on Sept. 16.

Whatever happens, it seems like anyone expecting a change in tactics from any of the federal leaders this summer will have been sorely disappointed.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor



Trump, Poilievre comparisons are concerning: Ottawa reader

There was a chilling connection for me between the articles by Christopher Guly ("He doesn't play by the rules": Local Ontario media's interactions with Poilievre gain national attention", *The Hill Times*, Aug. 26, p. 6) and Michael Harris' column ("Optimism and honesty are back on the menu", *The Hill Times*, Aug. 26, p. 10).

I sincerely hope that Harris' thoughts on a possible Kamala Harris presidency in the U.S. come to fruition, but when he outlined some of her rival Donald Trump's foibles, I could only think of Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre as partially outlined in Guly's article.

Trump doesn't want voters to believe in the U.S. Constitution, the justice system, and so on. He lies constantly, and rails against the "fake news" media.

Poilievre has suggested that he'd use the notwithstanding clause to undo various progressive policies, or to legislate dubious ones.

J.D. Vance, Trump's vice-presidential nominee, speaks of the "green energy scam." Poilievre's mantra is "Axe the Tax"—the carbon tax, that is, which has been deemed a very useful policy by more than one commentator.

Poilievre is disparaging of Canadian institutions, starting with the Bank of Canada, mainstream journalism—which is a bulwark of democracy—and he makes misleading statements, not to the extent of Trump perhaps, but who could keep up with him?

It is said that Poilievre isn't Trump, but to my mind there are enough similarities to be very, very concerning.

Mary Rosebrugh
 Ottawa, Ont.

JNF's loss of charitable status justified by its conduct: Duchesney

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) has operated in Canada for over 100 years, accepting charitable donations from Canadians who support Israel, its goals, and actions.

While the JNF does raise funds to plant trees and build infrastructure in Israel, much of the JNF-owned land had previously been seized from Palestinian farmers under obscure Ottoman-era laws allowing the state to declare fallow fields to be abandoned by their owners.

This policy impoverished many Israeli Palestinians whose situation was arguably better than that of West Bank residents under martial law, or Gazans under total blockade.

Many of the more than 500 Palestinian towns and villages destroyed in

1948, 1967 and later are covered by trees and vegetation, possibly to obscure the former cultivation of olives, citrus fruit, and other plants by Palestinian farmers who were driven off. Former prime minister Stephen Harper proudly gave his blessing to Canada Park, an Israeli pine forest planted over a bulldozed Palestinian village.

It is not anti-Jewish racism that caused the JNF's loss of charitable status, but its active role in supporting questionable territorial seizures. The endless overuse of antisemitic accusations against critics of Israeli conduct is discrediting this tactic and revealing its deeper role as a device of censorship.

Morgan Duchesney
 Ottawa, Ont.



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circulation@hilltimes.com
 613-688-8821

THE HILL TIMES

Published every Monday and Wednesday by Hill Times Publishing Inc.

246 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E4
 (613) 232-5952
 Fax (613) 232-9055
 Canadian Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926
 www.hilltimes.com

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Little chance Liberals will see Harris-style poll bump

The boost in polling that Democrats have enjoyed since U.S. President Joe Biden dropped out of the race would not be shared by the Liberals if Justin Trudeau were to do the same.

Sheila Copps

Copps' Corner



OTTAWA—The post-Biden bump for the Democrats in the United States has not passed unnoticed in Canada.

One of the first questions asked of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the summer cabinet meeting in Halifax last week was just that: Could the Liberals get a

similar bump if the prime minister were to step down, and the voters were presented with a different face at the head of the party?

Trudeau sidestepped the question, and continued to insist that his job was to “be there to invest in Canadians.” But his close friend and cabinet colleague Marc Miller did say that robust conversations were taking place within the confines of the caucus, without public disclosure.

Other ministers, including potential leadership candidates Mélanie Joly and Chrystia Freeland, were quick to support the prime minister’s leadership. But the party is roiling, as ministers and Members of Parliament seek their own Canadian bump.

It has been a year since the Conservative lead entered into double-digit territory, and nothing the government does seems to narrow that gap. But the notion of a parallel result if Trudeau were to resign is misdirected.

First of all, the hike for Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris has resulted in an increase of three to four per cent for her party.

Three to four per cent in Canada would not be enough to return

to government, as the current polling differential between the Liberals and the Conservatives is much higher.

The United States is essentially a two-party system, so a small shift can make or break a victory. Even an independent with the name recognition of Robert Kennedy Jr. managed only six per cent support at the apex of his campaign. It is doubtful that six per cent would even follow him into an election. Now that he has thrown his support behind Republican candidate Donald Trump, his supporters will probably split between the two main parties.

Also, a two-party system lends itself to a smooth transition. In the U.S. case, the Democrats were able to replace U.S. President Joe Biden with Harris without a full leadership convention because opponents were edged out by the current vice-president.

The fact that she would have replaced Biden in the event of a presidential illness or incapacity made it simpler to rally around her at a national convention less than three months from the election.

In Trudeau’s case, his succession would trigger a full leader-

ship process. Contrary to some media reports, Mark Carney is not a putative leader in waiting. There are several current cabinet ministers who have been quietly setting the stage for their own leadership ambitions.

Pundits would suggest that it is better to have someone from outside the current crop of politicians, and Carney certainly has a polished Canadian and international pedigree. But the Liberal Party’s previous experience with global pedigree has not been positive.

Michael Ignatieff is a brilliant scholar with a renowned global reputation who was supposed to be the party’s saviour. Instead, he was quickly rejected as someone who came back to Canada only to run for office. Carney has declined multiple offers to run for office, and that doesn’t sit well with those working in the trenches.

While the public may be tired of Trudeau, the party’s volunteer base is actively working to explain why his leadership and the current government are worth supporting.

The checklist is long for Liberals. National childcare, dental

care, pharmacare and school lunch programs send a message that the party is working for all the people.

But the government has been telling that story for several months, and so far, it seems to be falling on deaf ears. Party members are ready for a leadership change, but also realize that the decision is in the hands of the prime minister.

Meanwhile, from François-Philippe Champagne to Dominic LeBlanc, many are weighing their future chances. Former parliamentarian Frank Baylis, who sold his heart-device business for \$1.75-billion in 2021, is also actively assessing a potential campaign for the top job.

Baylis, son of a Barbadian immigrant, served in Trudeau’s government for one term, from 2015 to 2019, as the member of parliament for multicultural Pierrefonds-Dollard in Montreal, Que. If successful, he would be the party’s first non-white leader.

All of the foregoing means Liberals will not follow the American example and force out their leader. Multiple candidates are already planning their own robust campaigns, so there would be no shoo-in for Carney.

No huge bump, and multiple candidates rule out a smooth post-Trudeau transition in Canada.

Vive le Canada.

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

The Hill Times

Poilievre lacks pizzazz, and that’s OK

For conservative politicians, lacking star power is actually a feature, not a bug.

Gerry Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



As long as Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre maintains that he’s the only guy capable of mending a ‘broken’ Canada, then—lovable or not—he has a clear path to victory, writes Gerry Nicholls. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

OKAVILLE, ONT.—A political party doesn’t necessarily need a popular or likable leader to have a big lead in the polls. This is especially true if we’re talking about a conservative leader.

Case in point is Canada’s Conservative Party, which is doing well in the polls, but which also has a leader in Pierre Poilievre who isn’t exactly a rock-star politician.

Don’t get me wrong. Poilievre is certainly an intelligent, experienced, and capable individual. But there’s no “Pierremania” erupting in this country right now. Canadians aren’t flocking to his banner because they’re attracted to his charisma or to his winning, affable personality.

Rather, the polls tell us Canadians are seemingly parking their votes with the Conservatives not because they like Poilievre, but because they just don’t like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Indeed, according to a recent Abacus Data poll, 40 per cent of Conservative supporters say their vote is more about disliking the prime minister and the Liberals than it is about liking Poilievre.

More interestingly, that same poll also indicates 65 per cent of those who have a neutral or neg-

ative view of Poilievre who still plan to vote Conservative say it’s because they dislike the Liberals and Trudeau.

In other words, people who don’t like Poilievre like Trudeau even less.

Meanwhile, another Abacus poll—this one conducted in July—showed that only about one in three Canadians even recognized Poilievre when shown a picture of him.

In short, Poilievre is not a celebrity-style charisma machine, dazzling voters with his glamour.

So why doesn’t that seem to matter? Why is Poilievre still poised to win the next election?

Well, the fact is for conservative politicians, such as Poilievre, lacking star power is actually a feature, not a bug.

Things like charisma, personal magnetism, and aspirational rhetoric are traits normally associated with politicians on the left.

I say that because politicians on the left usually win elections when the voting public is in the mood for new, new ways of doing things, and new visions of the future.

Basically, voters want to replace boring and bland leaders with exciting and non-traditional ones.

In the past, charismatic politicians like John F. Kennedy, Pierre Trudeau, Barack Obama, Jack Layton, and Justin Trudeau have filled this need.

Currently, U.S. Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris seems to be channelling this sort of energy.

Inevitably, however, the positive political spirit of the left eventually collides with political reality. Lofty expectations are not met, disappointment sets in, then disillusionment.

When that happens is the public shifts gears and seeks strong leadership. Voters will want a

leader capable of cleaning up any messes in government, and who will set the country back on the right track.

It’s in this sort of political environment where conservative politicians have a chance to shine.

Yes, they may lack pizzazz and flash and may even be unlikable, but they offer something anxious and disillusioned voters desire: stolid competence.

Politicians like Richard Nixon, George W. Bush, Donald Trump, Stephen Harper, and Doug Ford would fit into this category. One notable exception to this rule is former U.S. president Ronald Reagan, who somehow managed to combine hardcore conservatism with likable charisma.

This is why Conservative strategists don’t need to be concerned if polls continue to show that Poilievre is seen as the “lesser of two evils.”

It doesn’t matter if he isn’t perceived as lovable or cuddly; it doesn’t matter if he can’t enthrall the masses.

As long as he continues to stress that he’s the only guy capable of mending a “broken” Canada, then—lovable or not—he has a clear path to victory.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Hill Times

Comment

Trudeau's motto seems to be 'more of the same' after retreat



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau may be excited about continuing as prime minister, but a majority of those polled want a change at the top, writes Michael Harris. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The cabinet retreat showcased a laissez-faire prime minister not interested in a cabinet shuffle or bringing new blood into the party.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—For a party trailing by a country kilometre in the polls for over a year, the recent Liberal cabinet retreat was a pretty self-satisfied affair.

True, there was a laundry list of announcements: tariffs on EVs from China, a tweak of the

temporary foreign workers program, a task force here, and more studies there. Not unimportant, to be sure.

But it was very much a bits-and-pieces rather than a strategic or visionary exercise. There was no overarching message. As one shrewd observer put it, Justin Trudeau's motto seems to be "more of the same."

More of the same is exactly what the polls and the recent byelection in Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont., show Canadians do not want. Change is on the country's mind. As Democratic candidate and Vice-President Kamala Harris is proving in the U.S. presidential race, it is possible for an incumbent to be that agent of change.

But you have to realize the public mood in order to have a chance to connect with it. The cabinet retreat showcased a laissez-faire prime minister not interested in a cabinet shuffle, or in bringing new blood into the party.

Tellingly, Prime Minister Trudeau continues to insist that

he still has what Canadians want, even though that is the opposite of what data scientist Nik Nanos and others have found in survey after survey.

Trudeau may be excited about continuing as prime minister, but a majority of those who were polled want a change at the top. They want Trudeau to step down before the next election. When I asked Nanos who would have the best chance of winning as Liberal leader, he answered anyone but Trudeau.

A lot of ink has been used pointing out that Trudeau's answer to desperately bad poll numbers is to ignore them. But that is exactly what his cabinet colleagues did at the Halifax meeting. Here is how Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland put it at the three-day cabinet retreat:

"All of us here have tremendous confidence in the prime minister. We have confidence in him as the leader of our government, and the prime minister of Canada, and we

have confidence in him as the leader of our party."

That is probably loyalty talking, not sober analysis from a veteran politician. But if Freeland meant what she said it would only show that—like the PM—the cabinet is badly out of touch with the mood of Canadians.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller compounded that impression when he said that Trudeau had a "vision" for the country. Really? Where is it?

Miller also said that he thinks the prime minister was doing a "great job" on making sure that he's reflecting what Canadians are saying. Again, is that loyalty talking? The evidence has been clear for over a year that Canadians are saying it's time for Trudeau to step down.

One of the cautions Liberals give to people who are already counting them out is that time is on their side. That bears thinking about. Trudeau has done something that none of his critics have done: he has won three consecutive federal elections in a country

that often looks like a charter member in the "grumpy voter society."

Trudeau knows that the next election could take place as late as next autumn. That, as the saying goes, is an eternity in politics.

Affordability issues could ease with lower interest rates. Credit card and vehicle payments, as well as mortgage costs, could all come down if the Bank of Canada continues to cut rates. "Greedflation" in the food industry could be addressed if the federal government intervened along the lines of what the NDP is proposing: a cap on the price of essential food items.

And then there is the possibility that Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—who has been so sure-footed and industrious in his quest to become prime minister—might stumble. Or he might have to start talking about his own ideas rather than dining out on Trudeau's alleged shortcomings. Where, for example, is the Conservative climate plan? What services would the Conservatives cut to reduce government spending and tame the deficit and debt?

Some—or any of that—could lead to a reversal of Liberal fortunes. But time is a two-edged sword. If Trudeau remains as leader, the public impression that he has overstayed his welcome could become even more baked in than it already is.

Should the Liberals lose the looming byelection in the riding of LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que., it would reinforce the message voters sent to the government when they elected a Conservative in the Liberal stronghold of Toronto-St. Paul's: Trudeau's electability is past its best before date.

Although the Quebec byelection doesn't take place until Sept. 16, the news on that front is already troubling. There has been a revolt by 52 ministerial staffers who wrote to the PM that they will not participate in the campaign to hold LaSalle-Émard-Verdun for the Liberals.

Why won't these mostly Muslim and Arabic staffers staff phone banks or go door-knocking? They can't support the Trudeau government's position on the war in Gaza. They are asking the government to denounce Israel for war crimes and the "genocidal rhetoric from members of the Israeli cabinet."

The staffers have gained the support of Network 100-GTA, London, Ottawa, Montreal, a group of influential Arab and Muslim donors.

If the Liberals should lose ex-justice minister David Lametti's former seat, Trudeau may not have quite as much time as he thinks to pull off what looks more and more like an unlikely comeback, especially if Jagmeet Singh takes to heart Poilievre's request of the NDP leader to pull the plug on the Trudeau government this September.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times



Watching one side of polarization play out on the floor of the Democratic National Convention was intensely disconcerting, writes Liberal MP John McKay. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Chsdrummajor07

Security trumps democracy at the DNC

The Democratic National Convention's security environment made sure that no intersection took place between the persuaders and the persuadable. It's hard to see how a democracy can survive or flourish in such a setting.

Liberal MP
John McKay



Opinion

The taxi driver said to me that "this is as far as I can go without going through massive security." I thanked him and paid my fare. I travel light, so walking three or four blocks to the hotel on a beautiful day in Chicago, Ill., was really no problem.

Besides, it gave me an opportunity to admire the beautiful symmetry of the eight-10 foot tall security barrier, arranged to keep delegates to the Democratic National Convention and citizens at a safe distance from each other. The hotel location was so secure that, other than delegates and the police, there were no other people, including protesters. The local businesses were either deserted or shuttered.

The police all wore vests of some kind. Some said 'Secret Service.' I'm not sure why you would want everyone to know you are *the* 'secret service'. A lot of the officers appear to have spent a great deal of time in the gym.

I was attached to an organization called the National Democratic Institute (NDI). My fellow delegates were senior diplomatic representatives from around the world. The Balkans, Baltics, Eastern Europe, and some parts of Africa were well represented. Everyone was acutely aware that the outcome of the American presidential election will affect world security for years to come. Everyone, that is, but the Americans.

Delegates would repeatedly bring back U.S. presenters to the election's international implications not only in terms of

international security, but also democracy as a viable form of government. No one could say that this election would be a cathartic moment for the United States, or whether the U.S. will continue this self-destructive path.

Much of the conversation revolved around the deep divisions in American society even as the Obamas and others pleaded for grace and respect for your neighbour. Then the conversation would rocket off in the opposite direction as the "professionals" sliced and diced the electorate, and determined what was the best wedge issue. Apparently, that issue is reproductive freedom.

That night we went to the convention arena where 'Air Jordan' used to reign supreme. After two-and-a-half hours of bus rides, scarfing down finger foods, and standing in line, we were herded like cattle to a narrow opening while being harangued by protesters as "godless baby-killing Democrats." Having had our credentials checked, re-checked, and checked again, we secured a seat in the very top of the nosebleed section of the United Center. Fortunately, the large television screen projected the tiny figure at the centre of the arena. An endless parade of Democratic luminaries spoke to

a wildly enthusiastic audience who had patience and endurance beyond measure.

When former U.S. president Barack Obama finished his outstanding speech, there was a large but orderly rush to the only exit. For the next hour-and-a-half, our bus wound its way back to the hotel. The following morning, we were told that part of the delay was due to a "security incident". Four hours getting there and back, three hours of speeches, one shooting, loud music, videos—it all becomes a bit of a blur.

Speech after speech spoke to the theme of needing to come together with respect and grace. Speech after speech drove home, however, the wedge issues. A security environment made sure that no intersection took place between the persuaders and the persuadable. It is hard to see how a democracy can survive—let alone flourish—in such an environment.

As we were associated with the NDI, we had a number of conversations with ambassadors, former heads of government, and political leaders from many countries. Senior leadership in the Biden-Harris administration at various panels gave reassuring remarks in formal sessions, but when pressed by the delegates on specifics, they became almost

necessarily vague because no one could really speak for a future administration led by Kamala Harris.

The dread of a second administration under Donald Trump hung like a smog over the international observers. The distance between vague assurances and smog can be great or small, not only for an individual nations' national security, but also for its own indigenous democratic expression. Watching one side of polarization play out on the floor of the United Center was intensely disconcerting.

Democrats know they have a problem talking to those who used to vote for them. Condescension is not a good vote-getting strategy. Hence, Tim Walz. "Coach" Walz gave a fair imitation of a football pep talk to the delegates in relatable language. Everyone's favourite uncle/coach is the guy you want to have coffee with, but when you're surrounded by a phalanx of heavily armed well-built security personnel, it's difficult to have any kind of a conversation, even with the guy you would intuitively like.

Trump didn't create the American political divide, but he certainly has wedged it to the max. And with security trumping everything else, even approaching respectful, political, democratic dialogue looks illusory.

Canadians need not be smug.

John McKay is the Liberal Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont., chair of the House of Commons Committee on National Defence, and the Canadian co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The Hill Times

Nominations: Series

Nominations: Series

Federal nomination contests yield candidates beholden to party leaders, not constituents, say ex-MPs

Former Liberal cabinet minister Sheila Copps says when the central party tips the scales it 'poisons the well.' This means fewer people 'are going to believe that their vote has any value,' says Rachel Gilliland, who was rejected from seeking a Tory nomination.

BY IAN CAMPBELL & ABBAS RANA

The nomination process in federal parties is significantly flawed and actively undermining democracy, yielding candidates who are beholden to party leaders, not to the constituents they represent, which raises questions about the integrity of the process, says a former nine-term MP as well as candidates who've participated in nomination contests.

"It undermines democracy when you get candidates that are basically chosen by the centre. And I'm not talking Liberals, I'm talking all parties," said former cabinet minister Wayne Easter, who represented the riding of Malpeque, P.E.I., from 1997-2021, in an interview with *The Hill Times*.

"There's too much say by all political centres in the nomination process. A nomination process should be left up to the local riding association, and the rules established by the national party."

Nominations became a hot political issue earlier this year when two reports related to foreign interference raised concerns. One report called them a "gateway" for foreign actors looking to meddle in Canada's domestic affairs.

However, nominations were known as the wild west of Canadian politics decades before these new concerns arose.

As part of an ongoing series on nominations, *The Hill Times* spoke with candidates from contested processes across party lines—some from recent years, others from decades earlier. Sometimes there's controversy about the way a race is run. In other cases, the issue stems from the central party appointing a candidate without a race. Many nominations run without issue, but bitterly disputed processes routinely occur.

Across the board, those with experience in controversial nominations echo a similar refrain: there's too much control from the centre. Several past candidates said the experience left them feeling personally disillusioned with the process, and had a negative impact on voters' democratic engagement.

No contest

One recent high-profile Conservative nomination controversy stemmed from the lack of a vote.

Earlier this year, the Conservative Party used procedural tactics to nominate Parm Gill, a former Conservative MP who most recently served as an Ontario provincial cabinet minister, without a nomination race in the riding of Milton East-Halton Hills South, Ont.

D'Arcy Keene, a Halton Hills municipal councillor, told *The Hill Times* he was keen to run, but never received nomination papers because party headquarters wanted Gill.

"I have a reputation as being an independent, and maybe that's what it was," said Keene, who has been a Conservative member for

decades through the party's various iterations.

He said 10-20 years ago leaders used to influence nomination outcomes in a handful of ridings. But over the years it appears the "floodgates have opened up," and this has undermined the will of grassroots members.

"They're playing with the rules, bending the rules, interpreting the

rules a certain way, squeezing certain people out by simply not allowing them to participate in the process," said Keene. "Not only do they get so-called star candidates ... they're able to pick candidates who will be very loyal to the new prime minister, and won't give them any difficulty once they form a government."

Keene said it's already hard to get average Canadians involved in politics, and people become even more cynical when they see political parties manipulating the process.

The Liberals also have a long track record of leader-appointed candidates. Most recently, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) appointed Laura Palestini, a Montreal city councillor, as the party's candidate for the Sept. 16 byelection in LaSalle-Emard-Verdun, Que. The party made this appointment only days before the byelection was called, frustrating the two other potential contestants who had been preparing for weeks to seek the nomination.

Wyatt Claypool, who wished to seek the nomination, was disqualified during the vetting process in the safe Conservative riding.

Claypool, editor of *The National Telegraph*, said he was never given a reason for his disqualification. He filed an appeal, but the national council upheld the ruling. Claypool said sources on the national council told him the party put together a



Halton Hills municipal councillor D'Arcy Keene says party officials may not have liked his reputation for 'being an independent.' Photograph courtesy of Halton Hills

nine-page dossier that was based on "complete nonsense."

"It was full of stuff like, 'I follow pro-life social media organizations,' or, literally, the funniest one is 'Wyatt called himself a neoconservative in an interview,'" said Claypool, describing the alleged contents of the document.

He claimed it also noted he had criticized the 2019 Conservative Party election campaign of then-leader Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, Sask.). "If you're not criticizing that campaign, you actually have a problem," said Claypool.

Former Alberta deputy premier Leela Aheer was also disqualified.

Claypool said that he spent a total of about 1,200 hours preparing. He said if a party wants to appoint a candidate, they should announce it publicly as this would save potential candidates from investing significant time and energy.

Thumb on the scales

In some cases, candidates work for months on signing up members, only to have the candidacy denied, or they choose to withdraw over a controversy.

The 2024 Conservative nomination in Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Ont., saw both.

Sabrina Maddeaux, a former *National Post* columnist, sought the Tory nomination, but faced stiff competition against former MP Costas Menezakis who held the seat from 2011-2015.

In May, Maddeaux posted a lengthy thread on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), stating she was withdrawing over a "corrupted process." She alleged one candidate had received early access to a membership list.

Maddeaux said she had filed a complaint with the party, but there was "no evidence that a promised internal investigation is actually underway."

Conservative Party communications director Sarah Fischer said the allegations were "completely false."

Party rules state that only green-lit nomination candidates are to receive a copy of the current membership list for their riding—a vital asset in getting out the vote.



Party leaders like Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre have too many MPs who owe their positions to them because the nomination process gives too much control to the central party, say former nomination candidates. The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade



Another candidate, Aurora town councillor Rachel Gilliland, announced later that month that her candidacy had not been greenlit.

At the time, Fischer told CBC News that Gilliland was "in clear violation" of the party's "rules and procedures for candidate nominations." According to CBC, Fischer did not specify which rules were broken.

"When Sabrina dropped out, all of a sudden all eyes were on me," Gilliland told *The Hill Times*.

She said she felt the party preferred another candidate. Despite this, "I chose put my head down" and focus on membership sales, she said, claiming to have outsold her opponents.

Gilliland said the party's decision left her feeling that the process is "somewhat broken."

If the party has a preferred candidate, that's "their purview," she said. But party officials should openly appoint that individual, not

offer free memberships.

Times don't change

It's not only the current rules that have produced controversy.

There were several highly contested Liberal nominations before the party made a series of changes to their rules in the 2010s which saw, among other updates, the party

One of those controversies took place in 2008 in the riding of Cambridge, Ont.

That contest saw Rob Konduros lose the Liberal nomination to Gord Zeilstra by only 24 votes in a race where Zeilstra was fined over 262 nomination forms that were found to be improperly obtained.

None of those members were disqualified from voting.

"I lost by 24 votes, but if you exclude the 262 votes Gord obtained illegally, I was the clear winner," Konduros told a local newspaper at that time.

Zeilstra countered that he was not the only candidate to obtain forms without paying, but that he did not launch a formal complaint against his opponents.

Under the 2008 rules, the Liberal Party charged a \$10 membership fee, and candidates were required to pay a \$1 fee to purchase each hard copy form that was needed

to sign-up members. The \$1 fee was used to help the central party control the number of forms in circulation so an outsider could not sign-up large blocks of new members *en masse*.

Reflecting back on the experience from 16 years ago, Konduros told *The Hill Times* that what struck him most was the degree of influence from the central party.

"There were Liberal players locally who had good connections [at the regional headquarters] in Toronto, and were simply able to get the Toronto people to go their way," said Konduros.

It seemed it was not a matter of central party officials favouring Zeilstra, he said, but of them wanting to work with preferred local organizers who were backing the Zeilstra campaign.

This was the first and only time Konduros sought a party nomination. He said the experience left him feeling "disappointed" and "betrayed."

"Psychologically and emotionally, I felt that I just couldn't trust the people involved," he said.

Konduros said nominations like this have a negative impact on the democratic process.

"The risk is that people become disillusioned, and lose faith and lose trust," he said.

No fish too big

Even high-profile MPs can get caught up in a controversial nomination.

In 2004, then-Liberal MP Sheila Copps found herself in a hotly contested race with fellow Liberal MP Tony Valeri when a change to their local riding boundaries played a role in them both seeking the nomination in the riding of Hamilton East-Stony Creek, Ont.

Many observers believed Valeri was encouraged to run against Copps by then-prime minister Paul Martin, who had recently won a Liberal leadership race in which he defeated Copps, a long-time ally of Martin's bitter political rival Jean Chrétien.

Copps said she was on a list of former Chrétien supporters that Martin was looking to push out of the party, and a mix of local and national officials pulled out all of the stops to see that happen.

One of the tactics came at the nomination meeting, Copps said two separate lines of voters were set up—one for her supporters and another for Valeri's—and she said efforts were made to delay the progress of her line while speeding up the other.

She said maneuvers were also made in the lead-up to the meeting to remove some of her supporters from the list.



Former Liberal cabinet minister Sheila Copps says many lifelong Liberals were 'disgusted' by what took place during her 2004 nomination race in Hamilton East-Stony Creek. The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

Ontario campaign co-chair—told *The Hill Times* "there's always a lot of gamesmanship" in these races.

Siegel, who has overseen hundreds of nominations, said in his experience the "more capable cheaters" do not get caught. For example, when the Liberal Party still had paid memberships, some campaigns coached their supporters to say they had paid for their membership fee themselves—even if they had not. Others did not take this step, and these members gave themselves away when they came to vote.

One of the races Siegel was involved in on behalf of the Liberal Party was the contested 2008 race involving Konduros. Siegel said he no longer recalls any details from it.

However, he said, in a contested nomination, the strongest candidate usually wins.

He said the first nomination meeting he ever ran—held in the late 1980s—was disputed, and eventually the party held another race. There were some "flaws" in the first race, said Siegel. But in the second contest, the same candidate won.

At the time, the Liberals had a rule that when riding boundaries changed, some members who had resided in the old riding but no longer fell within its boundaries could vote in the new riding's nomination contest—as long as they constituted no more than 10 per cent of the total membership. This was to allow long-time members to participate in the race to which they felt most connected. Names of these members needed to be submitted for advance approval.

Copps said she submitted 374 names under this process, and personally drove to the regional headquarters in Toronto to submit the forms out of concern over procedural issues. Despite this, all names submitted by Copps—including her own mother's—were struck from the voters list the night before the nomination meeting, she said.

"The risk is that people become disillusioned, and lose faith and lose trust," he said.

Copps said the impact of races like this one is that it "poisons the well."

"So many people that had been lifelong Liberals were so disgusted with what went on that they just left," she said.

Copps said the general public may not pay close attention to nominations, but party members do. The outcome can have a big impact on their motivation.

In the end, Martin had "cut off his nose to spite his face," said Copps. In the next election, Liberals lost many of the ridings where Chrétien supporters were pushed out.

Easter said every backbench MP aspires to be promoted, and they believe unwavering support improves their chances.

Similarly, opposition MPs want prominent critical roles to enhance their prospects if the party forms government.

"We have to stop these manipulations from the centre of every party," said Easter. "The leaders' offices in all parties have too much authority."

This story is part of an ongoing series about nominations. The next instalment will look at ways of improving the process.

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The Hill Times



Former nine-term Liberal MP Wayne Easter says party leaders' offices have "have too much authority." The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade



Sabrina Maddeaux, second right, canvasses with members of her team in the riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, while seeking her party's nomination. Photograph courtesy of X

Comment



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement that Canada will match the United States in tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles shows the top priority in our foreign policy is to keep the Americans happy, writes David Crane. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Protectionism is not the answer on Chinese EVs

Our government, supported by the official opposition, is doing more harm than good by ignoring due process and undermining the global rules-based system.

David Crane

Canada & the 21st Century



TORONTO—Compare two *Toronto Star* headlines on two consecutive days.

On Aug. 26: “Canada urged to help stem flood of Chinese EV’s—Top Biden adviser calls for ‘united front’ against cheap imports at Liberal retreat”.

On Aug. 27: “Ottawa matches U.S. on Chinese EV tariffs”.

No surprise there. The number-one priority in Canadian foreign policy is to keep the Americans happy—to show we can be trusted to follow orders.

After all, as U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Cohen stated upon his arrival in Ottawa in late 2021, his job was to ensure

that Canada’s China policy was aligned with that of the United States.

It turns out alignment on other policies were on the agenda, too. Hence the ugly threats should we choose to make American big tech platforms pay taxes on their Canadian profits, for example.

But the decision was not only driven by our fear of the United States. Our own government has also committed somewhere in the range of \$50-billion in subsidies for plants for electric vehicles, batteries and components.

Given that Chinese cars—the BYD Seagull in particular—are technologically superior, safe, well designed and affordable, Canadian taxpayers could be stuck with uncompetitive plants and far fewer jobs than were promised if such cars were brought into Canada in large numbers.

Interestingly, many of these Canadian subsidies to automakers are not in response to Chinese subsidies, but to U.S. subsidies, which discourage investment in Canada.

Protectionism is not the answer. A U.S.-led trade war to weaken China’s economy and slow down its technological advance won’t work.

First, it invites retaliation and escalation. China has threatened to punish Canada for its 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles. Why should China buy our pork or soybeans if we don’t want to buy its cars?

China has already caused problems for American chip

makers by restricting exports of germanium and gallium, which are essential for manufacture of advanced computer chips. As a result, prices of these critical materials have doubled. Now Canada is threatening further restrictions in other sectors, as well, including battery parts, semiconductors, solar products, and critical minerals.

Second, protectionism imposes higher costs on consumers while freeing companies from the competition that would force them to become a lot more competitive, and to build better, more affordable cars.

The effect of higher tariffs is passed on the Canadian consumers, forcing them to pay more for the things they need. It squeezes incomes and leads to inflation.

Canadians are under pressure with carbon pricing to make clean energy choices. But putting 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese vehicles means that Canadians who want to make the transition will have to pay more or buy inferior North American cars. The introduction of these tariffs has been welcomed by the auto and auto-parts industries—that’s understandable since it means less competition and less innovation, and hence more profits.

Third, actions by Canada and the U.S. to create a sheltered North American market still leave ample room for Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers to dominate world markets since they will have access to much of the world’s overall market. These

consumers will still have access to affordable Chinese cars since they have no reason to adopt onerous trade penalties, while North American producers will remain uncompetitive.

Moreover, restrictions by the U.S. and others on access to advanced technologies will only lead China to develop its own technologies. For example, by limiting Huawei’s access to advanced computer chips, the U.S. had hoped to expand its efforts to cripple the Chinese electronics company. However, Huawei went on to develop its own advanced computer-chip technology.

American efforts to deprive China of access to advanced technologies, then, will only incentivize China to pursue its own advances, rendering the U.S. efforts counterproductive.

There is a bigger issue, one that affects global governance on geoeconomic issues more broadly, and with high-risk consequences. Many attacks on China claim it is undermining the global rules-based system, and in some instances it probably does. But today it is the U.S. and its allies that are undermining the system, in particular the World Trade Organization (WTO).

If the U.S. and Canada believe China is breaking world trade rules on electric vehicles, they should hold their own trade-remedy hearings to publicly examine evidence, and also seek a WTO trade dispute hearing on China and electric vehicles. But neither avenue has been pursued.

Instead, we have behind-closed-doors sessions with domestic interests leading to arbitrary tariffs of 100 per cent. One reason may be that the Trump administration worked to destroy the WTO dispute settlement system, and the Biden administration did nothing to change course.

It is not China that is destroying the WTO, then, but the U.S. For its part, the European Union did hold preliminary trade remedy hearings leading to a cap of 48 per cent on tariffs for electric vehicles, and—for some Chinese companies—less.

Canada failed to hold an anti-dumping hearing despite the existence of the Canadian International Trade Commission that is designed to investigate claims of unfair trade. Instead we got a 100-per-cent tariff, the result of secretive industry lobbying rather than a transparent public process.

The world is on a dangerous course. There are no innocent parties. But the U.S.-led effort, aided and abetted by Canada, to divide the world in an escalating trade war can only have a bad ending. Canada is entitled to protect its economic and security interests but the best way to do this is not through arbitrary protectionism, but by pursuing an open and transparent investigatory process that puts all the evidence—pro and con—in the public eye and which leads trade experts to come to conclusions and recommendations without political or industry closed-door interference.

In the case of Chinese electric vehicles our government, supported by the official opposition, is doing more harm than good by ignoring due process and undermining the global rules-based system.

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

The Hill Times

Western politicians turn to walls, deportations as public cools on migration



Under pressure following a deadly knife attack in his country, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has promised to speed up deportations of asylum-seekers whose applications have been refused. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/European Commission

The current flow of migrants crossing Europe's borders is only a fraction of what's to come once climate change forces increasing movement of desperate people whose homes are no longer livable.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Fortress America and Festung Europa (Fortress Europe) are just starting to take shape; bare outlines of what they will have grown into 10 years from now. But the trend is almost unstoppable, and it will be very ugly when it's finished.

Some sort of turning point was reached in Germany this week where the public was horrified by a knife attack in the western city of Solingen in the midst of the celebrations for the city's 650th anniversary. Three people were killed and eight injured allegedly by a lone attacker from Syria who had sought asylum in Germany as a refugee.

There has been no official word on the killer's motives, but the fact that he shouted 'Allahu Akbar' throughout the attack was a useful clue. As you would expect, Friedrich Merz, the leader of the opposition Christian Democratic Union, called for an end to Germany's "naive" immigration policy.

There's a state election underway in Saxony at the moment, and Merz took the opportunity to present Chancellor Olaf

Scholz with a list of demands that included a complete and immediate ban on letting asylum-seekers from Syria and Afghanistan enter Germany. This is a first: targeting specific nationalities for exclusion.

Merz didn't actually say "International law be damned! This is serious!" but that was the general tenor of his remarks. Scholz, under pressure, promised to speed up deportations of asylum-seekers whose applications have been refused (roughly half). It probably won't be enough, and his coalition is likely to lose the federal elections next year.

On the same day, on the other side of the Atlantic, Democratic presidential candidate and current Vice-President Kamala Harris was making peace with harsher popular attitudes towards immigration in the United States. In 2017, she denounced then-president Donald Trump's beloved 'wall' along the border with Mexico as "a stupid waste of money." Now, her TV ads show images of the same wall.

It's still a stupid waste of money, but it's the image that counts, and she needs to show she's willing. Moreover, the brutal truth is that it's entirely possible to close borders to unwanted people. Fences and walls don't work, but killing only a few would-be illegal immigrants will deter all but a few of the rest from taking the same route.

Migrants are not being killed yet in either Germany or the United States, although it's getting pretty close in the Mediterranean. The Italian and Greek authorities, in particular, do not always strive to rescue people whose flimsy, overloaded boats get into trouble while trying to cross from North Africa to Europe. (There have been 1,341 deaths so far this year.)

It's just a foretaste of what is to come, and a somewhat misleading foretaste at that. Probably around half of the current flows of migrants crossing Europe's borders are genuine refugees from war, famine, or political or religious persecution. Most of the rest are so-called 'economic migrants' seeking to raise their living standards and/or earn money to send home.

Only a small minority of those who are coming now are 'climate refugees': people whose farms dried up and blew away, or are now permanently underwater, or victims of half a dozen other ways that climate change can destroy your livelihood. But this is the category of migrants whose numbers are certain to grow and grow.

The miniscule number of migrants who just want to murder infidels will continue to come, too, and the fear and hate they spread will coarsen the debate in all the European destination countries.

The response may continue to be somewhat less cruel in the United States where the main source countries for the migration in Latin America and the Caribbean do not include this fanatical element, but it won't

be pretty along America's southern border, either.

Those who are paid to think about such things have long been deeply pessimistic about how we will handle these waves of refugees. This is from a 2008 interview with Leon Fuerth, a former national security adviser in the Clinton administration:

"Governments with resources will be forced to engage in long, nightmarish episodes of triage, deciding what and who can be salvaged from engulfment by a disordered environment. The choices will need to be made primarily among the poorest, not just abroad, but at home.

"At progressively more extreme levels, the decisions will be increasingly harsh: morally agonizing to those who must make and execute them—but in the end, morally deadening."

Even the rich countries will be having a very hard time when the average global temperature exceeds two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. So how much concern will be shown for the needs of desperate foreigners hammering on the gates when such conditions prevail even inside them. The gates will stay firmly closed, and those outside them will die.

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

The Hill Times

THE HILL TIMES CAREERS



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Opinion

The Bruce Nuclear Generating Station near Kincardine, Ont. Natural Resources Canada can learn from the attacks on Kursk and on Ukraine's own Zaporizhian nuclear power plant, writes Erika Simpson. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Chuck Szmurlo



Nuclear stations in Russia-Ukraine war provide warnings for Canada

The legacy of strikes on nuclear sites has made evident that nuclear power plants and waste disposal sites could become targets in conflict zones.

Erika Simpson

Opinion



Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency says he will visit the Kursk nuclear power station in south-west Russia this week. He is taking “very seriously” the risk that the facility could be damaged during Ukraine’s incursion into the region.

The nuclear station is situated about 40 kilometres west of the city of Kursk, home to about 500,000 people. The station has

two active reactors, two decommissioned older units, and two partly built ones. The two operating reactors have no protective dome. “It’s a Chernobyl-type plant,” Grossi said, with the reactor core “totally exposed.”

Ukrainian forces are advancing within range of the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP), according to open sources, and Grossi noted that it is located “technically within artillery range” of Ukrainian positions. On Aug. 22, a Ukrainian drone carrying an anti-tank grenade was intercepted and downed near the spent fuel storage at the KNPP, Russian state-owned news agency TASS reported. The drone was brought down by electronic warfare countermeasures. The unmanned aircraft bore the logo of Ukraine’s Army of Drones project, and the Russian Federation informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Aug. 22 that its remains were found within the territory of the nuclear plant.

It may be possible to seriously damage a spent nuclear fuel pool with a drone. Spent fuel-pools contain some of the highest concentrations of radioactivity on the planet. Should a pool lose its cooling water, exposing spent fuel rods to steam or air, the rods will heat to the point of rupture,

releasing enough radiation to seriously contaminate thousands of square kilometres.

Ukraine is deploying thousands of troops into the Kursk region, which includes the nuclear plant. Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, have accused Ukraine of targeting the facility during the incursion.

Natural Resources Canada and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) can learn valuable lessons from the attacks on Kursk, and on Ukraine’s own Zaporizhian nuclear power plant, which has been under Russian control since early 2022.

The first lesson is that we need to keep radioactive waste out of the biosphere, but Canada’s new radioactive waste policy appears to provide the nuclear industry with free license to abandon radioactive waste quickly and cheaply. That will leave North Americans with little protection from radioactive wastes that will remain hazardous for tens of thousands of years.

According to critics, Canada’s new policy fails to address problems identified by the IAEA which explicitly said defunct nuclear reactors should not be entombed in place except in extreme circumstances. Yet the new policy enables the abandonment of reactors beside Lake

Huron (the Bruce reactors), Lake Ontario (Darlington and Pickering reactors), and the Ottawa and Winnipeg rivers.

Ukrainians and Russians did not give free, prior, and informed consent before the Russian-designed nuclear reactors were built. But Canada must obtain permission to store or dispose of waste on Indigenous Peoples’ territories, as laid out in article 29(2) of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada affirmed the declaration, but a proposed radioactive waste site in unceded Algonquin territory is close to approval, and would violate this principle.

Broad-stroke reassurances from supporters of another proposed deep geological repository for Canada’s nuclear waste have failed to allay important environmental and serious security concerns for current and future generations.

This October, the tiny community of Teeswater, Ont., will hold a municipal referendum on the plan to store all of Canada’s high-level nuclear waste in one deep geological repository (DGR). An earlier plan had proposed burying intermediate- and low-level nuclear waste in limestone caverns constructed under the Bruce reactor, but was met with a “no” vote from members of

the Saugeen-Ojibway Nation. That led to Bruce Power withdrawing its own proposal in June 2020.

The current proposal for a \$23-billion DGR project may be constructed 50 kilometres away from the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station, the world’s largest operating nuclear site that supplies 30 per cent of Ontario’s power. Whether the proposal goes ahead in partnership with a willing host community will be decided by the Governor in Council. Once one of the two remaining possible host communities—either Teeswater or Ignace, Ont.—is selected, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada will continue to lead decades-long consultation processes.

The legacy of strikes on nuclear sites, like the Russian assault on Ukraine’s Zaporizhian nuclear plant, has made evident that nuclear power plants and waste disposal sites could become targets in conflict zones. Few people in Canada are publicly asking about terrorist threats, and whether the site could become hostage to nefarious bargaining.

In light of the attacks on nuclear power plants in Europe, the NWMO—which is responsible for developing and implementing Canada’s plan—should reconsider other options, such as a rolling stewardship model, which actively plans for retrieval and periodic repackaging of nuclear waste.

Erika Simpson is an associate professor of international politics at Western University, the author of *Nuclear Waste Burial in Canada? The Political Controversy over the Proposal to Construct a Deep Geologic Repository, and Nuclear Waste: Solution or problem?* She is also the president of the Canadian Peace Research Association.

The Hill Times

Canada must act after 500 days of suffering in Sudan



International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen. The Canadian government, alongside global partners, must step up its efforts to ensure aid reaches those who need it most, write Alexandria Bohémier, Mehjabeen Elahi, and Nicolas Parent. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Now is the time for Canadians to live up to our legacy of supporting global human rights, and providing humanitarian aid by taking action to help alleviate the crisis in Sudan.

Alexandria Bohémier,
Mehjabeen Elahi &
Nicolas Parent

Opinion



As the world watches numerous global crises unfold, the ongoing humanitarian situation in Sudan remains one of the most urgent and yet under-reported tragedies.

Having reached the 500-day mark on Aug. 27, the country has been grappling with what has become both the world's largest internal displacement and hunger crisis.

The numbers are staggering: 26 million people—more than half of the country's population—need immediate humanitarian assistance, including more than 14 million children. More than 13 million people have been forced to flee their homes, half of whom are children. This has led to more than two million people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, including Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan. This dire situation demands immediate attention and action from the global community, and Canada can play a crucial role.

Sudan's ongoing conflict has precipitated one of the most severe hunger crises in recent history. More than half of the population faces acute food insecurity, with the conflict pushing the nation's communities into famine conditions. The collapse of local markets, coupled with restricted access to agricultural inputs, has left millions of families unable to feed themselves.

Humanitarian aid is severely underfunded, and the situation will only worsen without urgent support. The Canadian government, alongside international partners, must step up its efforts to ensure aid reaches those who need it most before it is too late.

The humanitarian crisis in Sudan is taking an especially harsh toll on the country's most vulnerable populations.

Women and children are bearing the brunt of violence and instability. Reports from the ground indicate a sharp increase

in gender-based violence against women and girls. Data from Darfur, in western Sudan, reveals that 92 per cent of women who have survived sexual and gender-based violence are not receiving adequate support.

Without more significant financial resources and more robust diplomatic actions, millions of women and girls will remain without essential response services for sexual and gender-based violence. The breakdown of social structures has left many without protection, exposing them to grave dangers.

Children—especially girls—are amongst the most impacted by this crisis with an increase of 480 per cent in grave violations against children. This includes recruitment into armed groups, abduction, gender-based and sexual violence, and forced marriage.

Schools have been destroyed, depriving children of their right to education, and exposing them

to further risks. Of the 19 million school-aged children in Sudan, approximately 90 per cent have been out of school for a full academic year.

The international community—including Canadians—must prioritize the protection of these vulnerable groups by supporting programs that provide safety, education, and psychosocial support.

Canada has a proud history of supporting international human rights, and providing humanitarian assistance to those in need. Now is the time to live up to that legacy by taking decisive action to help alleviate the crisis in Sudan.

An increase in humanitarian assistance must go beyond monetary support. It must be delivered strategically to ensure that life-saving assistance reaches those in desperate need. This requires collaborating closely with trusted local and international NGOs on the ground, such as Islamic Relief Canada, Plan International, UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), and the World Food Programme, whose staff have been navigating Sudan's complex and perilous environments.

As humanitarian safe zones continue to shrink, they must be protected to permit the safe delivery of resources. These zones should also be expanded by negotiating with all conflict parties to allow medical stockpiles, food, and vital services to reach displaced civilians. Canada must press for the establishment of more safe zones while using diplomatic channels to ensure the protection of displaced populations.

Alongside these efforts, our country should demonstrate stronger political leadership by increasing diplomatic engagement to secure a ceasefire and durable political settlement, including by supporting peace talks in Cairo and working with neighbouring countries—namely Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan—to alleviate the impact of forced displacement within the region.

The catastrophic situation in Sudan demands our immediate focus. Millions of lives are at stake, and the world cannot afford to look away. By increasing humanitarian aid, supporting NGOs on the ground, and engaging in diplomatic efforts, we can make a tangible difference for those affected by this crisis. Let us stand in solidarity with the people of Sudan and demonstrate that Canada will not turn its back on those in need.

Alexandria Bohémier is a humanitarian policy and advocacy adviser at Plan International Canada. Mehjabeen Elahi is a government relations specialist at Islamic Relief Canada, and is pursuing a Master's in strategic public relations at the George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management. Dr. Nicolas Parent is policy officer at Cooperation Canada, a part-time professor at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Social Sciences, and a junior research fellow at the Tshepo Institute for the Study of Contemporary Africa.

The Hill Times

Opinion



Political attention to resolve workers' issues does not come by itself. It has to be directed, especially in the case of public sector workers, writes Waheed Khan. *The Hill Times file photograph*

Canadian workers' gains are sliding back this Labour Day

More than ever, organized labour needs to remain cohesive and proactive.

Waheed Khan

Opinion



Since 1894, Labour Day has been marked as a statutory public holiday in Canada on the first Monday in September.

The day was the result of decades of work by labour unions who were organizing annual celebrations and demonstrations to promote solidarity among workers, and to advocate for their rights. These efforts gradually led to changing public opinion, which in turn led to political impetus for the recognition of the rights of workers.

We have come a long way since then, and unions have secured many benefits for all workers. These include the right to collective bargaining, occupational health and safety standards, minimum wage, paid vacations, statutory public holidays, overtime pay, and paid parental leave.

With a federal election due next year, political parties are once again courting unionized workers. These overtures can lead one to believe that it is governments that have granted these rights to working Canadians. In fact, it was organized labour that fought for and secured these and many other basic rights we take for granted in Canada.

The standard 40-hour work week, as an example, was only instituted in Canada in the 1960s following Australia in 1948, the United States in 1938, and France in 1936. It was the result of efforts by the unions during the 1930s based on the notion that scarce opportunities for gainful employment ought to be shared among the largest possible number of workers.

Unfortunately, Canadian workers are sliding back, regard-

less of which political party is in power. Large corporations and executives are recording huge profits and bonuses, while the incomes of workers stagnate and purchasing power declines.

Public sector workers are generally considered better organized, and the federal government claims to be a leading employer. However, federal public sector employees have also been sliding back, often due to political expediency. Take the examples of public sector pensions, severance pay, and—most recently—the Treasury Board Secretariat's direction of prescribed presence in the office.

In 1999, the government introduced Bill C-78, which enabled it to take away \$28-billion from the surplus of the public sector pension fund (superannuation accounts). Its purpose was twofold: first, to reduce the government's annual budget deficit by reducing annual pension expenditures; and, second, bring down the government's net debt. Unions took the matter to the courts, but the lost at the trial court and all the way through to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The courts maintained that the plan members' interests were limited to their interest in the defined benefits to which they are entitled under the plan. The courts maintained that the superannuation accounts were merely accounting records, not funded and segregated pools of assets. In exchange for their contributions, and with each year of pensionable service, employees gained a legal entitlement to statutorily defined pension benefits.

But in 2013, the government took the position that supporting the plan was not sustainable, and that employees must increase their share of contributions to 50 per cent. This increase in cost was downloaded to plan members whose pay was already lagging behind the cost of living, significantly.

The Treasury Board report in 2023 stated that the plan was running a \$42.4-billion surplus. Will the government raid it again, followed by a pitch to increase employees' contribution?

Even worse, the slide has not stopped. In the Policy Declaration from the Conservative Party's 2023 conference, the party that

hopes to form government after the next election declares its commitment to switch public sector pensions from the current defined benefit model to a defined contribution pension model, which will expose retired employees' income to the market upheavals.

Severance pay provisions were negotiated in collective agreements in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and have been an important part of compensation package. In 1969, public servants gave up an existing right to cash in surplus sick leave.

During collective bargaining in 2010, Treasury Board established the termination of severance pay for voluntary departures as a pre-condition to a settlement in that round of bargaining. The value of severance pay was estimated at one per cent of salary on resignation to 1.9 per cent on retirement, but Treasury Board maintained that it would add 0.75 per cent per year to the rate of pay as compensation.

On May 1, 2024, Treasury Board announced that as of Sept. 9, all employees are required to show up in the office at least 60 per cent of their time. Meanwhile, since the pandemic, the government has drastically reduced work spaces so that many buildings have been shut down for long overdue repairs, or to repurpose them.

The government has identified 56 federal properties across Canada, including 22 in Ottawa, to convert into residential properties in an effort to address the housing crisis. Employees have no more assigned desks where they can leave their computers and documents on which they rely for doing their jobs.

Such a dramatic change to the workspace has been pushed through by the government in violation of collective agreements it has signed, its own guidelines on union-management consultation, and during collective bargaining for the past two years. Public sector unions, including the Association of Canadian Financial Officers, Canadian Association of Public Employees, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, and Public Service Alliance of Canada have filed policy grievances and unfair labour practice complaints, but Treasury Board is not willing to discuss the issue to arrive at a reasonable solution.

Political attention to resolve workers' issues does not come by itself. It has to be directed, especially in the case of public sector workers. The temptation for governments—new or old—is the use austerity measures and program cuts to win votes.

The people that suffer are the recipients of those programs, as well as the workers who deliver the programs, make policies changes, all the while remaining politically neutral. The point is that more than ever, organized labour needs to remain cohesive and proactive.

Waheed Khan is the president of the Community of Federal Visible Minorities, and serves on the board of directors of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada.

The Hill Times

Nearly half of Canada's public servants are now millennials, but Gen X holds onto management reins

Millennials' 'fingerprints' are now on the federal public service, says Deloitte's Stephen Harrington, while a Carleton University professor says the demographic could be better divided into those hired pre- or post-pandemic.

Continued from page 1

This aligns with Canada's demographic makeup as a whole where millennials now outnumber all other generations, including the baby boomers, who were born approximately between 1946 and 1966.

While millennials have previously been used as a byword for youth, and attained a bad reputation as a chronically online 'selfie' generation, 'elder millennials' are now pushing 45 years of age, with many having young families of their own.

"We should recognize that millennials are, for the most part, in management positions in the government today. So, actually, millennials are currently putting their fingerprints on the federal public service," said Harrington.

Public service's millennial era

Millennials are the first generation to spend their formative years under the influence of the internet, as well as be early adopters of social media. This millennial workforce are said to be more at ease with technology, while also putting a higher focus on social responsibility.

The younger generation's fluency with technology will come in handy as the government transitions to "digital first."

"They are more likely to push for digital experiences at work," said Harrington.

The ongoing hybrid-work battle may seem emblematic of generational friction as the government clashes with the public service unions over the mandatory three-day-per-week return to the office.

But Linda Duxbury, a professor of management at Carleton University, said we shouldn't link that fight to the rise of the digital millennials, and more to poor management where "where



Housing Minister Sean Fraser, a millennial, speaks at a press conference on Sept. 21, 2023, with Treasury Board President Anita Anand, a gen-Xer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

employers don't know how to manage people."

"It's all very arbitrary how they're doing it. And for many younger people, the question is, 'well, why?' And the government is not doing a good job of answering the 'well, why?' Because they're basically saying 'because we say so,' and that's not a good reason to do that," said Duxbury.

A Treasury Board of Canada spokesperson previously told *The Hill Times* that they see the benefit of hybrid work, but that they also "believe in the value of human interaction in the workplace."

Generation X-ecutive

Generation X—those born between the years 1967 and 1979—have been seen in popular culture as having been overlooked when compared to their larger boomer and millennial counterparts.

But generation X comes out on top when it comes to the federal public service's executive level—making up about 54 per cent of the sector's assistant deputy ministers, directors, and more.

Policy Options' Kathryn May reported last year that Canada's top civil servant, John Hannaford, was the first gen-Xer to lead the public service when he became Clerk of the Privy Council in 2023.

That, coupled with Canada's first Generation X prime minister, Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), has meant that the "grunge generation" has officially taken over the helm of the country's public service.

On the come up

Generation Z, mostly the children of generation X, are now just entering the workforce.

The generation of Canadians born approximately between the

turn of the century and 2012 are expected to overtake millennials in numbers sometime between 2038 and 2053 in part due to forecasted immigration levels, according to Statistics Canada.

It's still too early to get a sense of how generation Z will impact the public sector given they only make up about five per cent of federal public servants, but Harrington provided some clues, saying this generation is the most anxious about climate change, and had their formative schooling years impacted COVID-19.

COVID-19 game changer

The shared experience of the global COVID-19 pandemic also appears to have brought generations closer.

Shannon Jackson, principal owner of consulting firm Emerging People Practices Inc., said the pandemic "levelled the playing field," and broke down generational barriers.

"People had to learn how to work more collaboratively together because we were all online and trying to figure it out. And those lessons have stayed with us in the way we work now," said Jackson, who previously co-authored a report on rethinking public sector human resources.

Duxbury added that, while millennials were previously seen as 'work-life balance' focused, the pandemic has forced everyone to re-evaluate their priorities.

"Now a lot of older workers are going, 'hey, I may die tomorrow. I may have another pandemic. I may have another lockdown. It's not my job that's the most important thing. It's my family, my friends, my life,'" said Duxbury.

With COVID-19 breaking down generational barriers, it might be easier to classify workers as pre-pandemic hires, and those hired during and after.

"The millennials that we used to have in the workforce are not the millennials we have now," said Duxbury.

She said those post-pandemic workers weren't onboarded correctly and were not provided the opportunity to create meaningful connections with their coworkers. Life post-lockdown has also seen higher inflation, higher interest rates, and slower economic growth, meaning life in the public service could be a better way to make ends meet.

"It's a job, not a calling. It's money, it's job security, it's good benefits," said Duxbury.

But Harrington said a characteristic that millennials and generation Z share is their need for a strong sense of purpose in their careers.

He added that the government can end up losing these workers if they get lost in bureaucracy and transactional tasks.

Target demo

Talk of generations returned to the forefront of politics as Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's (University-Rosedale, Ont.) latest budget largely revolved around the themes of generational fairness.

Titled *Fairness for Every Generation*, the 2024 Budget targeted disgruntled millennials and gen-Zers who will be key demographics for the trailing Liberals to win over if the governing party wants to stay competitive in the next election.

The Trudeau government announced a flurry of new housing measures in April's budget in a move to sway younger Canadians who felt shut out of the nation's increasingly unaffordable housing market.

To help pay for all of Budget 2024's new spending, the Liberals changed the capital gains tax by upping the inclusion rate on annual capital gains over \$250,000 from 50 per cent to 67 per cent. These changes came into effect on June 25.

Despite criticisms about the capital gains tax changes, Freeland—another gen-Xer—was quick to dismiss accusations that her government was pitting older generations against younger ones.

"I really believe that older Canadians—slightly older Canadians and older older ones—we really want younger generations to do well," said Freeland in a press conference at the time.

So is a millennial public service a match made in heaven for the Liberal government's millennial-gear policies? Not necessarily.

"On its own, this shift is unlikely to initiate an adequate advance toward the requirements of generational fairness," said Paul Kershaw, a professor in the University of British Columbia's School of Population and Public Health.

Kershaw, who is the founder of Generation Squeeze, said the Liberals would need to enshrine 'generational fairness' into legislation for the machinery of government to reflect that priority. He advocates for a generational fairness minister, commissioner, and advisory board.

Main character energy

Baby boomers haven't formed the majority in the public service since 2015.

Even with the public service's golden age for boomers over, their priorities will continue to shape the political agenda, given their importance as a voting bloc.

In the last four federal elections, voter turnout was highest amongst those aged 55 and up, according to Elections Canada.

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Age distribution of federal public servants				
Age range	March 2022		March 2023	
Under 25	18,372	5.5%	18,561	5.2%
25 to 34	52,357	21.5%	80,892	22.6%
35 to 44	91,474	27.2%	97,354	27.3%
45 to 54	89,864	26.7%	95,272	26.7%
55 to 64	55,280	16.5%	55,981	15.7%
65 and up	8,609	2.6%	9,186	2.6%
Unknown	1	0.0%	1	0.0%

Source: Privy Council Office

News



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The next federal election will be in October 2025, or sooner. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

A second lobbyist who preferred not to be identified told *The Hill Times* that their firm has experienced “a handful” of inquiries since the start of the summer from ministerial staffers asking about job opportunities, but declined to provide a specific number.

“It’s kind of expected what the results [of the election] are going to be, and a lot of people are looking for new opportunities, for sure. Everyone is exploring the options and what’s next for them,” the second lobbyist said. “If you think you can land a good job where you aren’t going to be impacted, it would make no sense to stay. It would make much more sense to leave and set yourself up for no matter what.”

Not all government relations firms are reporting a higher-than-normal rate of Liberal staffers reaching out to ask about jobs. A third lobbyist, who spoke with *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis, said they haven’t noticed any increase recently in Liberal staffers applying for work, but that it would make sense for any staffers interested in moving on to do so soon.

“If you want to leave before the election, now is a good time because it gives the minister [or] the MP enough time to staff back up for the fall session or for the next six to 12 months that we’re going to go with the current government,” said the third lobbyist. “I’d also say that election cycles are a natural time where, as a political staffer, you choose to say, ‘this is a good time for me to get out.’ Even if they thought the Liberal government was going to be re-elected ... it is a natural time where people are like, ‘I’ve had this job ... and now I want to get out before the next election.’ It is a natural turnover cycle.”

The third lobbyist added that, because of the possibility of a Conservative government being established after the next fixed election date, some firms may be more interested in “beef[ing] up the Conservative bench” on their teams.

“You need to have balance, but then you look at what the clients are demanding, and certainly clients are looking ahead and want to make sure that they have strong relationships with the Conservative opposition,” they said. “It’s not that firms are saying, ‘we’re getting rid of all the Liberals and only bringing in Conservatives.’ It’s that when they have a new demand, they look to balance their roster of expertise.”

A fourth lobbyist who spoke with *The Hill Times* and asked not to be identified, said that it’s normal for Hill staffers to look for alternate work during the summer months.

“There’ll be some who are probably looking now and making alternative plans. I mean, everybody gets a little a little nervous, especially if they’ve got young families,” they said. “A lot may decide they may go back to school. Maybe upgrade, or take a Master’s, or maybe look at law school, or all sorts of options.”

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Some Grit staffers try to ‘get ahead of the curve’ in private sector outreach before next election

Some lobby firms are fielding inquiries from Liberal staffers looking for new jobs this summer, which one lobbyist says is part of a natural turnover cycle.

Continued from page 1

compensation look like? Should I stick around? Does it make sense to stick around with the ship going down, or not?” said the lobbyist.

The Conservatives have been leading the Liberals by a double-digit margin since last summer. If an election were held today, 42 per cent of committed voters would vote Conservative, while 25 per cent would vote for the Liberals, according to an Abacus Data survey of 2,300 Canadian adults conducted between Aug. 14-18, and released on Aug. 21.

Some Liberal staffers may be seeking to “get ahead of the curve” by looking for new jobs before the upcoming election since the competition for jobs afterwards



Huw Williams, president of Impact Public Affairs, says ‘there’s something different about this election for the Liberals.’ Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

could be more difficult, according to the lobbyist.

“[Pre-election] you still have some value or opportunity as opposed to post-election where, if the government falls, you are competing with hundreds of other people all looking for probably similar jobs at the same time,” the lobbyist said. “If the government changes, all those people will be out of a job within a month’s time.”

Huw Williams, president of Impact Public Affairs, told *The Hill Times* that, in his view, “there’s

something different about this election for the Liberals.”

“In 2019 [and] 2021, there wasn’t a sense of folks looking to leave the Hill to do different things en masse,” said Williams in an interview on Aug. 26.

Williams told *The Hill Times* that part of the motivation for Liberal staffers to leave the Hill for pastures new is the sheer length of time the current government has been in power.

Some staffers may have started working in Liberal MP offices in the early days of Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau’s (Papineau, Que.) government, but after almost nine years they may have different personal circumstances—such as marriage or children—factoring into their decision to stay, he said.

“This feels different. The polling is different. But also, what’s probably much more important is the length of time that some of these people have served,” said Williams. “Even if you’re a staffer or MP who is optimistic about the next election and wants to battle until the end, sometimes it’s just those personal dynamics and the toll of working in politics.”

Williams said that there is a noticeable trend of more senior or long-serving staff members leaving the offices of public office holders pre-election, but this can also have a positive benefit. Staffers from backbench offices can be promoted to fill the senior-level vacancies, according to Williams.

“You get promotions from backbench office staffers who come into ministers offices, and they actually bring an air of renewal and actually get how important the backbench offices are,” said Williams. “They get that you don’t have a government unless the backbenchers are elected.”

Liberal caucus off to B.C. for annual summer retreat to brainstorm fall parliamentary game plan

Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski said the caucus needs to discuss 'how to address people's dissatisfaction with our direction as the government.'

Continued from page 1

satisfied with the government. We have been talking about that, and we need to talk about that further, and how to address people's dissatisfaction with our direction as the government."

The retreat will begin on Sept. 9 with meetings for the Indigenous, rural, and women's caucuses. The following day will start with the meeting of the regional caucuses, followed later by the first national caucus meeting since the summer recess. On Sept. 11, both sessions will be dedicated to national caucus meetings. The caucus is expected to receive a briefing about election readiness from the party.

Since last summer, the Liberals have been trailing Conservatives, led by Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.), by double digits in national public opinion polls. This sustained dip in public support represents a key hurdle for the Liberals, which has enjoyed considerable electoral success under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) leadership since 2015, and has won three back-to-back elections. The persistent gap in polling numbers has raised questions both within and outside the Liberal Party whether Trudeau is the right leader to take them into the next election.

A Leger poll released last week suggested that the Conservatives had the support of 43 per cent of Canadians, followed by the Liberals on 25 per cent. The NDP was at 15 per cent, and the Greens seven per cent.

A Nanos Research poll released last week suggested that 40 per cent of Canadians support the Conservatives, 25 per cent back the Liberals, 19 per cent favour the NDP, and 5.1 per cent endorse the Greens.

Prior to that, an Ekos Research poll suggested that the Conservatives were leading the pack with the support of 38.2 per cent of Canadians, followed by the Liberals who were at 23.7 per cent. The NDP support was at 18.2 per cent, and the Greens 5.7 per cent.

Parliament returns on Sept. 16 for its fall sitting, and the same



Liberal MP Brenda Shanahan is the chair of the national Liberal caucus. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

day, voters in the ridings of La-Salle-Émard-Verdun, Que., and Elmswood-Transcona, Man., will go to the polls to elect new MPs. In the Quebec riding, the Liberals face the prospect of losing a seat that has traditionally been considered safe. A loss in a historically Liberal stronghold would not only be a symbolic blow, but would also raise fresh questions about Trudeau's leadership. In June, the Liberals lost the safe seat of Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont. to the Conservatives.

Compounding all these problems is a revolt by 52 ministerial and MP staffers who last week questioned their government's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the backdrop of these challenges, the upcoming retreat will potentially be the last annual summer gathering before the next federal election. This will be an opportunity for MPs to share with their colleagues the feedback they received from constituents. In light of this, the parliamentary caucus will reassess their political strategy, develop a cohesive approach to the coming byelections, and craft a compelling narrative for the fall sitting of Parliament and beyond.

Powlowski acknowledged that the Liberal Party is trailing the Conservatives by a double-digit margin, but expressed confidence in his party's ability to reverse the trend and close the gap. While he didn't go into specifics, he said that when voters compared his party's platform with the Conservatives, they would choose the Liberals.

"I do think we can [bridge the polling gap], and I do think we will," said Powlowski. "There's obviously very many ways, and I don't want to speculate as to too many of them, but I don't think in Pierre Poilievre, they [Canadians] have the Superman that they think they have that's going to lead them to the promised land. On the other hand, when people take a more sober look at the Liberal Party and their policies, I do think we have the more solid platform. I do think we have the better leader, and I do think we probably have the better leadership team."

Powlowski said that Poilievre is not offering any solutions to problems that Canadians are facing. Instead, he said, the Conservative leader is using simplis-

tic slogans to highlight issues without saying how he is going to address these challenges.

"If you look at what Poilievre and the Conservatives have done so far, and what they've been doing of late, they're just a bunch of jingles, corny, kind of wholesome jingles like 'axe the tax,' 'build more houses,' and then what's after that, 'milk the cow' and 'walk the dog,'" he said. "But when you actually look at their policies and what policies they've proposed and what alternatives they've proposed is very little."

Powlowski conceded that Canadians have tuned out Trudeau at this time, but he believes the solution lies in better communication of the government's past achievements, and its ongoing



Liberal MP Marcus Powlowski says that the Liberal government should promote its wins and the initiatives it has implemented to help Canadians deal with cost-of-living challenges. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

efforts to support Canadians in dealing with cost of living issues.

While he expressed concern over his party losing seats like Toronto-St. Paul's, he said that the dynamics of a general election are vastly different from those of a byelection. In a byelection, he said, voters often send a message to the governing party knowing it won't change the government. Powlowski also pointed out that inflation has come down, and this could trigger the Bank of Canada to lower interest rates, which should help alleviate some of the affordability challenges Canadians are facing.

"Certainly, the economy looks like it's turning around. Inflation rate continues to come down. Interest rates continue to come down. Poilievre's true nature continues to become more apparent," said Powlowski. "Are things going to change a lot in the next two weeks? No, they almost certainly won't, but in the course of the next year, well later, I think that's a different issue."

Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs, said that the retreat is coming at a time when the party has been struggling in the polls for months, and the two byelections just weeks away. He added that caucus members would be eager to know the strategy moving forward.

"It could be a difficult caucus meeting," said Bricker. "They're going to be asking about what the expectation is for the performance of the party in the byelections. And if there's anything that they can do in order to calm down the caucus now is the time because what will start happening after this—particularly if the byelections are lost—is that people will start voting with their own feet. So you'll start hearing people saying they're not going to run again. You might actually get a couple of braver people standing up and saying that they don't think that the party's headed in the right direction."

Bricker said that despite decreasing inflation and anticipated interest rate cuts, public sentiment remained pessimistic about the state of the economy. He said that governments often get blamed during economic downturns, but do not receive equal credit for improvements. Whether the Trudeau government can recover lost ground in the coming weeks and months remains to be seen, Bricker said.

Regarding the letter from Liberal political staffers publicly criticizing their own government on the Gaza conflict, Bricker said that from a public relations perspective, it presents a negative image. He suggested that if these staffers genuinely disagree with the government, they should resign from their positions.

"If you really are opposed to what the government's doing, step aside," said Bricker. "You're not a public servant, you're a political staffer. You're there serving the political interests of the government, and if you don't support the political act, the political direction of the government, why are you there?"

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Laura Rycckewaert
Hill Climbers

Agriculture Minister MacAulay finds a new policy lead

Plus, there are a few staff promotions, and one new hire, to report in Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu's shop.

In time for Parliament's return later this month, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister **Lawrence MacAulay** has found a new director of policy for his office, bringing **Hilary Peirce** back to the Hill to take on the role.



Hilary Peirce is back on the Hill as policy director to Minister MacAulay. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Peirce has been living life off the Hill for the past year, having left in August 2023 in the wake of that summer's cabinet shuffle.

While she's got previous experience with the agriculture file under her belt, Peirce had most recently been working for then-Treasury Board president **Mona Fortier**. Starting as a senior policy adviser to Fortier, after the 2021 federal election, Peirce was promoted to serve as Fortier's director of labour relations near the end of 2022—her last gig on the Hill. In July 2023, Fortier was shuffled out of cabinet and replaced by current Treasury Board President **Anita Anand** (who, as has been reported, recently named a new labour relations director of her own).

Peirce first came to the Hill in late 2010 as an assistant to then-Liberal MP **Ralph Goodale**. After a little more than a year working for the then-Saskatchewan MP, Peirce stepped away to put her personal training certification to use and work as owner and operator of F.I.T. By Hilary. She returned to the political trenches in January 2016—at the start of the Trudeau government's first mandate—to once again work for Goodale, this time as a communications officer in his office as then-public safety minister.

Goodale, who's now Canada's high commissioner to the United Kingdom, lost his seat in the 2019 election. In turn, Peirce started 2020 working for a new minister in a new portfolio, this time as a policy adviser to then-agriculture minister



Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, left, with chief of staff Matthew Mann at the Liberal Party's national convention in Ottawa in May 2023. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Marie-Claude Bibeau, for whom she worked until joining Fortier's treasury board team.

MacAulay has been on the hunt for a new policy head since **Emerson Vandenberg's** exit from the role in June. **Alison Porter**, who'd previously been acting policy director when Vandenberg went on parental leave last year, has since been named director of regional affairs to MacAulay.

In MacAulay's office, Peirce oversees policy advisers **Jeremy Keats** and **Arianna Myers**.

Matthew Mann remains chief of staff to the agriculture minister.

Hajdu hands out 'senior' staff promotions

A trio of staff in Indigenous Services and Federal Economic Development



In addition to a few staff promotions, Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu recently added a new assistant to her team. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Agency for Northern Ontario Minister **Patty Hajdu's** office added "senior" to their business cards this summer.

Policy adviser **Danielle Louzado**, policy and British Columbia and North regional affairs adviser **Joanna Lam**, and policy and Atlantic regional affairs adviser **Ashley Harris** have all been promoted to "senior" status.



Danielle Louzado is now a senior policy adviser to Minister Hajdu. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Louzado has been working for Hajdu since December 2023, having joined the minister's team after a little more than a year and a half working for the Treasury Board president, starting under Fortier as a 2022 Liberal Summer Leadership Program (SLP) intern. Louzado was subsequently hired on full time as a special assistant for policy, and was promoted to policy adviser to Fortier in the spring of 2023.

Lam has been working in Hajdu's office as Indigenous services minister since June 2023. She previously worked for Hajdu as then-health minister for less than a year: hired as a West and North regional affairs adviser at the start of 2021, Hajdu was shuffled out of the portfolio following

that year's federal election and replaced by now-Public Services and Procurement Minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**. Lam was subsequently kept on as a regional adviser to Duclos, and stuck with the health portfolio until June 2023. Lam is also a former regional affairs adviser for the West and Territories to then-women and gender equality minister **Maryam Monsef**, and a former deputy field organizer for the federal Liberal Party in B.C., among other things.

Harris has been with Hajdu's team since March 2022. A former staffer at Nova Scotia's provincial legislature and ex-aide to N.S. Liberal MP **Lena Metlege Diab**, Harris started out just covering Atlantic regional affairs for Hajdu. She later picked up responsibility for the B.C. and North regional desks as well, but dropped those, becoming a policy and Atlantic regional adviser by late 2023.



Ashley Harris is now a senior policy and Atlantic regional affairs adviser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Along with those promotions, at the end of July, Hajdu added a new member to her team: **Joy Nwadike**, who's now busy as both a digital communications adviser and executive assistant to the minister's chief of staff, a role currently filled by **Randi Anderson** on an acting basis.



Joy Nwadike is the newest addition to Minister Hajdu's team. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Nwadike is a recent graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, where she earned a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences, and has previously worked part time for the Métis Nation Saskatchewan, for which she tackled administrative and clerical work related to intergovernmental affairs.

That makes three staff additions to Hajdu's office overall this summer—so far, at least. As previously reported, the minister added policy adviser **Anika Kale**, and FedNor policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser **Alex Filbey** to her team in June. On the other hand, as has been noted by **Hill Climbers**, two staff have left: senior adviser for FedNor policy and Ontario regional affairs **Kaitlyn Wendland**, and policy adviser **Javin Ames-Sinclair**.

Jordano Nudo continues as director of policy to Hajdu, while **Christi Basaraba** is director of operations and a senior adviser for FedNor policy.

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Parliamentary Calendar

Bank of Canada to announce rate target on Sept. 4



Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem. The central bank will announce its decision on the overnight target rate on Sept. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4

Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate. Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 10 a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 5

Info Sessions on FNCFS Draft Settlement Deal—The last in a four-part series of online info sessions on the Draft Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services hosted by the Assembly of First Nations. Today's session is on "Chapter #4: Governance and Accountability." Thursday, Sept. 5 at 11 a.m. ET happening online: afn.ca.

Pints and Politics with Minister Wilkinson—Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson will take part in a Liberal community event, "Pints and Politics." Thursday, Sept. 5 at 7-9 p.m. PT at 3154 Highland Blvd., North Vancouver, B.C. Details: event.liberal.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10

Breakfast with Conservative MP Barrett—Grenville Futures, the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce and the South Grenville Chamber of Commerce host a breakfast with Conservative MP Michael Barrett and Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP Steve Clark. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Prescott Golf Club, 900 Boundary St., Prescott, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

Bank of Canada Governor to Deliver Remarks—Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem will deliver remarks to the Canada-United Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 8:25 a.m. ET, in London, U.K. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

RBC President McKay to Deliver Remarks—Dave McKay, president and CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Tuesday, Sept. 10, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., Toronto.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11

Canada Fintech Forum—Finance Montréal hosts the 11th edition of the

Canada Fintech Forum, the largest fintech event in Canada. Quebec's Finance Minister Eric Girard is among the speakers. The latest edition of the Quebec Fintech Report will also be unveiled. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Wednesday, Sept. 11 at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, Montreal. Details online: forumfintechcanada.com.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

UN General Assembly—The 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly opens today in New York City with a high-level General Debate. Tuesday, Sept. 10, to Tuesday, Sept. 24.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11

Seminar on the Canada-Taiwan Partnership—Conservative MP Michael Chong will take part in a seminar, "Pathways to Prosperity: Redefining the Canada-Taiwan Economic Partnership," hosted by the Toronto Region Board of Trade, and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 1:30 p.m. at The Quay, 100 Queens Quay East, 3rd Floor, Toronto. Details: bot.com.

Bob Rae to Discuss the UN—Bob Rae, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations in New York City, will take part in a debate and public talk on "The United Nations and its Future" hosted by the Canadian International Council. Wednesday, Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m. AT at the Halifax Central Library, 5440 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax. Details: thecic.org.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12

Privy Council Clerk Hannaford to Deliver Remarks—John Hannaford, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet, will deliver remarks at a roundtable lunch hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Sept. 12, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details online: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 13

Senator Gignac to Deliver Remarks—PSG Senator Clément Gignac will take part in a breakfast "Discussion on the Economic Outlook for 2024-2025" in French hosted by the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal. Friday, Sept. 13, at 8 a.m. ET at Le Centre Sheraton, 1201 René-Lévesque Blvd. W., Montreal. Details: ccmm.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 16

House Resumes Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 16.

Two Federal Byelections—Federal byelections will be held on Monday, Sept. 16, in the electoral districts of Elmwood-Transcona, Man., and LaSalle-Énard-Verdun, Que., to fill vacancies in the House of Commons.

Ambassador May to Deliver Remarks—Canada's ambassador to China, Jennifer May, will deliver bilingual remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Monday, Sept. 16, at 11:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Montréal, 1255 Jeanne-Mance St., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

Webinar: 'Geopolitics of Trade in an Era of Security'—The Institute for Research in Public Policy hosts a webinar on "The Geopolitics of Trade in an Era of Security," expanding on the ideas raised in the corresponding *Policy Options* editorial series about how major international players including Canada are navigating this rapidly evolving geopolitical environment. Monday, Sept. 16, at 12 p.m. ET happening online. Details: irpp.org.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17

Mining Association President to Deliver Remarks—Pierre Gratton, president and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada, will deliver his annual address to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 11:30 a.m. PT at the Fairmont Pacific Rim, 1038 Canada Pl., Vancouver. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 17—THURSDAY, SEPT. 19

Special Chiefs Assembly on FNCFS Program Reform—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a Special Chiefs Assembly on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program. Chiefs and proxies will deliberate and vote on the proposed reforms. Tuesday, Sept. 17, to Thursday, Sept. 19, at the RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Man. Details: afn.ca.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18

Panel: 'Three Years Since the Taliban Takeover'—The NATO Association of Canada and the Bill Graham Centre

for Contemporary International History host "Three Years Since the Taliban Takeover: Security Threats, Humanitarian Crisis, and the Fight for Freedom" featuring panellists who will take part in two sessions. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 2 p.m. ET at the Munk School, University of Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.toronto.ca.

Beverley McLachlin to Discuss Her New Book—Former chief justice Beverley McLachlin will discuss her latest work of fiction, *Proof*, a thriller featuring defence attorney Jilly Truitt as she defends a high-profile mother accused of kidnapping her own child, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Wednesday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: writersfestival.org.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

Canada Strong and Free Regional Networking Conference—Conservative MP John Barlow is among the speakers at the Canada Strong and Free Regional Networking Conference. This year's theme is "Alberta Leading the Way." Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Red Deer Resort and Casino, 3310 50 Ave., Red Deer, Alta. Details: canadastrongandfree.network.

MONDAY, SEPT. 23

Space Canada's Annual Parliamentary Reception—Brian Gallant hosts Space Canada's third Annual Parliamentary Reception featuring networking with leaders of Canada's emerging space ecosystem, food and drinks, several space-related interactive displays, and a special guest speaker. Monday, Sept. 23, 5-7 p.m. ET at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building. Details and RSVP to: RSVP@space-canada.ca.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

Panel: 'Canada as Natural Resource Powerhouse'—The Ottawa Board of Trade hosts a panel discussion on "Charting the Path: Canada's Potential as a Natural Resource Powerhouse and the Impact to Canadians" featuring speakers from the Indigenous Resource Network, Cenovus Energy, and Fertilizer Canada. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 11 a.m. at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: business.ottawabot.ca.

Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a hybrid event, "The Next Frontier in Canada's Digital Divide." Participants include Ian Scott, former CRTIC chair; Bill Murdoch, executive director of Clear Sky Connections; and Elisha Ram, senior assistant deputy minister at Employment and Social Development Canada's Income Security and Social Development Branch. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 12 p.m. ET. Impact Hub Ottawa, 123 Slater St., 7th floor, and online. Details: irpp.org.

The Regent Debate—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts the sixth Regent Debate on the topic "Be It Resolved: Canada can turn a Trump Presidency from a threat into an opportunity." Arguing in favour are author and businessman Conrad Black, and former New Jersey governor Chris Christie. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 5:15 p.m. at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: cdhoweregntdebate.org.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

CUTA 2024 Policy Forum—The Canadian Urban Transit Association hosts its 2024 Policy Forum in Ottawa. Some of North America's leading transit and urban mobility experts will discuss the industry's future and the role of federal public transit policy. This year's event will focus on affordability, regional co-ordination and integration, and transit's role in addressing Canada's productivity gap. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at the Hilton Garden Inn Ottawa Downtown, 361 Queen St. Details via Eventbrite.

Via Rail President to Deliver Remarks—Mario Pélouin, president and CEO of Via Rail, will deliver remarks

titled "At the Heart of Canada's Passenger Journey: Via Rail's 2030 Vision" hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 7:30 a.m. PT at the Vancouver Club, 915 W. Hastings St., Vancouver, B.C. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

Minister Champagne to Deliver Remarks—Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne will take part in a bilingual discussion with Margrethe Vestager, executive vice-president of the European Commission for a Europe fit for the Digital Age and Commissioner for Competition, hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Location to be announced. Details: corim.qc.ca.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26

Murray Sinclair to Discuss His New Book—Former senator and Truth and Reconciliation Commission chair Murray Sinclair will discuss his new memoir, *Who We Are: Four Questions For a Life and a Nation*, on stage with CBC host Matt Galloway. Thursday, Sept. 26, at the RBC Convention Centre, 375 York Ave., Winnipeg. Details: mcnallyrobinson.com.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 27

Via Rail President to Deliver Remarks—Mario Pélouin, president and CEO of Via Rail, will deliver remarks titled "Connecting Manitoba with Via Rail's Vision for 2030" hosted by the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. Friday, Sept. 27, at 7:30 a.m. CT at the Delta Winnipeg Hotel, 350 St. Mary Ave. Details online: business.mbchamber.mb.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—The fourth annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, is today, honouring the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities.

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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.

Back to Parliament

POLICY BRIEFING

Publication Date: Monday, September 16, 2024

Advertising Deadline: Tuesday, September 10, 2024

Government House Leader Steven MacKinnon said before the summer break that the Liberals will be “ruthlessly focused on making lives better for Canadians” in the fall. What are the struggles facing Canadians, and how can these issues be addressed when Parliament returns?

How might the anticipation of a federal election, which will occur next October at the latest, affect the agenda or the decorum in Parliament in the fall?

What legislation that was left on hold during the summer break should be prioritized in the fall? What new legislation could be introduced?

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