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THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR, NO. 2160

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 \$5.00

NEWS

Senate aims to serve up pharmacare for Thanksgiving

BY STUART BENSON

With the dissolution of the Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence agreement increasing the chances of an early election, the Senate has given a committee until Thanksgiving to complete its study of the agreement's marquee pharmacare legislation.

The Senate Social Affairs, Science, and Technology Committee begins studying the proposed pharmacare legislation, Bill C-64, on Sept. 18, with testimony from Health Minister Mark Holland (Ajax, Ont.), Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux, and representatives from Health Canada, Canada's Drug Agency, and the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance.

On Sept. 19, the committee will hear from policy experts from the

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Health Minister Mark Holland vowed to have agreements signed, and 'drugs flowing in every jurisdiction' by next April, once the pharmacare legislation has passed the Senate and receives royal assent. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

Plan to bring 10,000 Uyghur refugees to Canada off to slow start, says advocacy group

BY NEIL MOSS

Progress has been slow on a new program to resettle Uyghur refugees in Canada as an advocacy group says none have yet to arrive after nine months.

In February 2023, the House of Commons unanimously agreed to call on the government to "urgently leverage" Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) refugee and humanitarian resettlement program to "expedite" 10,000 Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims to come to Canada in 2024 and 2025.

The House of Commons motion sponsored by Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que.) set in motion the creation of the resettlement program to help vulnerable Uyghurs stuck in third countries in between China and safety.

Zuberi's motion followed a previous Conservative motion sponsored by MP Michael Chong (Wellington-Halton Hills, Ont.) that passed unanimously in

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NEWS

Poilievre says he can negotiate a softwood lumber pact with the U.S., but trade analysts are skeptical

BY NEIL MOSS

As Pierre Poilievre lambastes the Liberal government for failing to secure a softwood lumber pact with the United States, trade

observers question if a Conservative-led government could fare any better in the face of U.S. obduracy.

The federal government is once again launching a trade dispute over increased American

duties on Canadian softwood lumber, but the Conservative leader said last month that the Liberals "failed" to reach an agreement with Washington, remarking that "only" Conservatives

"will deliver a deal for Canada's forestry workers."

Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) noted that then-Conservative

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Byelection nail-biter: NDP fills its Dance card in Winnipeg, while Sauvé shows out for the Bloc



New Democrat Leila Dance, right, will soon join caucus members like Blake Desjarlais, left, in Ottawa after winning the Elmwood-Transcona, Man., byelection on Sept. 16. Screenshot courtesy of CBC News

Like teachers welcoming mid-semester student transfers, NDP Leader **Jagmeet Singh** and Bloc Québécois Leader **Yves-François Blanchet** will greet new members of their respective caucuses this fall, following victories in the Sept. 16 byelections.

New Democrat **Leila Dance** helped her party retain its seat in the Winnipeg riding of Elmwood-Transcona, Man., while **Louis-Philippe Sauvé** squeezed out a win for the Bloc in LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que., upsetting a safe Liberal seat while doing so.

According to preliminary results from Elections Canada, Dance held off her Conservative rival **Colin Reynolds** with a four-point margin, earning 48.1 per cent of the votes (13,606 in total). Liberal **Ian MacIntyre** placed a distant third, with 4.8 per cent of the vote.

Singh called Dance's victory "a big victory for working families," in a social media post. "Our movement is growing—and we're going to keep working for Canadians and building that movement to stop Conservative cuts before they start."

Over in Quebec, the results were called shortly before 3 a.m., and less than one point and 248 votes separated Sauvé from second-place Liberal finisher **Laura Palestini**, who earned 27.1 per cent of the vote to Sauvé's 28 per cent. NDP candidate **Craig Sauvé** placed a close third, with 26.1 per cent of the vote, and only 374 votes behind Palestini.

"The victory is historic, and all of Quebec will speak with a stronger voice in Ottawa," Blanchet posted in French in a celebratory message on X.

The pair of byelections were announced on July 28 following

the resignations of former Liberal cabinet minister **David Lametti** in Quebec, and the NDP's **Daniel Blaikie** in Manitoba.

These are the third and fourth byelections to be held this year, and they are the first ones to take place outside of Ontario with voters in Toronto-St. Paul's having gone to the polls in late June, and those in the riding of Durham casting ballots last in March.

Sen. Lankin to bow out early



Independent Senator Frances Lankin will retire early on Oct. 21. *The Hill Times file photograph*

Ontario Senator **Frances Lankin** will be taking her leave from the Red Chamber earlier than expected. In a Sept. 16 press release, Lankin announced her pending retirement effective Oct. 21.

The Independent Senator's mandatory retirement date—i.e. her 75th birthday—isn't until April 2029.

Lankin was appointed to the Senate in March 2016 after a career in the public service that included 11 years as an Ontario

NDP MPP and cabinet minister, and another decade-plus as head of United Way Toronto. Prior to joining the Senate, she was a member of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, and she currently sits on the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

"It's been an honour and a privilege to be a member of Canada's Upper Chamber. Collaborating with exceptional colleagues from all groups in the Senate of Canada, for the benefit of all Canadians, has been an incredible experience as my political career draws to a close," Lankin said in the release. "I look forward to retirement in the wonderful company of family and friends. I will be returning to my community volunteering roots and look forward to discovering new ways to continue making a difference."

Former senator Lois Wilson dies

Former independent senator **Lois Wilson** died, aged 97, in a Fredericton, N.B., hospital on Sept. 13.



Retired senator Lois Wilson died on Sept. 13. *The Hill Times file photograph*

"There was no one in the world quite like Lois Wilson. Extraordinary doesn't do justice to this magnificent human being. She won't 'Rest in Peace.' She will advocate, persist, create, demand and inspire until the Reign of God is among us. Hallelujah!" Liberal MP **Rob Oliphant** posted on X on Sept. 13.

Born in Winnipeg in 1927, Wilson followed in the family business. Her father **E.G.D. (Gard) Freeman** was a United Church minister, and she became one, too, in 1965. Her husband **Roy Wilson** was also a minister, and the couple ministered together in Winnipeg and across Ontario in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Her career was of many "firsts" and breaking the stained-glass ceiling, according to her Sept. 15 obituary in *Broadview* magazine: the Canadian Council of Churches's first woman president (1976), the United Church's first woman moderator (1980), and the first Canadian president of the World Council of Churches (1983-1991).

Outside of the church, she was chancellor of Lakehead University (1990-2000), and was appointed by **Jean Chrétien** to the Senate in 1998. She sat as an independent—before such a thing was fashionable—and led Canada's first parliamentary delegation to North Korea in 2000. She hit the Red Chamber's mandatory retirement age in 2002.

Wilson also had four children, wrote 10 books, and received countless honours for her work in human rights and social justice, including the Order of Canada.

"The legions of us who were inspired, challenged & lifted up by the remarkable Lois Wilson are beyond measure. Her flame flickers & then blazes even brighter as we now take her light forward," posted former Amnesty International Canada head **Alex Neve** on X on Sept. 13.

"REST IN POWER Mentor/Moderator/Senator Lois Wilson. Thank you for your courage and your honesty about both Church and State," posted former Ontario NDP MPP **Cheri DiNovo** that same day.

MP Kirsty Duncan writes of women in STEM

Liberal MP **Kirsty Duncan**'s new book, *The Exclusion Effect*, was released on Sept. 3.

Published by Sutherland House, Duncan's memoir is based on her pre-political career in the sciences when—armed with her new PhD in medical geography—she led a research team to Norway, but her work was sidelined by harassment, sexism, and privilege from her fellow scientists. It's a story that's all too familiar for many women in the sciences.

"She makes a powerful argument for cultural and institutional change to ensure girls and women their rightful place in the scientific community," reads the promotional blurb.



Then-science minister Kirsty Duncan in 2019. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

The five-term MP for Etobicoke Centre, Ont., and former science minister—who's been on medical leave since January 2023 while recovering from a cancer diagnosis—dedicates the book to her partner, former Liberal MP **Sven Spengemann**.

The Exclusion Effect is Duncan's second book. Her first, *Hunting the 1918 Flu: One Scientist's Search for a Killer Virus*, was published in 2003 by the University of Toronto Press.

Roméo Dallaire brings his book to Ottawa on Oct. 27



Former senator and retired general Roméo Dallaire. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Speaking of new books, former senator and retired lieutenant-general **Roméo Dallaire** is resuming his book tour this fall.

Dallaire was set to promote his latest book, *The Peace: A Warrior's Journey*, this past spring, but a health setback forced him to postpone the tour.

"I had over six months, seven months, of a variety of pneumonia and things on my kidneys and God knows what else," Dallaire told CTV's *Power Play* with **Vassy Kapelos** last week, explaining that doctors found a lingering infection he'd caught during a mission in Cambodia more than 30 years ago which was affecting his prostate and kidneys.

"I have come through all the tests ... I am now ready to take on all the duties that I used to have," the 78-year-old said, crediting his wife **Marie** for her support.

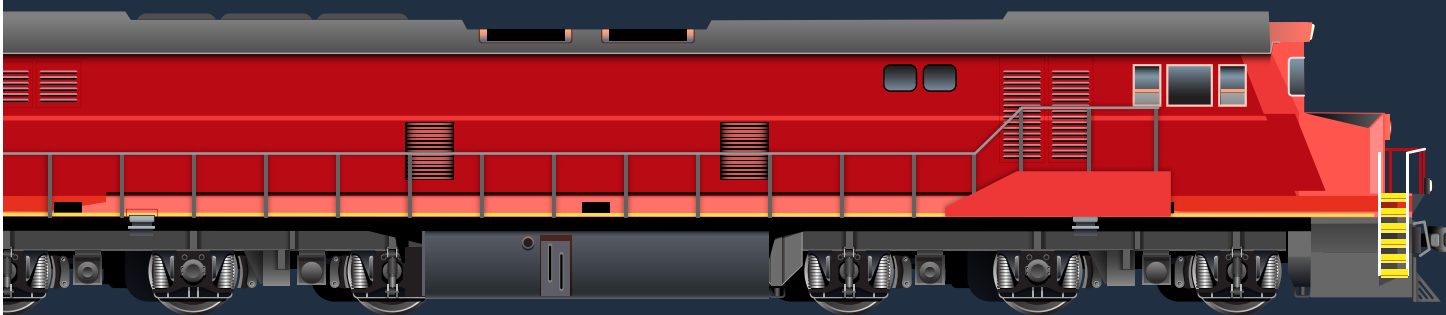
Dallaire is scheduled to be in Ottawa to chat about his new book on Oct. 27 at Library and Archives

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CANADA SHOULD INCENTIVIZE INVESTMENT IN SUPPLY CHAINS, **NOT CHASE IT AWAY.**

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WHY:



News

Politicos defend protest against Russian war doc after TIFF scraps official festival screening

The Toronto International Film Festival ‘made an error in judgment,’ says Sen. Donna Dasko. ‘We are a free society; people can object, and raise their voices against what they see.’

BY STUART BENSON

The Toronto International Film Festival’s decision to “cast itself as the victim” over protests of a controversial film documenting Russian soldiers in occupied Ukraine has compounded a “really bad judgement call” with even worse crisis communications, says Pendulum Groups’ Yaroslav Baran. However, while Ukrainian Canadians who protested the film’s screening say they are fighting to correct TIFF’s bad editorial decisions, the Centre for Free Expression says the inclusion of complex and difficult conversations on both sides of the conflict is essential to Canadian democracy.

The controversial *Russians at War* documentary by Russian-Canadian filmmaker Anastasia Trofimova was pulled from its official screenings at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) last weekend, but the festival announced it would instead be screened at its Lightbox Theatre in Toronto beginning Sept. 17.

The film had originally been scheduled to premiere as part of the festival’s official lineup on Sept. 13, but the day before, TIFF announced it would be pausing all screenings that weekend due to “significant threats to festival operations and public safety.”

In the statement, TIFF said it continued to stand firm in its defence of the film, saying it is “in no way” Russian propaganda. However, it had ultimately decided to pause screenings “to ensure the safety of all festival guests, staff, and volunteers.”

“This is an unprecedented move for TIFF,” the statement continued, adding that the festival remained “committed to screening it when it is safe to do so.”

The Toronto Police Service said the decision to pause the screenings was made “independently by event organizers, and was not based on any recommendation from Toronto Police.”

“We were aware of the potential for protests, and had planned to have officers present to ensure public safety,” the police statement said.

During the week before TIFF’s decision to pause screenings, large crowds of protesters organized by Ukrainian community groups like the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) gathered outside festival theatres.

The film’s producers called TIFF’s decision “heartbreaking.”

“This is not a win for Canadians, including Ukrainian Canadians,” reads the statement shared by Sean Farnel, a consulting producer.

The statement also condemns comments made by Ukrainian and Canadian officials and politicians, including Yulia Kovaliv, Ukraine’s Ambassador to Canada; Oleh Nikolenko, Ukraine’s consul general in Toronto; Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.); Liberal MP Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Ont.); and Independent Senators Stanley Kutcher (Nova Scotia) and Donna Dasko (Ontario).

“Their irresponsible, dishonest, and inflammatory public statements have incited the violent hate that has led to TIFF’s painful decision,” the statement said. “This temporary suppression is shockingly unCanadian.”

On Sept. 12, following TIFF’s decision to pause screenings, Baker posted on social media, saying “we did it” in celebration, and thanked those who had protested the film for their work to “make this happen.”

“The film is [inconsistent] with Canadian values and has no place in Canada,” Baker wrote.

Near the end of her press conference at the Liberal caucus retreat on Sept. 10, Freeland also echoed the “grave concerns” the Ukrainian Canadian community raised, which she said she shared.

“It’s not right for Canadian public money to be supporting the screening and production of a film like this,” Freeland told reporters, but stopped short of calling for the film to be removed from the festival.

“There is very clearly good and evil in this war,” Freeland said. “We, as a country, have to be very, very clear that there can be no moral equivalency in our understanding of this conflict.”

The documentary—a Canada-France co-production—was partially funded by the Canadian Media Fund, which provided \$340,000 to TVO, which independently chose which productions to support.

While TVO had defended the film as “anti-war” in a Sept.

9 statement, and planned to broadcast the documentary on its television channel in the coming months, TVO’s board of directors released a statement announcing it would no longer be associated with the film following mounting pressure.

“We have listened to the Ukrainian-Canadian community and their thoughtful and heartfelt input,” reads the Sept. 10 statement from Chris Day, TVO’s board chair, adding that the broadcaster would be “reviewing the process by which this project was funded and our brand leveraged.”

Baker did not respond to *The Hill Times*’ request for comment by publication deadline, and Freeland’s office declined to comment and referred back to her initial comments.

In a Sept. 16 interview with *The Hill Times*, Kutcher called TIFF’s decision to continue screenings “extremely disappointing,” and said that it reflects a “problematic hubris and unwillingness to understand the difference between soft propaganda and critical cultural commentary.”

While Kutcher said he could excuse the film’s initial inclusion in the festival, TIFF’s decision to “double down” despite the protests and criticism demonstrates its organizers have no interest in understanding its error.

Instead of trying to promote “critical and difficult discussion of challenging topics,” which Kutcher said is “necessary and essential for films to do,” he said that TIFF has instead chosen to “parrot propaganda derived from a malignant state.”

Kutcher also noted that the festival had chosen to do so in spite of recent reports from the U.S. Department of Justice, which last week alleged that RT—previously Russia Today—now functions as a “de facto arm of Russia’s intelligence apparatus.”

On Sept. 13, American Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that “Kremlin-backed” media outlets had sought to covertly “undermine democracy in the United States, but also to meddle in the sovereign affairs of countries around the world.”

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly (Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que.) confirmed that Canada was one of those countries in a statement released the same day.

“It is deeply concerning to learn that RT has acquired and managed other pro-Russia assets, including cyber actors who have previously carried out information operations and caused cyber incidents against Western targets, including Canadian critical infrastructure,” Joly’s statement said.

On Sept. 4, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted two Russian RT employees it accused of illegally funnelling US\$9.7-million into a Tennessee-based content-creation company to spread pro-Russian propaganda. While the indictment didn’t name the outlet, its description has identified it as Tenet Media, a company founded by two Canadian right-wing commentators: Lauren Chen and her husband, Liam Donovan.

Dasko told *The Hill Times* that given everything we now know about RT, claims of “independence” by the film’s director Trofimova—a former RT producer—“completely lack credibility.”

“As far as I’m concerned, this film is a whitewash of the Russian army and trying to portray it sympathetically,” Dasko said in a Sept. 16 interview.

Dasko also rejected characterization of the protests of the film—in which she took part as a Torontonians and supporter of the Ukrainian community—as calls for censorship.

“TIFF already makes these decisions when it decides which films will be included in the lineup,” Dasko said. “They made an error in judgment, and the protests spoke to that. We are a free society; people can object, and raise their voices against what they see.”

Yaroslav Baran, a co-founder of communications firm Pendulum Group and prominent Ukrainian-Canadian advocate, agreed that the initial decision to include the film in the festival lineup could be attributed to a “simple lapse in judgment.”

However, he said the continued insistence on presenting the film and TIFF’s response to the public protests and criticism seem “somewhat clueless and divorced from reality.”

“You don’t do an ‘inside the minds of the soldiers committing the atrocities’ while the atrocities are still being committed,” explained Baran, a past president of the UCC and current chair of the Canada-Ukraine Foundation’s board.

While Baran said he views the issue through a personal lens, from his professional perspective as a crisis communications expert, he said TIFF’s response to the criticism was far more egregious than its initial mistake. Unlike TVO, which Baran said unequivocally admitted its mistake and chose not to broadcast the film, TIFF has decided to “cast itself as the victim.”

“Rather than admitting its error, [TIFF] took the decision to disparage the Ukrainian community by suggesting they will be violent,” Baran explained, noting

that while the festival’s suggestion had been extremely offensive, it was equally short-lived as an excuse.

“Toronto Police said they had no knowledge of threats and didn’t recommend postponing ... so this was just a slur attempting to change the channel,” Baran explained. “It was a terrible crisis communications, and only compounded that original really bad judgment call.”

Centre for Free Expression decries censorship of Russia-Ukraine ‘complexity’ in democratic discourse

James Turk, director of the Centre for Free Expression, said he is troubled by what he sees as calls for “censorship” from Canadian politicians and TVO’s subsequent response to remove the film from its future broadcast schedule.

“I think both are inappropriate and a threat to freedom of expression,” Turk told *The Hill Times*. “It’s a threat to the kind of public discourse that’s essential to a democratic society.”

Turk also disagrees with the description of the film as “Russian propaganda.”

While Turk hasn’t seen the film, he said that—based on the descriptions and initial trailer—it depicts disillusioned and demoralized soldiers, and attempts to provide the same kind of “human picture” the director has documented in films about the victims of ISIS and the critical mineral extraction in the Congo.

“If we’re ever going to have a better, proper understanding of this war—that will lead to some sort of resolution—it means having a realistic understanding of as much of the human dynamics as possible,” Turk explained. “Instead, what [Freeland] did, and we see this frequently in wartime, is the effort to portray it as a battle between good and evil ... and projects a view of the other side as inhuman beasts.”

Instead, Turk said the film presents the conflict as far more complex than that simple narrative, and he finds it troubling to see demands for censorship from those “who don’t want this conflict to be understood for what it is, in all its complexity.”

“Of course, freedom of expression has its limits, but there’s no grounds that this film promotes hate, is inaccurate, or that it’s propaganda for the Russian government,” Turk said. “Yet they’re giving in to public pressure to deny the public access to it.”

“Democracy is fundamentally about an ongoing public discourse about what’s legitimate and what’s not legitimate in society, and public discourse has to be able to carry on despite some people not liking it,” Turk said. “When politicians or a public television authority deny the public the information to inform that discourse, it undermines democracy.”

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Setting the stage for a proper parliamentary rumble

Just like the wrestling pros, politicians on Parliament Hill are posturing for a prime position come election time.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, Bloc Leader Yves-François Blanchet, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

to their normal parking space in polls, it is not where Singh needs to be if he wants to pick up from the Liberals' potential collapse.

Meanwhile, Justin Trudeau's plan to move Liberal numbers up on a quarterly basis has not yet worked. While his party has gone from cagey about his leadership to almost complacent, the public has yet to show the prime minister any benefit of the doubt. From likability to winnability, the PM's ratings are still in the toilet. If he is hanging around, he needs time to lift himself out of his current political grave.

As he's failed to retain LaSalle-Émard-Verdun in Quebec, he may be subject to a personal intervention from the few people closest to him who would not want to see him personally lose to Poilievre—which appears increasingly likely today. It is fair to speculate that if the Liberals can't retain long-held seats in Toronto and Montreal now, how can they avoid a significant loss whenever the election comes? This prime minister's wins have come from doing well in Toronto,

Montreal, and Atlantic Canada, among other places. But, just in Atlantic Canada, our recent Abacus polling showed the Liberals way behind the Conservatives.

The Bloc Québécois will now start to creep back into our Anglo minds as what they decide to do in the return of the confidence-vote roulette matters. I don't think I've ever seen as much coverage of the Bloc and their charming leader Yves-François Blanchet as there's been this past week since the last election. Blanchet has the best arrangement in Ottawa: he only needs to do whatever carries favour for him in Quebec. Nobody is really threatening his Quebec fiefdom, and he knows it. He'll broker one day, bluster another, and bust it up if it suits him.

There is a greater likelihood of Trudeau stepping aside this fall than a failed confidence vote triggering an election during the remainder of this year. On the former, the prime minister says he isn't leaving, so if we take him at his word and there isn't a confidence vote accident, there will be no federal election in 2024. Shenanigans will still abound, but 2025 will be the year the Royal Rumble happens.

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

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



identally, an emerging favourite of my son's. He loves the over-the-top language, the posing, and then the thoroughly choreographed rumbles.

But yes, expect every confidence motion to be covered in nauseating detail. Watch the Conservative leader take jabs at everyone, hoping to bruise an ego, and push an election button. Pierre Poilievre knows the people who are supporting him in the polls will go along for a campaign of agitation as they are the ones who want change now.

While one leader is posturing for elections, two others are in no hurry to have one. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh is going to need as much time as he can get to re-program Canadians on who he is, and why he and his party are an alternative to the Liberals. While Singh may have made reasonable policy gains in his marriage of political convenience with the Trudeau government, it won him no political benefits. Our recent Abacus poll had him and the NDP at 19 per cent nationally behind the Liberals. While that is close

OTTAWA—Parliamentary school is back in session, and it will be one of the most ram-bunctious sittings we have seen in a while.

With the Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence agreement blown to smithereens, we are back to the place where confidence-vote posturing resembles *Friday Night SmackDown* on Sportsnet—coin-

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Comment

Two scenarios leading to Liberal oblivion

Canadians will reject the Grits in the next election if Trudeau stays put, or 'boring' Mark Carney ascends to the throne.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



It looks as if the Liberals are toast, whether the leader is named Justin Trudeau, left, or Mark Carney, writes Andrew Caddell. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

KAMOURASKA, QUE.—Last week, I predicted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would recognize his leadership of the Liberal Party doomed its electoral chances, and would resign sometime next year. I compared it to Pierre Trudeau's reluctant decision to leave in 1984.

Since then, the political landscape has changed with the appointment of former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor Mark Carney as a special economic adviser to Trudeau, and a *Globe and Mail* article outlining Trudeau's determination to stay on as Liberal leader at all costs.

The two stories offered different narratives. On the one hand, Carney's ascension puts him in a strategic spot for the big chair in the Prime Minister's Office. On the other hand, Trudeau doesn't want to vacate that chair.

I still think Trudeau must resign, as each time he opens his mouth it is not the message but the messenger who is getting savaged. In Quebec, his government's failure to defend the Constitution has made him a pariah among anglophones. And every time he announces another spending project, average Canadians recoil at the waste of tax dollars while buying a house is out of reach.

I am not sure he grasps how angry traditional Liberals are at what we call "Canada's first NDP government." And that anger is not just over the past three years, but also going back to 2015 when the promise to run "modest deficits" opened the door to an orgy of spending.

When the pandemic hit, and the PMO ignored the Finance Department's cautious approach, pandemic expenditures like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit cost hundreds of billions of dollars. According to the Fraser Institute, Canada was second only to Japan in pandemic borrowing of 33 industrialized countries. Since then, we have seen record deficits, low productivity, soaring interest rates, and a one-third increase in the size of the public service. So, the arrival of a careful hand on the financial tiller like Carney might bring so-called "Blue Liberals" back to the fold.

Meanwhile, Trudeau's original Class of 2015 has seen many dropouts. In the past few months, more ministers and MPs have announced their intention to leave. There is a reason politicians say they are leaving politics "to spend more time with their families." Either no one in the PMO will take

their calls, or they won't beat their brains out campaigning to make a concession speech early on election night.

As long as Trudeau is prime minister, Pierre Poilievre will win the next election. However, that is Poilievre's Achilles' heel: his strength depends on the dislike of Trudeau. Almost half of Canadians who plan to vote Conservative will do so to get rid of Trudeau.

So, let's play out the Carney scenario. On the plus side, he is no Trudeau, but rather an economist with an international pedigree, and experience outside of politics. And he could attract new candidates and staff to renew the Liberals.

However, people who have worked with him say he's a lousy communicator, and I can attest: his speeches read like treatises. Elias Makos, who hosts a talk show on CJAD radio in Montreal, summarizes Carney in three words: "He is boring." This is the electoral kiss of death.

In an attempt to make him appear more of a "man of the people," Carney has been described in the media as "a former Harvard goalie." But goaltenders are often the outliers on a hockey team, and Carney was a third-string goaltender at Harvard, not the Halifax Mooseheads.

If he has the chance to run, Carney may suffer the fate of John Turner, Kim Campbell, and so many other anointed leaders who fell flat. He may not have the time to establish a political persona or policies, depending on when a leadership convention takes place, and the timing of the next election, scheduled for Oct. 20, 2025.

Although born in the Northwest Territories and raised in Alberta, it will be hard for him to appeal to your average pipefitter, farmer, or barista: his 13 years at Goldman Sachs give him an air of privilege and wealth. As for political liabilities, his emphasis on the environment won't play well in the West, and his Anglo name won't resonate in Quebec. Whether the leader is named Trudeau or Carney, it looks as if the Liberals are toast.

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

The Hill Times

Global warming remains in uncharted territory

The trend in average global temperature has been racing upwards for decades, breaching the pre-industrial target for more than a whole year.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



of each assessment report, the scientific document upon which the IPCC's now-annual conferences are based.

The data and conclusions in the hundreds of pages of the reports are valid and unbiased, but the executive summary—the only part most journalists will ever read—is a political document negotiated between the scientists and the governments that are paying for the whole IPCC enterprise.

The scientists are already hampered by their own professional reluctance to discuss their private and tentative conclusions in public. Alas, that handicaps them in their protracted arm-wrestle over the executive summary with governments that are deeply concerned about climate change, but always want to avoid large spending commitments right now.

I'm relying on private information from some scientists who have been involved in the process, but the governments usually win. ("He who pays the piper calls the tune.") This may explain the widening gap between what the IPCC says, and what we can see with our own eyes: monster wildfires, unprecedented heatwaves, killer landslides, and all the rest.

So what is causing all this heat and havoc? Nobody knows for certain yet why the planet's average surface temperature has jumped more than two-tenths of a degree Celsius in just one year. However, the prime suspects are feedbacks that have been triggered by our own emissions-related heating and are also adding to the warming.

There are three leading candidates. Melting ice and snow are uncovering open water and dark rock that absorb more sunlight. Cleaning up the emissions from 60,000 giant merchant ships has eliminated the "ship tracks" that used to reflect much incoming sunlight. The huge forest fires that are devastating the Americas may be a much bigger feedback than we thought.

What can we do about all this? The stock answer is "cut your greenhouse gas emissions," and we should move as fast as we can on that front, but it is delusional to go on pretending that this is all we can and must do. After 30 years of trying, our emissions are still growing almost every year (although we may start to make a little progress soon).

We need to hold the heat down while the emissions work proceeds, or the growing chaos, damage, and violence will make further progress on any front impossible. The various ways to do that are called "geoengineering" or climate engineering, and for a long time it was taboo. That never made sense, and now the prejudice is fading fast.

Geoengineering is a very big subject, but if you're interested I recently wrote a book about it.

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

LONDON, U.K.—No sirens are blaring, nobody even looks frightened—but they should be. Last week the world moved into uncharted territory. The "aspirational" goal of never allowing the average global temperature to rise more than 1.5 degrees Celsius higher than the pre-industrial norm (+1.5 C) has been breached for a whole year—and probably forever.

"Never" is a long time, so the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC)—when it set that target in 2018—actually said that it should remain achievable until at least 2050. You may have noticed that the year is only 2024, and we are already there. Something has gone wrong, and there is a scramble to cover it up.

This takes two forms. One is to say that it's just a temporary effect related to the recent El Niño, a cyclical ocean event that occasionally raises the average global temperature a bit for nine to 12 months, then subsides again.

The trouble with that explanation is that the "anomaly"—as climate scientists are calling the unexpected warming—was twice as big as any El Niño event has ever been. It also began months before this El Niño got going—and it did not go away when the El Niño died out back in April. The "anomaly" is still there.

So much for that attempt to explain the "anomaly" away, but there's another. What if a whole year above +1.5 C doesn't count as "breaching the limit"? It doesn't, according to the IPCC's counting rules. Those rules say it won't be reached until the average global temperature has been +1.5 C for the past 20 years—so about 10 years from now, in practice.

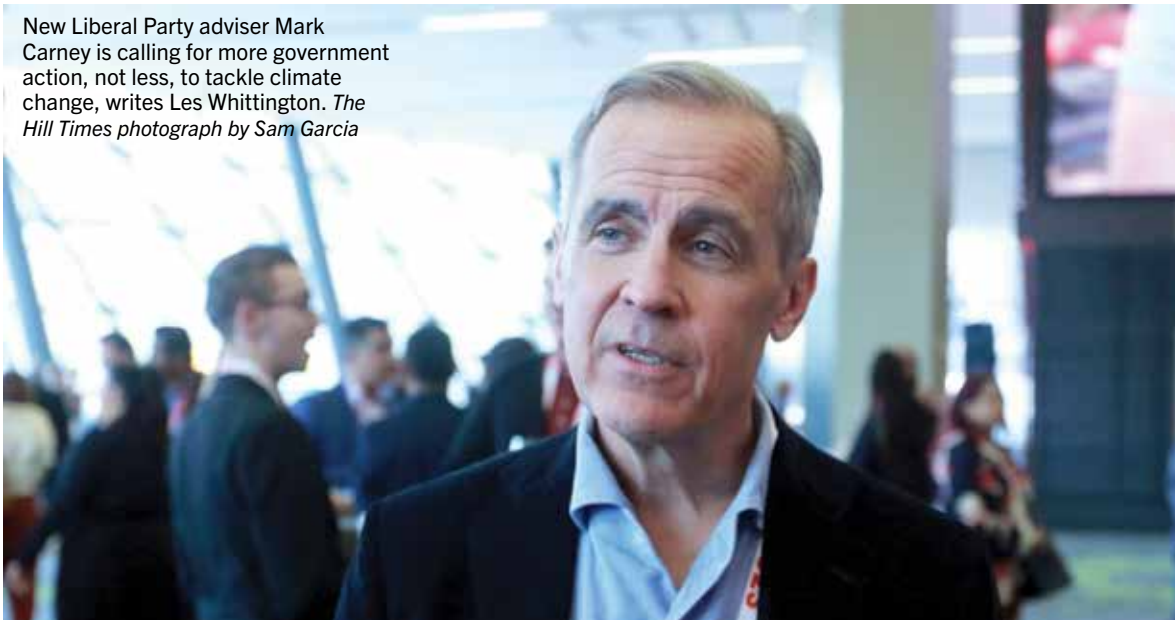
Calculating long-term averages for global temperature made sense when the climate was basically stable and just jiggled around a bit from year to year, but those days are long gone.

The trend in average global temperature has been relentlessly upwards for decades now. To insist on mixing in cooler temperatures from 20 years ago to come up with a number that understates the reality of the present would be self-deception at best.

What would it be at worst? I wouldn't use the words "deliberate misrepresentation," but something complicated and largely invisible happens at the conclusion

Carney's advice to Liberals puts low-carbon future above all

Mark Carney made it clear he will be doubling down on the need for the government and Canadians to move heaven and earth to build a low-carbon economy.



New Liberal Party adviser Mark Carney is calling for more government action, not less, to tackle climate change, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

With the media primarily interested in the politics of Carney's appointment, there wasn't much detailed coverage of how he views the dynamics of the country's economy.

Despite the seeming unpopularity among voters today of anything to do with reducing Canada's carbon use, Carney made it clear he will be doubling down on the need for the government and Canadians to move heaven and earth to build a low-carbon economy.

He said completing the low-carbon energy transition will make the difference between success and failure when it comes to this country's long-term prosperity in a rapidly changing world. "Every major economy is accelerating their energy transition, and being low carbon is becoming a key driver of competitiveness," he told reporters at the Liberal caucus meeting in Nanaimo, B.C., last week.

Achieving low-carbon goals "is an issue for our manufacturing sector, it's an issue for whether or not we are going to lead in information technology, it's an issue for whether we are going to retain our ability to trade into the major markets," Carney asserted.

At a time when Canadians appear to see the federal carbon tax

Continued on page 9

Les Whittington



Need to Know

OTTAWA—Mark Carney has finally entered the political fray, although in a special role that will allow him—at least for

now—to go right to the heart of government decision-making without having to bother with all the issues around getting elected.

Be that as it may, his arrival on the scene as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's now-official adviser on the economy gave the Liberals

something upbeat to put in the window as their caucus prepared to return to Parliament facing mostly bad news.

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Editorial

Stamping out systemic racism should be a top priority

On its first day back for the fall sitting, the House of Commons undertook an emergency debate instigated by NDP MP Lori Idlout on the recent spate of killings of First Nations people by the police.

It was a stark reminder of the work that MPs are so often called to do; not only advocating for their constituents' quality of life, but also for their very lives themselves.

"From Aug. 29 to Sept. 8, in just 11 days, Canadian police killed six people. All six were First Nations," Idlout said during her remarks in support of her request for the debate. They were: Jack Piche, Hoss Lightning-Saddleback, Tammy Bateman, Jason West, Daniel Knife, and Steven "Iggy" Dedam. "Two were hit and killed by police vehicles. One was shot in the chest three times during a wellness check. Another was a 15-year-old child who had called police for protection. Two officers shot at him as he ran away. Two others were shot by police responding to service calls."

During the debate, MPs hit on the need for proper resources for traditional law enforcement, as well as the necessity to follow through on calls for Indigenous policing and oversight.

But despite the reams of reports and recommendations, there is still very little accountability and action to get the need-

ed reforms to ensure these deaths stop happening, and there is a major barrier at the heart of the issue: systemic racism.

"Part of the reason systemic racism still exists is that there is still too much ignorance," Idlout said during the debate. "There is still too much denialism about residential schools, for example. We need to make sure we are opening the eyes of Canada."

Idlout's caucus colleague Charlie Angus also put the issue in stark terms during the debate: "I can tell Members, if there were seven blonde girls found in the McIntyre River, the police would turn the world upside down. I say that while thinking very carefully about what that means. I do not want to pit one group against another, but we need to address the systemic failures. Going forward, we need to address the need to keep communities safe at this time."

During the debate, it was refreshing to see MPs tackling the issue head on, and not attempting to sweep it under the rug with platitudes about "this is not who we are." Because this is what the country was founded on, and the more politicians can push the rest of the country into accepting that, the sooner progress can start to be made on eradicating the injustice.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Liberals shouldn't try to prolong the inevitable, says Ottawa reader

Re: "Federal Liberals face 'wipeout' in R.B.C. blue wave, say pollsters," and "Like his father, Trudeau will know when to quit," (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 11).

I found it an interesting juxtaposition comparing your headline article about a potential Liberal "blue wave" wipeout in British Columbia and columnist Andrew Caddell's prediction that a new Liberal leader will somehow delay the October 2025 general election in order to "establish their brand."

I am curious as to which opposition party Caddell thinks will support such a clearly suicidal move?

With the dire warning of your headline, does Caddell—or the Liberals—think that delaying their overdue reckoning with the voters will somehow prevent that "blue wave" from becoming a "blue tsunami" that will sweep the Grits away from coast to coast?

If the Liberals truly want to be crushed in an election they are already on track to lose, delaying the vote is a surefire way to do it.

Andrew Tyler
 Ottawa, Ont.

The F-word is at the root of the DFO decision to end the cod moratorium

In all the commentary by politicians, the unions, the bureaucrats, and the media about the decision by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to end the commercial cod fishery moratorium, and in all the anger throughout the Canadian fishing communities lies a basic lack of understanding of what drives such decisions in that fantasyland that we call Ottawa. That lack of understanding is shown by a complete and total absence of the F-word.

We must recognise that DFO is a minnow playing among the Ottawa whales: Global Affairs Canada, the Privy Council Office, and the Prime Minister's Office. These are the whales who make the important decisions about the Canadian fishery, and not the minnow called DFO.

The collapse of the Canadian cod fishery—for centuries, a major source of protein for the world—was brought to us by the policies of those Ottawa whales. Thanks to those policies, the East Coast fishery catch rose from about 300,000 tonnes annually to about 800,000 tonnes by the early 1970s when the factory freezer trawlers created a fishing frenzy. The catch then declined, forcing Ottawa to recognize what the East Coast fishing communities had been saying for decades by declaring the moratorium in 1992. They did so without ever mentioning the

F-word, essentially blaming the Canadian fishing communities for the collapse.

Now, many decades later, the Ottawa whales—despite the warnings of the DFO minnow—have ended the moratorium for the very same reasons that have governed their policies for decades: using Canadian fish for trade advantages.

By ending the moratorium, the whales are now obliged—in their minds—to meet the international obligations they have entered into over many years. Obligations that will allow outside access to Canadian fish.

And that is the reason for the end of the moratorium. It is not about quotas; it is not about draggers; it is not about the needs of the East Coast fishing communities. It is about the F-word: foreign.

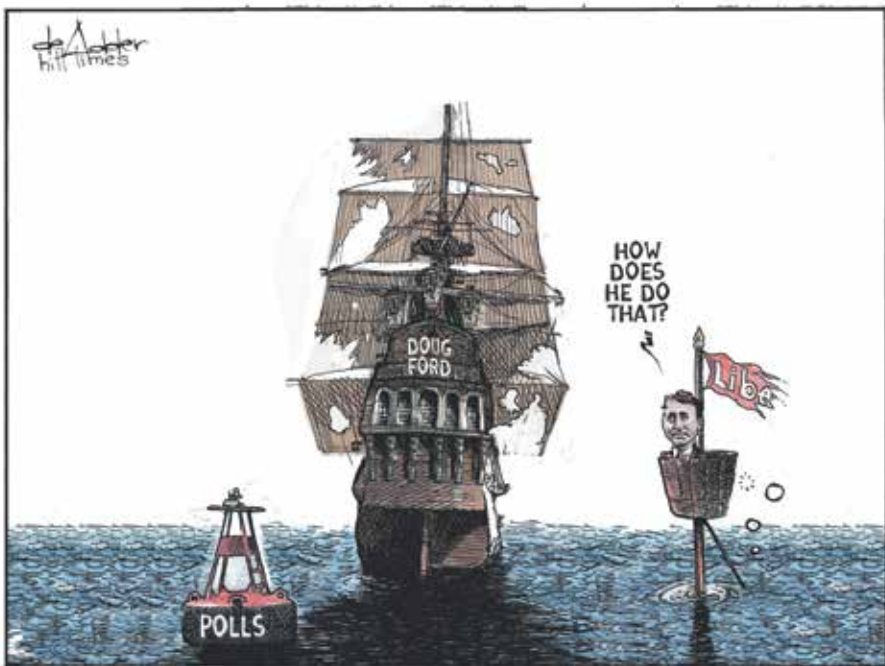
Yet the F-word is never uttered by the politicians, the unions, the bureaucrats, and the media commenting on the end of the moratorium.

No moratorium, and the Ottawa whales are back in business and the F-word reigns supreme.

At the same time, DFO struggles to create credible science with diminished budgets and diminished influence.

Watch this space for the announcement of a new cod collapse.

Jim Winter
 St. John's, N.L.



EDITORIAL

NEWS REPORTERS Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Sophall Duch, Riddhi Kachhela, Irem Koca, and Neil Moss
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PHOTOGRAPHERS Sam Garcia, Andrew Meade, and Cynthia Münster

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 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

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

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Urban and rural voters find themselves on a collision course as Poilievre seeks to unite

The Conservative leader has an opportunity to cement himself in the history books by centring his agenda on core issues that unite Canadians across the urban and rural divide.

Josie Sabatino

Opinion



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is able to identify the nation's mood, define the problem, and give voice to Canadians' concerns, writes Josie Sabatino. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

OTTAWA—Building a lasting legacy can be very tricky for present-day politicians. As Canadian politics becomes increasingly tense and polarized, it becomes much more difficult for party leaders to stand by the pillars of the policy agenda upon which they were first elected. For instance, the resurgence of the Bloc Québécois has put Quebec nationalism back on the agenda. The Liberal Party of Canada has ended up with a vote share largely concentrated in urban centres, while the NDP has strug-

gled to make any kind of gains in urban or rural regions.

Former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper can boast about many things, but perhaps his greatest feat was making incremental gains in the suburbs of urban areas like Toronto and Vancouver, as well as winning previous Liberal-held ridings in Atlantic Canada, and increasing the party's vote share in Quebec. After being denied a majority government in 2006 and 2008, he understood that to win, the Conservative Party would need to focus on pragmatic policy shifts with an emphasis on economic

policies, contrasted by the threat of a government run by the Liberal-NDP-Bloc Québécois coalition.

While the Conservatives would be defeated in 2015 following the Liberal Party's majority win, the Tories walked away with nearly 100 seats, allowing them to receive official opposition status in the House of Commons. With time on the clock until the next election, this meant the Conservatives were able to run a lengthy leadership contest, and rebuild their electoral war chest, all while holding the governing Liberals to account for ethical missteps.

While the party was well positioned from a seat-count perspective, the caucus was made up of representatives for rural held ridings. Up until this past June, the Conservatives had failed in the last three elections to crack the Liberal fortress in the vote-rich 905 region.

Fast forward nine years. Canada is once again on the precipice of a change election that stands to shake up the parliamentary power dynamics, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is at the very centre of the shift.

On the heels of last week's two-year anniversary of his decisive leadership win, Poilievre has much to celebrate. A 20-plus-point lead in the polls has left him with a caucus that is not only motivated, but more importantly, also united and on message.

For anyone who has watched Poilievre's ascension from opposition pitbull to pragmatic frontrunner, early success can be attributed to a couple of things.

Poilievre has shown an affinity for successfully identifying the mood of the country, defining the problem, and giving voice to the concerns that Canadians are feeling. Take the issue of housing for example. In the 2023 federal budget, big commitments made by the Trudeau government focused on health-care transfers, dental care, Indigenous reconciliation, and the transition to clean energy. Housing commitments mostly took the form of previous-

ly announced measures and the rollout of the First Home Savings Account.

Concerns around the lack of housing supply and questions of affordability reached a head that summer just as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was responding that housing wasn't a "primary federal responsibility."

The Conservative leader seized on the moment to indicate he would use parliamentary tools like tabling a private member's bill to put forward solutions such as requiring municipalities to cut red tape to fast-track housing construction in exchange for infrastructure dollars. While the legislation was ultimately defeated, Poilievre used the bill to solidify his policy chops, and demonstrate there was a real plan behind the slogans.

This is a problem that unites Canadians from one end of the country to the other, across urban and rural divides. This message works at the doors, whether candidates are in the suburbs of Toronto or northern British Columbia.

Poilievre's strategic decision to focus on four core policy pillars that will form the basis of his election platform and boil them down into catchy soundbites is working. These are the right messages at the right time, and leave little room for gaffes or missteps.

Legacies aren't built solely on electoral wins. While Poilievre has had quite the run as opposition leader, he has an opportunity to cement himself in the history books by centring his agenda on core issues that unite Canadians across the urban and rural divide.

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

The Hill Times

Carney's advice to Liberals puts low-carbon future above all

Continued from page 7

as an unfair intrusion by an activist government, Carney called for more government action, not less, to tackle climate change.

He said there's a "huge range of things" the federal government, the provinces, and stakeholders need to do to drive the low-carbon energy transition. "We have to help our companies become more competitive," he remarked.

Canadians need "real policies, we need solutions, not slogans," Carney added in a clear shot at Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre who calls the former Bank of Canada governor "Carbon-tax Carney," and has popularized "Axe the Tax" without explaining

what he would do about climate change.

On that topic, Carney told a Senate committee in the spring he would be open to something other than a carbon tax, but only if the alternative would be more effective. "What's critical in my view... is that if something is going to be changed, that something at least as good is put in its place. Ideally, if you're going to change something, you put in place something better that still has that credibility and predictability," he said.

As an economist, Carney would obviously know that a carbon tax is a market signal that is the most effective way to influence economic activity—something economists of all stripes have always agreed upon.

And it's not at all clear what a replacement for the carbon tax would be. As Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault put it last week: "If someone in this country, on this planet, in this solar system, in this universe, can show me a measure that will give us 40 per cent of our 2030 emission reduction targets at no cost to Canadians, I'll take it right away. There is no such measure."

Guilbeault was referencing the fact that most Canadian consumers get more money back in a carbon rebate than they spend as a result of the carbon levy. This—and the fact that most middle- and low-income people would be worse off financially if Poilievre were to scrap carbon

pricing—seems lost on the public as a result of the relentless effort by federal and provincial conservatives to mislead Canadians about how the federal carbon tax impacts their wallets.

All this means that with Carney spearheading Trudeau's economic strategy, there's no reason to think the Liberals—unlike New Democrats—will backtrack on their support for a carbon tax as a tool in the effort to save the planet from global warming.

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, whose party appeared to be in danger of shedding a lot of votes to Poilievre's faux overtures to labour, decided days before Parliament reopened to do an about-face on the issue—apparently

hoping to have it both ways in the carbon-pricing controversy.

"We want to see an approach to fighting the climate crisis where it doesn't put the burden on the backs of working people, where big polluters have to pay their fair share," he said, conveniently forgetting *à la* Poilievre about the carbon rebate for consumers. Singh added that his party hasn't figured out its new approach yet.

With the Liberals freed from their deal with the NDP—assuming Trudeau can live with the demands of the Bloc Québécois in exchange for support in the Commons—the government has an opportunity to seek a more centrist position on economic issues. But the commitment to carbon pricing and the low-carbon energy transition as the key to future prosperity is likely, if anything, to be bolstered with Carney involved.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Comment

Shielding Nazis in Canada the wrong use of time, resources



The September 2023 standing ovation MPs gave Second World War veteran Yaroslav Hunka is still fresh in Canadians' minds, writes Scott Taylor. Screenshot courtesy of CBC News

Not releasing the names of alleged Nazi war criminals who entered Canada would be a continued protection of individuals who perpetrated the Holocaust, or collaborated with the Nazis.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Earlier this month, there were stories in both *The Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen* revealing that Library and Archives Canada is preparing to release a list of nearly 900 names of alleged Nazi war criminals who entered Canada following the Second World War.

With the passage of time, it can be safely assumed that the overwhelming majority of these individuals are long since deceased.

Those Canadian officials responsible for allowing these Nazi war criminals entry—and failing to bring them to justice for the war crimes they committed—are most certainly no longer among the living. So, one would think this would be a rather routine release of formerly classified gov-

ernment information. However, that has not proved to be the case.

The contentious files include documents compiled by the 1986 federal government war crimes commission headed by Justice Jules Deschênes. One such document is entitled “Master List of alleged war criminals resident in Canada with a list of sources.” While this particular list contains 774 names, additional files of Nazi scientists and technicians who entered Canada following the war brings that total to 900.

The original news stories revealed that after Library and Archives Canada (LAC) had received an access to information request for the “Master List of Alleged war criminals,” they had conducted a series of consultations with what LAC officials described as a “discrete group of individuals or organizations.” Those consulted included various representatives from Canada’s Ukrainian community, along with other Eastern European diasporas. Not included in the LAC discussions were any Holocaust survivors or Holocaust scholars whom one would think would be the key stakeholders in a decision to release the names of Nazi war criminals.

Also, one would think that all Canadians would be interested in knowing the identity of alleged Nazi war criminals who were allowed to live out their lives peacefully in our midst.

However, many of those consulted by LAC took strong exception to the notion that the list would be made public. One argument put forward was that the release of this information could lead to the prosecution of any of these alleged war criminals who may still be alive. Last

time I checked, there is no statute of limitations on war crimes—and why would long-delayed justice in these cases be objectionable to anyone?

As many of the names on that federal government list are believed to be originally from Ukraine, the Ukrainian community has argued that the release of the names might embarrass their diaspora, and simultaneously provide Russia with fuel for its propaganda machine. One of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s stated reasons for his 2022 invasion of Ukraine was the “denazification” of Ukraine.

Fresh in the minds of many Canadians is the September 2023 political fiasco wherein during a visit from Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, MPs from all parties rose in the House of Commons to give two standing ovations to Second World War veteran Yaroslav Hunka. Then-Speaker of the House Anthony Rota announced Hunka to his fellow parliamentarians, and described Hunka’s wartime service as having “fought against the Russians.”

Subsequently, it was quickly revealed that Hunka had actually served in a Ukrainian Waffen SS division, which was alleged to be involved in war crimes involving the murder of women and children. The backlash from this blunder was heard around the world, and naturally enough amplified by Putin’s propagandists who were quick to make the most

out of western politicians paying tribute to a Nazi.

However, not releasing the names of alleged Nazi war criminals who entered Canada would be a continued protection of individuals who perpetrated the Holocaust, or collaborated with the Nazis.

Yet that is exactly what the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) intends to do with a court challenge to prevent the LAC from making the contentious list public. The UCC has just launched a fundraising drive to solicit \$150,000 to cover the cost of its legal challenge. “It is appalling that the Canadian government could attempt for no good reason to subject innocent Canadians, their family members and descendants to public scorn,” wrote Ihor Michalchyshyn, CEO and executive director of the UCC, in his fundraising plea.

There is a lot to dissect in that, but I’ll give it a go. The LAC would be following the law by releasing information requested under the Access to Information Act. Alleged war criminals as identified by the Deschênes commission do not automatically fall into the category of “innocent” Canadians.

Furthermore, I think Canadians are wise enough to discern that offspring and descendants do not inherit the guilt of crimes committed by their parents. The public scorn of which Michalchyshyn warns should be directed at the successive Canadian governments who first allowed entry to these war criminals, and subsequently protected them as they peacefully lived out their lives without prosecution.

Instead of focusing on the list of Ukrainian Canadians who fought for Hitler’s Nazi regime, why not herald the 40,000 Ukrainian Canadians who fought for Canada, against Hitler in that same war? Maybe put that \$150,000 in the UCC legal challenge into a monument for those Ukrainian Canadian Second World War veterans.

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

The Hill Times



The Ukrainian community has argued that the release of the names might embarrass their diaspora, and simultaneously provide Russia with fuel for their propaganda machine. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Politics: the overlooked determinant of children's health

The commitment of elected officials to prioritize our children's well-being determines how and if policies will be enacted or sustained beyond a single election cycle.

Stelios Georgiades & Ryan Voisin

Opinion



As Parliament resumes and kids head back to school, it's a critical time to reflect on how the policies debated in Ottawa affect the future of children across the country. While the Govern-

ment of Canada's website lists a broad range of personal, social, economic, and environmental factors that determine individual and population health, one critical determinant frequently goes unrecognized: politics. Political decisions play a pivotal role in shaping the environment in which our children grow up.

Policies related to income support, education funding, and health care access directly affect the health and well-being of every new generation. Recent decisions on school food programs, child benefit policies, and health-care funding will likely have immediate and long-term impacts on children's physical and mental health, but a more systemic approach is required. It is time to bring politics into the conversation about determinants of health, and consider their profound impact on children's health and well-being.

It's hard to understate how crucial it is for policymakers to ground their decisions in robust evidence, but the reality is that political cycles upend the continu-

ity required to create transformational child health and well-being initiatives. Election cycles often guide the timing of budgetary decisions, which in turn creates discontinuity between the design and implementation of initiatives—often with negative outcomes for children who need them most. Recognizing and addressing these disruptions can lead to more stable and effective policies for children, youth, and families.

It's not enough to focus solely on the policymakers or the policies they create. Politicians themselves are critical to enacting transformative legislation that can make a real difference in the health and well-being of children in Canada. Tools like UNICEF Canada's Child Rights Impact Assessment provides critical questions politicians should be asking to better understand the implications every piece of legislation has on children and youth. With political will often being the deciding factor, it is the commitment of elected officials to prioritize our children and their

well-being that determines how and if policies will be enacted—and sustained beyond a single election cycle.

It is imperative that politicians at all levels of government not only prioritize children's health and development as a key issue, but also understand the far-reaching impact their decisions have on each and every child in Canada. While there are several bills awaiting Parliament's attention this fall, S-282—a national strategy for children and youth in Canada—promises to provide a framework for all federal and provincial/territorial politicians to align policies and legislation across multiple levels. Bills like this are key to holding politicians and governments accountable for improving child well-being over the long term.

Collaboration between politicians, researchers, practitioners, and advocates—including youth themselves—is essential to improve health outcomes. These experts provide the evidence and insights needed to shape effective policies,

while politicians have the power to refine, promote, and implement these changes. Recognizing politics as a determinant of health enables us to understand and address the indirect ways in which political decisions impact our children's health and well-being. We must strive for more consistent and supportive policies that benefit kids throughout their development. A national strategy for child and youth health can serve as a framework for the way forward.

At the end of the day, children's health and well-being is an issue of great importance to all Canadians, irrespective of political ideology. By recognizing politics as a determinant of health, prioritizing evidence-based policies, and fostering collaboration between all politicians and experts, we can transform the future for kids in Canada. It's time to work together to leverage the power of politics for the benefit of our children's health and well-being. After all, children make up 20 per cent of the population of Canada, and 100 per cent of Canada's future.

Stelios Georgiades is the director of the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University, and McMaster Children's Hospital. Ryan Voisin is the managing director of the Inspiring Healthy Futures network, hosted by Children's Healthcare Canada.

The Hill Times

Support zero-profit grocery stores to fight market failure in the food supply chain

We cannot rely on the private market to solve this problem. The government has recently acknowledged as much in the housing sector—it now needs to do the same in the food sector.

Marissa Alexander & Wade Thorhaug

Opinion



Canada is in the middle of a housing crisis. The private sector has failed to fix the steep cost of housing, and many now recognize it as a market failure.

Accordingly, in last year's budget, the federal government committed to funding non-profit solutions like housing co-operatives.

We are also dealing with a crisis in the food supply chain. According to Statistics Canada, prices have gone up by an astounding 20 per

cent from 2020 to 2023, and 23 per cent of the population is food insecure. Food insecurity affects historically marginalized groups the most: 40 per cent of Black Canadians, and 37 per cent of Indigenous people are food insecure.

Reports by the Competition Bureau and an all-party committee on agri-food found big grocers have been taking advantage of inflation and their dominant market share with predatory pricing, paying suppliers less and charging consumers more.

Put simply, this is another market failure.

In response to the crisis, the government recommended inviting more multinationals into Canada, adding to the likes of Walmart and Costco, in the hope that this will drive down prices. There has been no mention, however, of co-operatives and other home-grown, zero-profit grocery models.

Co-ops are popular across Canada: according to a 2019 Abacus Data poll, about one in three Canadians are members. Another one in three are not members but could be, given the appeal of the co-op model as a democratic, community-focused alternative. Interest in co-ops is shared across rural and urban residents, and among Liberal, Conservative, and NDP voters.

Co-ops are not just popular, they are also seen as more trustworthy, especially in times of

inflation. In a recent Food Secure Canada webinar on greedflation, economist Nicholas Li compared North West Company—a food retailer supplying many Northern communities—to the Arctic Co-op, its main competitor. He found that the North West Company's profits rose significantly from 2019-2023, similar to other private retailers. Meanwhile, net margins and patronage dividends for Arctic Co-op Ltd., which serves individual community-owned member co-ops, were stable or declining.

As detailed by Jon Steinman, author of *Grocery Story: The Promise of Food Co-ops in the Age of Grocery Giants*, co-ops have a different structure than profit-maximizing retailers. Some co-ops are technically for-profit, but that profit then gets re-invested into the co-ops or their membership. This makes price gouging difficult or even impossible.

Canada's history shows that co-operatives keep people afloat in times of crisis. During the First World War, rural co-ops met people's needs for cheap food. During the Great Depression, those co-operatives who survived were funded by the federal government, and they, in turn, helped to organize new co-operatives. In the 1950s, Inuit co-ops greatly contributed to social development and food sovereignty in communities harmed by colonialism. However, the 1990s

saw a steep reduction in support of co-ops as the government prioritized market solutions.

We can take inspiration from other models that aren't co-ops. In Quebec, solidarity grocery stores sell food at different prices, depending on what you can afford. Chicago is considering opening a city-run grocery store to fill in the missing need in food deserts in racialized neighborhoods. Publicly-owned grocery stores already exist across the United States, especially in remote rural towns. As described by Susanna Redekop, co-founder of Freedom Dreams Co-operative Education—a co-operative development and education hub—Indigenous, Black, and migrant communities have a long history of organizing co-operatives, loan programs, credit unions, and land trusts to support each other in the face of racism and economic exclusion in Canada.

To flourish, these models need government support. Rather than attracting multinationals, the government should be highlighting the impact of co-ops and supporting widespread roll-outs. They could support campaigns like those of Your Way Together, an educational initiative for co-operative development in Indigenous communities. Loans could be provided through a federal program modeled after Quebec's Cooperative Investment Plan. After all, Quebec

is a province that has more co-ops than any other. Zero-profit grocery stores also need tailored support in areas where there is a "natural monopoly," such as Northern towns where the North West Company is the only store. Finally, Black, Indigenous, and migrant communities—who face the highest levels of food insecurity in the country—are innovating co-operative models that should be learned from and supported.

The numbers on skyrocketing food prices and food insecurity are clear: we have a crisis on our hands. With climate change, Canada's fragile food supply chain is only going to get worse.

We cannot rely on the private market to solve this problem. The government has recently acknowledged as much in the housing sector, allotting much-needed funding to non-profit and co-operative housing. It now needs to do the same in the food sector.

Marissa Alexander and Wade Thorhaug are co-executive directors of Food Secure Canada. Alexander has spent most of her career exploring the intersections of food security, equity, and social justice. Thorhaug has extensive experience advocating for affordability in northern Canadian communities, local Indigenous food systems, and a rehaul of Nutrition North Canada.

The Hill Times

Feature

Parliament Hill a hive of

The Hill Times photographs



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrives at the House of Commons for Question Period on Sept. 16.



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet predicts this parliamentary session won't last long now that the Liberal-NDP deal is done. 'We are playing chicken with four cars,' he says in reference to the four political parties. 'Eventually one will hit another one. There will be a wreckage.'



Conservative MP Kelly McCauley dodges 'Freedom movement' supporters as he arrives at the West Block before Question Period on Sept. 16.



Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault and Defence Minister Bill Blair simultaneously scrum with reporters.

activity as MPs return

by Andrew Meade



NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh speaks with Videotron workers picketing Parliament Hill on Sept. 16, as the lockout by their employer continues after 10 months.



Government House Leader Karina Gould calls Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre a 'fraudster' in her remarks kicking off the fall sitting.



'Freedom movement' supporters protest at the south stairs outside of the West Block.



Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland unveils the government's plan to ease mortgage rules by expanding 30-year amortizations, which she says would help first-time homebuyers.



Employment Minister Randy Boissonnault criticizes Singh softening his stance on a federal carbon price, accusing the NDP leader of 'caving under pressure' from the Conservatives.



CBC's Janyce McGregor, left, and CTV's Rachel Aiello get ready for live hits from the House foyer.

News

Plan to bring 10,000 Uyghur refugees to Canada off to slow start, says advocacy group

No Uyghur refugees have been resettled in Canada yet, but hope persists that arrivals could begin in November, according to advocate Mehmet Tohti.

Continued from page 1

February 2021, which noted it was the House's opinion that China's persecution of Uyghurs constituted genocide.

When the federal government unveiled its immigration plan for 2024 to 2026 last November, it included its commitment to Uyghur refugees as part of the number of refugees and protected persons that it was allocated to admit.

Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project (URAP) executive director Mehmet Tohti said the federal government told him that its aim is to bring in 500 Uyghur refugees by the end of the year, with increased numbers coming in 2025 and 2026.

He said he hopes that the target for 2024 will be met, but doubted IRCC would be able to reach it.

"The program is ongoing, [but] most likely we are not going to fulfill the initial 500 arrivals before the end of this year as the IRCC had promised," he said, remarking that URAP is trying to submit more than 500 individuals to be processed. "There will not be an issue in the number of potential candidates to submit to the IRCC portal."

"But IRCC itself is stretched out because of the backlog, and they may not be processing the 500 applications before the end of this year," he said, but noted there has been a promise to bring in 5,000 people in 2025.

While there is concern that the target of resettling 500 this year will be missed, Tohti said that senior government officials have committed to him that the program will be followed through on.

As of right now, Tohti said there has yet to be a Uyghur refugee to reach Canada as part of the new program, noting that he is hopeful that the first arrivals will come to Canada in November.

An IRCC spokesperson didn't respond before publication deadline regarding the number of applicants that have been resettled in Canada since the regime started earlier this year.



Immigration Minister Marc Miller included the proposed resettlement of Uyghur refugees in his plan for Canada's 2024-26 immigration levels. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The department currently has more than 2.3 million applications on its docket, with more than one million backlogged and taking too long to process.

Zuberi told *The Hill Times* he is confident that the government will follow through on his motion. "The wheels have started to turn," he said, but remarked that he would have liked to have seen the government follow through on the motion as it was written and passed by the House.

The motion called for the 10,000 refugees to be admitted to Canada within two years starting in 2024, but the government gave

itself a third year to fulfill the pledge.

"I would have liked to have seen it within the timeline that is within the motion," he said. "But what we are talking about at the end of the day are deeply vulnerable people—that fact remains."

"We can talk about timelines here in Canada, [but] that doesn't change the fact that they are deeply vulnerable, and it has proven that they've been [sent] back to the concentration camps in China," he said.

"We need to remember why we're doing this. These people

are more than numbers," he said. "We did commit to taking on a certain weight in recognition that Canada has a role to play in this humanitarian crisis and to avert genocide."

In the last hours of her role in 2022, then-United Nations human rights commissioner Michelle Bachelet submitted a report that found that the extent of Beijing's arbitrary detention against Uyghurs "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity."

China has consistently denied all charges of international law breaches against Uyghurs.

The Canadian government has been reluctant to label China's persecution of Uyghurs as a genocide, saying that can only be done by an international tribunal. Global Affairs Canada noted that Canadian Ambassador to China Jennifer May raised concerns over "credible reports of systematic violations of human rights occurring in Xinjiang" during a visit to the region in June.

As the Liberal government has indicated that it will cap certain immigration streams, Tohti said he hopes that any changes to Canada's immigration regime won't impact the Uyghur resettlement program.

"The public perception on immigration has changed, so there is a huge concern, and I hope that IRCC should uphold its commitment," he said.

Provincial premiers have increasingly come out against asylum seekers coming to their provinces.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has opposed the federal government's plan to adopt a system of "fair distribution" of asylum seekers to have smaller provinces take in more refugees after a call from Quebec Premier François Legault to reduce its share of migrants. Others like New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs have also opposed the Liberal government's idea.

Despite his concern, Tohti said he has "a certain level of confidence" that the Uyghur resettlement plan will continue as promised since it was voted on with the support of the federal cabinet—including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.)—and was supported by all parties.

While Uyghur refugees wait to come to Canada, Tohti said there is a concern for their safety, especially those in Turkey as Ankara grows increasingly close to China. Earlier this month, Turkey announced that it was seeking to join the BRICS group, which includes China, Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa, among others. Turkey signed an extradition treaty with China in 2017, which has been ratified by China, but has yet to be approved by Turkey's National Assembly.

Tohti highlighted concerns that Turkey could deport Uyghurs to China through a third country.

"There's a strong desire from the Turkish government to join Chinese-led international organizations, and that is the vulnerability for Turkey [as] China can increase pressure to discuss that extradition treaty in the Turkish parliament and approve it. It can happen," Tohti said.

Zuberi said speed is crucial in the rollout of the resettlement regime.

"Each day people are not in a country that they can call safe—where they still are at risk being deported to China—is a day more that they are at risk and vulnerable," he said. "The power of the motion is that it specifically focuses on deeply vulnerable people."

nmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi says he had hoped all 10,000 Uyghur refugees would've come to Canada by the end of 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Some provincial leaders, including Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, have increasingly questioned accepting asylum seekers. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

THE HILL TIMES POLICY BRIEFING | SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

BIOTECH

A silhouette of a person looking through a microscope against a blue background. The person is on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. The microscope is in the center, and the person's hand is visible near the slide. The background is a solid blue color.

CAN CANADA KEEP UP
and harness the power of its
burgeoning life sciences sector?

Biotech Policy Briefing

Biotechnology momentum in Canada needs infusion of talent and anchor firms, say industry reps

Canada has several prominent life science firms, but none can be considered an anchor company, according to a report by the adMare Institute released in late 2023.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Capitalizing on momentum in Canada's biotechnology sector gained during the COVID-19 pandemic will require a strategy to draw and retain more talent, as well as "anchor companies" to help ensure long-term successes in the industry, according to the president and CEO of BioTalent Canada.

"The problem is you have a lot of bricks and mortar being invested in, and a lot of infrastructure being invested in, with no mandate for talent," said Rob Henderson. "The issue then is that you can't just build it, and hope they will come. There has to be a talent strategy behind it."

The pandemic resulted in an influx of investment capital and growth within Canada's biotechnology and life sciences sectors both from the federal government and the private sector, according to Henderson. However, the inadvertent consequence of greater investment is a shortage of talent to accommodate expanding labs and businesses, he said.

Canada's growing bioeconomy will require an additional 65,000 workers by 2029, according to a report released on Oct. 13, 2021, by BioTalent Canada.

"The talent crunch was made that much worse because now we have biomanufacturing facilities who are now already entering a very tight labour market, so unfortunately, you have a lot of biomanufacturers that are pilfering from each other ... because there's only so many STEM grads and STEM expert out there for these companies," Henderson said. "You can throw as much money as you want on these things, but if there's not people there to do the work, you're not going to attain your goals."

As an example of federal government support, Hender-



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne said the government is committed to supporting innovation in the life sciences sector to ensure Canadians have access to 'cutting-edge medical technologies to keep them safe,' in a July 9 press release. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

son pointed to the \$2.2-billion announced in the 2021 federal budget toward implementing a comprehensive strategy to build a strong domestic biomanufacturing and life sciences sector in Canada. The strategy is the responsibility of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED).

Different federal government departments have a hand in Canada's bioeconomy, but they are "siloes," according to Henderson. Besides ISED and the life sciences strategy, there is also Health Canada, which handles the regulatory requirements for approval of new drugs; and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which is responsible for social programs, and the labour market at the federal level. ESDC has no mandate to preferentially support the Canadian life sciences industry, Henderson said.

"I think [the federal government] needs to take a more holistic approach. I think their job is also to position Canada as a leader around the world for this so that we can attract not only the investment, but also the talent that we require to foster these companies," he said.

Another challenge in building the bioeconomy over the long term is this country's lack of anchor companies, which Henderson described as firms large enough to attract investment capital and talent.

A report released by the adMare Institute on Nov. 21, 2023, argued that Canada has several prominent life science firms, but none at that time could be considered an anchor company.

Henderson said biotechnology firms in Canada never grow to the point where they become "truly behemoth companies across the world," because they are often sold to foreign entities before they reach that point.

As an example, he cited Biovectra, a biotechnology and pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing company based in Prince Edward Island. Biovectra was sold to Agilent Technologies, a biopharma firm based in the United States, according to a July 22 Biovectra press release.

Obstacles holding back the establishment of anchor companies in Canada include a prolonged regulatory environment compared to other countries like the United States, according to Henderson.

"You can imagine how much capital you're burning through if it takes you two years to get a drug on the market," said Henderson. "We've got a regulatory environment that is conducive to having companies go elsewhere to commercialize. That's a big problem, and that rests directly with the federal government."

To help address a "critical labour shortage" in Ontario, BioTalent Canada launched an initiative on Aug. 22 intended to encourage more involvement from people

with disabilities in the bioeconomy workforce. The organization said it will co-ordinate four events—one in Ottawa, one in the Greater Toronto Area, and two conducted virtually—intended to show potential employers how to attract and retain persons with disabilities. Conventional solutions such as relying on immigration and new graduates entering the field won't suffice, according to a BioTalent Canada press release. People with disabilities currently represent only one per cent of the bio-industry, according to the press release.

Michael May, president and CEO of the Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine, told *The Hill Times* that in order for momentum to continue in biotechnology, "we need to focus on access to capital," and Canada needs to put more funding into basic biotechnology research.

However, he added that there is no silver bullet for addressing challenges for growth in the biotechnology sector. He said Canada also needs to find a way to better leverage the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) Tax Incentive Program, which provides support in the form of tax credits and refunds to corporations, partnerships, or individuals who conduct scientific research or experimental development.

"If we want to be competitive, and improve our productivity in Canada, we need to invest more

in R&D, but then we also need to—I think—take advantage of our SR&ED program a little bit more, and make it more available—particularly available to incentivizing foreign capital to come and do industry research and clinical translation in Canada," he said. "We need to make sure we focus on the early stage and then also on the scaling stage, but the bottom line as a whole [is] access to capital is a weak spot for Canada."

In terms of support for the biotechnology sector, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) announced the opening of a STEMCELL Technologies facility in Burnaby, B.C., on July 9. The facility has been supported through a \$22.5-million investment by the federal government and matched by the B.C. provincial government.

The government is committed to supporting innovation in the life sciences sector to ensure Canadians have access to "cutting-edge medical technologies to keep them safe," Champagne said in a July 9 ISED press release.

"The opening of STEMCELL Technologies' state-of-the-art facility is another important milestone in achieving a robust domestic life sciences sector in Canada. Through investments such as this, we are securing domestic supply chains and ensuring new intellectual property remains in Canada, while supporting the creation of hundreds of great-paying jobs for Canadian workers," said Champagne in the press release.

May described Champagne as energetic and enthusiastic when it comes to the biotechnology file.

"He has been seen to be making investments. I think that he has been a champion for innovation, broadly. Of course, I'd love to see more in life sciences and biotech, but I think he's been very visible as a supporter for innovation in the sector," said May. "More R&D spending, leverage our existing tools like the SR&ED program, and make sure we're seeding access to capital, because ... that will drive all the training and that's necessary to make a vibrant biotech industry."

Henderson said Champagne has been a great champion of the bio-industry "within the confines of what they can achieve."

"The issue is the talent game hasn't been looked at for the long term; it's looking at being able to try to reskill a bunch of people within a very short mandate [of] one or two years, if at all, and not aligning priorities from other ministries," said Henderson. "As we look at the potential transition from one government to the next, this has to be not a political aim. This has to be long term."

Stefan Raos, the general manager of Moderna Canada, told *The Hill Times* that Moderna decided to invest in Canada in part because of a good "end-to-end ecosystem," from the study of vaccinations, through to clinical trials, and then vaccine manufacturing.

Canada needs to catch up in the biotech sector

Currently, our scientists have to look outside of the country to take their work to the next level, which means that Canada is not benefitting fully from Canadian ideas.

NDP MP Richard Cannings



Opinion

Countries around the world have long known that investments in research are the key to future prosperity, and one of the leading sectors in that drive is biotech. Unfortunately, Canada is well behind most developed nations in research investment, so we need to catch up, both in direct ways such as university and private sector grants, and indirect methods such as tax credits.

In Canada, direct instruments fall under business innovation and growth support programs, while the tax credit scheme is known as Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED).

We have to remember that at the heart of any research program are the researchers themselves. In last year's biotech briefing in *The Hill Times*, I wrote of the desperate need to increase scholarships for graduate students and post-doctoral fellowships, the amounts of which had remained stagnant for 20 years. Thankfully, after three years of effort by myself and many others, Budget 2024 contained increases to these amounts. These support levels must be maintained and tied to the cost of living.

Budget 2024 also contained a commitment to provide an additional \$600-million for SR&ED over four years, and \$150-million per year ongoing for future enhancements to the program. This past spring, the government conducted consultations as part of its work to improve the SR&ED program, and target this additional funding to boost research and innovation.

To claim SR&ED tax incentives, the work of businesses must meet two requirements:

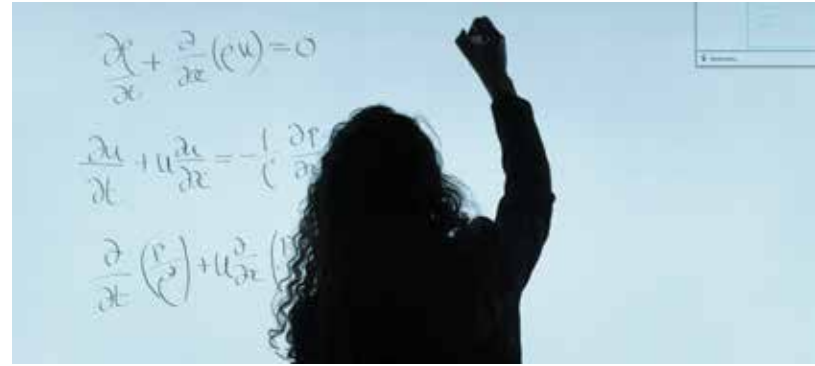
- The work is conducted for the advancement of scientific knowledge, or for the purpose of achieving a technological advancement.
- The work is a systematic investigation or search that is carried out in a field of science or technology by means of experiment or analysis.

Eligible work may include basic research, applied research, and experimental development, including activities related to engineering, design, operations research, mathematical analysis, computer programming, data collection, testing, and psychological research.

The problem is that less than one per cent of Canadian businesses are

investing in science, particularly for the process of taking basic research from a concept to a viable product. This lack of private sector investment means that Canada is not benefitting fully from Canadian ideas.

Simply put: our scientists have to look outside of Canada to take their work to the next level.



Canada is well behind most developed nations in research investment, so we need to catch up in direct and indirect ways, writes Richard Cannings. Photograph courtesy of Pexels

The biotech sector provides many examples where Canadian discoveries went on to be developed by foreign companies. For example, Derrick Rossi, the molecular biologist from Scarborough, Ont., whose work on stem cells at the University of Toronto was showing great promise. He couldn't find domestic support to put his knowledge into commercial production, so

he went to the United States to co-found Moderna. Or, there was the announcement last March that British pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca has an agreement to acquire Hamilton, Ont.'s Fusion Pharmaceuticals, which specializes in precision cancer drugs.

Continued on page 20

Advancing Canadian Biotech

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Photo credit: Province of British Columbia

Biotech Policy Briefing

Biotechnology momentum in Canada needs infusion of talent and anchor firms, say industry reps

Continued from page 16

According to Raos, that ecosystem should include a strong system of surveillance in regard to COVID-19. However, he said he is concerned because COVID-19 surveillance in Canada has “diminished significantly” since the height of the pandemic.

“I always look at our biotech investment as an end-to-end investment, not just a manufacturing investment, and we do want to be an anchor company, and act like one, and attract more investment to Canada,” he said. “But if there are areas of concern, for example, with a diminished interest in surveillance for COVID-19 and sharing of data, then that does concern me because I think we should keep that as a piece of the ... value story for Canada.”

Surveillance measures implemented by provincial and territorial governments during the pandemic include tracking the spread of COVID-19, as well as vaccine coverage. Raos said that if COVID-19 observation is reduced, a gap is created in public health defences.

“Surveillance is information. That information is used to address gaps in vaccine uptake rates. If there are certain regions that are lacking the appropriate vaccination rates for high-risk groups, then you would want to know that,” he said. “I think just understanding where there are gaps and opportunities to improve the implementation of vaccine uptake is really important. That’s where the data contributes to the actual implementation, and then ultimately the health of Canadians.”

Raos said that other countries are surpassing Canada in terms of current COVID-19 surveillance, such as the United Kingdom.

“The U.K. may be a good example. They’re continuing to invest in robust surveillance even in this phase of post-pandemic, and they’re positioning themselves as leaders in public health preparedness, which I know is something that Canada is working very hard to do on many fronts, but on the surveillance piece itself, I think it’s something we need to pay attention to,” he said.

Bettina Hamelin, president of Innovative Medicines Canada, told *The Hill Times* that the federal government achieved great strides during the COVID-19 pandemic in supporting the life sciences ecosystem, but “we have lost some of the momentum, in terms of supporting the biotech sector in a co-ordinated way.”

When asked how to maintain that momentum, Hamelin said Canada should have a co-ordinated strategy, governed by an independent body including representation by ISED, the Health Department, health system administrators, and academia.

“No. 2 is really supporting a ‘life-cycle approach’ to the discovery and development of new medicines, where there is co-ordination of funding for basic research with the subsequent development path that really happens in the health-care system,” she said. “I think our health-care system has been underutilized for the development of life-changing innovations. And so [we should be] looking at the health-care system as a big participant and driver for innovation, and then accelerating commercialization and access to patients. We have a lengthy process of approvals.”

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Pharmaceutical sector research and development statistics

- In 2021, the R&D pharmaceutical sector contributed \$16-billion to the Canadian economy in gross value added (GVA), an increase of 0.8 per cent from 2020. This followed a larger increase of 5.8 per cent reported from 2019 (\$15-billion) to 2020 (\$15.9-billion). Just more than half of the total—51.3 per cent, or \$8.2-billion—was attributable to the direct impacts of the sector, which rose 3.5 per cent from the \$7.9-billion generated in 2020.
- Indirect impacts accounted for 28.4 per cent of the total GVA in 2021, and increased 1.2 per cent to \$4.6-billion, while induced impacts—which accounted for 20.3 per cent of total GVA—decreased 6.1 per cent to \$3.3-billion.
- Overall, the R&D pharmaceutical sector accounted for 0.7 per cent of Canada’s gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices in 2021, a slight decrease from the 0.8 per cent in each of the two previous years.
- Nearly \$13.7-billion (85.5 per cent) of the total GVA (\$16-billion) contributed by the sector to the Canadian economy was generated in Ontario (\$8.2-billion) and Quebec (\$5.5-billion). Similarly, of the \$9.3-billion in labour income, 85.8 per cent was attributed to these provinces, with \$4.7-billion coming from Ontario, and \$3.2-billion from Quebec.
- These two provinces further accounted for the majority (86.2 per cent) of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in the sector. Among the 102,717 FTEs in the sector, 49,623 FTEs were in Ontario, and 38,937 FTEs were in Quebec, while 14,157 FTEs were in the rest of Canada.
- In 2021, the output generated by the Canadian R&D pharmaceutical sector increased slightly by \$10-million from the previous year to just less than \$30-billion. This increase follows an upward year-over-year trend in total output since 2018.
- Overall employment in the Canadian R&D pharmaceutical sector decreased to 102,717 FTEs in 2021, down 4.9 per cent from the previous year, a loss of 5,256 FTEs. This decrease brought overall employment to levels seen in 2019, when there were 102,595 FTEs in this sector.
- While the overall number of FTEs decreased in 2021, this decline was more noticeable for those with an indirect or induced impact on the sector, compared with those with a direct impact. The number of FTEs with a direct impact on the sector, which supported 48,826 FTEs in 2021, saw a reduction of 578 FTEs from 2020.

Source: The Canadian Research and Development Pharmaceutical Sector, 2021, released by Statistics Canada on June 10, 2024

Biotechnology: an opportunity balanced on a knife’s edge



We are observing an exodus of talent from our country towards greener pastures, and limited growth in a field of incredible strategic interest, writes Adam Damry. *Pexels photograph by Mike Chai*

To fully harness the benefits of a thriving biotechnology industry, it is critical we act to address the challenges that threaten it.

Adam
Damry

Opinion



With the COVID-19 pandemic fresh in our memories, the impact of biotechnology has never been as apparent with the swift deployment and development of lifesaving mRNA vaccines showcasing the capacity of this field to contribute to global solutions. Continuing breakthroughs in gene editing and therapeutic technologies such as biosimilars and CAR-T cell treatments now offer hope to patients with previously untreatable conditions. Beyond health care, bioengineering advancements such as industrial enzymes and drought-resistant crops are further driving the development of environmentally friendly practices. And yet, despite its incredible transformative potential, the Canadian biotechnology industry is at risk.

Growth of the biotech sector in Canada has been slow, and we are losing our country’s talent to more competitive markets. To fully harness the benefits of a thriving biotechnology industry, it is

critical we act to address the challenges that threaten it.

The biggest of these hurdles is a lack of funding and support. According to data released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada allocated 1.7 per cent of its GDP to supporting local research and development; only half of the allocation of biotech hubs such as the United States (3.46 per cent), Germany (3.13 per cent), Switzerland (3.36 per cent), and South Korea (4.93 per cent).

Venture capital investment in Canada is also limited, creating a financial bottleneck that stifles innovation, as biotech startups are generally considered to be high-risk—but high-reward—ventures. This is due to long development timelines and high R&D costs; factors that come with existing at the cutting edge of science.

Programs such as the National Research Council’s Industrial Research Assistance Program and the Strategic Innovation Fund represent recent government efforts to supplement R&D, enabling exploratory and transformative research. These, however, remain inadequate for the Canadian biotech sector to flourish amidst rising research costs.

Most critically, initiatives such as expanding R&D tax incentive programs, establishing new incubator hubs, and de-risking biotech startups to attract investment would substantially help to support early-stage biotech companies. Pre-commercial biotech firms are under especially high pressure as they seek to transition from research to commercialization; a particularly difficult step in the

Continued on page 23

Canada's biotech carpe diem

It's imperative Canada keep pace with other competing jurisdictions, and establish itself as a regulatory leader that rewards investment and talent.

Andrew Casey

Opinion



The pandemic's economic, social, and health impacts have effectively focused the attention of policymakers and the public on the strategic importance of building a competitive domestic life sciences industry and biomanufacturing capacity. Accordingly, nearly four years after the onset of the pandemic, all governments—including those in Canada—are prudently preparing for another pandemic or global health emergency. As a result, Canada's biotech sector is having a generational moment on which we must capitalize.

While it makes practical and strategic sense to prepare for another pandemic-like event, it is not possible to predict what or when the next challenge will be. It is, therefore, practically impossible to identify what types of technologies will be needed during the next crisis. Indeed, it is highly probable the technology we will need in 20 or 30 years has not yet been discovered. In this context, when considering how to prepare for the next crisis, the more strategic approach for Canada is to build our life sciences and biomanufacturing sector broadly so it can offer many potential solutions for the next crisis while also acting as an innovator and economic driver during non-crisis periods. Both objectives can be met by focusing on creating a competitive environment which generates ideas and attracts the investors, partners, and talent required to turn ideas into companies and scale them to become Canadian anchors.

With the implementation of the federal Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy, the federal government has signalled it recognizes the importance of building the nation's biotech sector. The strategy's corresponding investments are now accelerating the creation of companies, and the growth of Canada's biomanufacturing capacity and life sciences sector more broadly. Wisely, governments are avoiding the trap of betting on the horse they think will win the race. Instead, they are remaining technology agnostic, which will establish the conditions for a Canadian discovery or

company being an essential component of the next solution when the time comes.

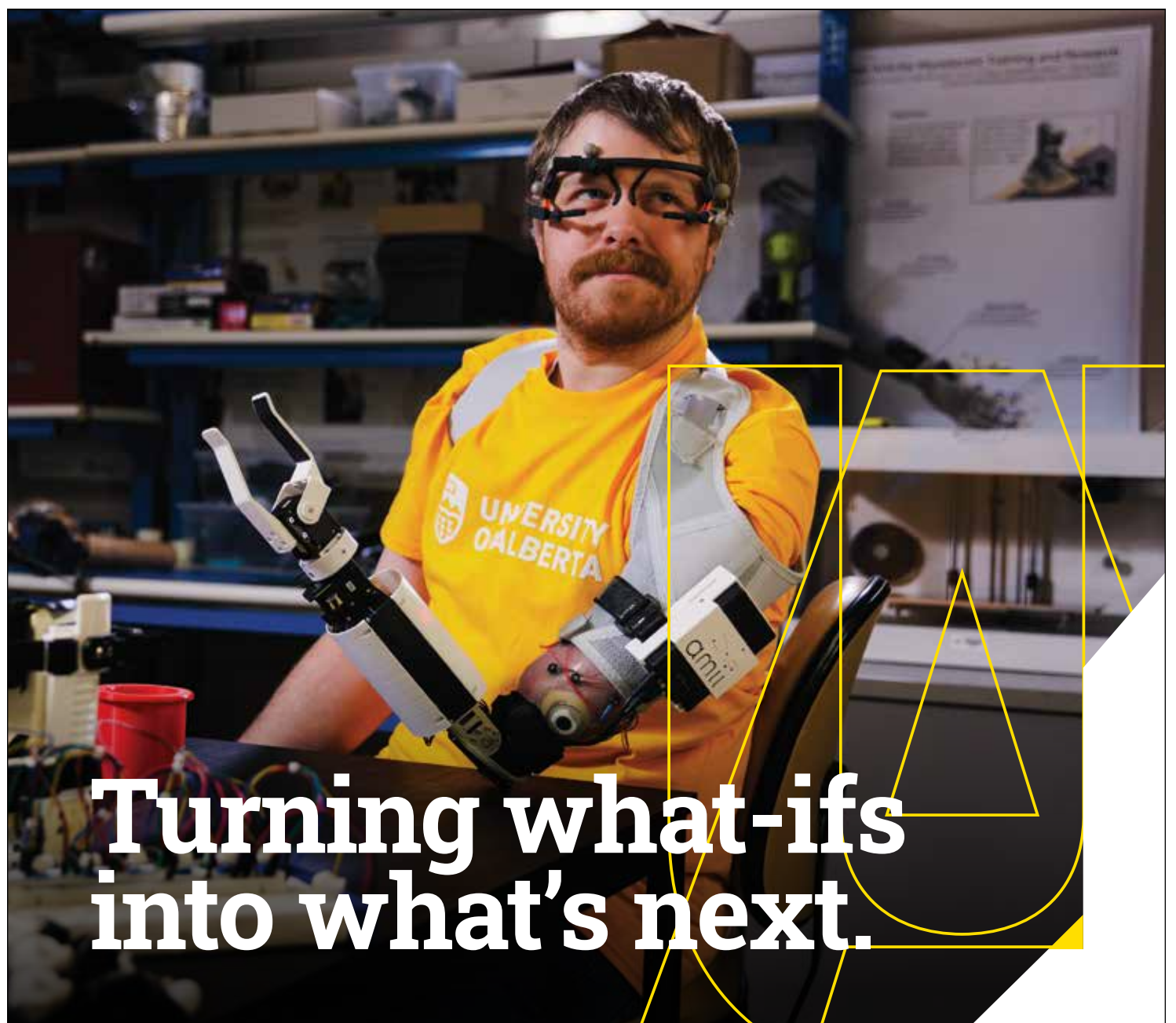


The Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy—jointly overseen by Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne and the health minister—is building from a position of strength, writes Andrew Casey. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Importantly, the Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy is building from a position of strength. Indeed, Canada has a vibrant and diverse life sciences ecosystem which is founded on a global reputation for excellent scientific research.

As a result, we're home to an ecosystem which includes hundreds of early-stage biotech companies, a strong global pharma presence, supporting a national clinical

Continued on page 21



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Biotech Policy Briefing



Tax policy also plays an important role in encouraging businesses to take the risks necessary for innovation, and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's recent capital gains reforms discourage this, writes Frank Baylis. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada needs to catch up in the biotech sector

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While foreign investment is welcome, the COVID-19 pandemic clearly showed the strategic value of having a strong Canadian biotech sector.

So how do we increase investment in Canadian science? The private sector in this country is perhaps disadvantaged to some extent in terms of the big investments needed to fully develop important discoveries because we simply have a smaller proportion of those big companies that can afford those investments. So, government has to step up to provide direct support, as well as the indirect funding we provide through SR&ED.

It will be important to examine the outcome the SR&ED review—what barriers to investment were identified, and how will they be addressed? However, there seems to be a need to address an inherent reluctance by Canadian financiers to take a risk on science. This culture of risk avoidance puts the brakes on prosperity here at home.

One counterintuitive solution might be to increase the corporate tax rate. As former U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower observed, businesses are more likely to look for investment opportunities for their profits if they avoid paying higher tax amounts. Further, increased revenue from higher corporate taxes could also be directed towards direct government investments in the biotech sector and other areas of science.

Canada has a long history of successes in the biotech sector. In addition to the well-known invention of insulin, Canadians developed the first Ebola vaccine, and discovered the genes that cause ALS and cystic fibrosis. We pioneered the field of regenerative medicine through the discovery of stem cells, while work by the University of British Columbia's Dr. Pieter Cullis developed the lipid nanoparticle technology that is a key component of the mRNA COVID vaccines.

What we need is more investment to both create more future discoveries like these, and to turn those discoveries into real products that will make the world a better, healthier place and bring prosperity to Canada.

NDP MP Richard Cannings represents the riding of South Okanagan–West Kootenay, B.C. He is his party's deputy critic for innovation, science, and industry. *The Hill Times*

Biotechnology must factor into a broader Canadian industrial policy

Governments should focus on supporting basic research, helping startups, and funding the scale-up of growth companies.

Frank Baylis

Opinion



The 2024 Bloom Burton Awards underscore the strength of Canada's biotechnology and life sciences sectors. The award honours an individual who has made the greatest contribution to Canada's innovative health care industry. This year's finalists are Roberto Bellini of Bellus, Tom Frohlich of Chinook Therapeutics, and François Ravenelle of Inversago. Notably, all three work in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Each built businesses that have employed high-skilled workers including scientists, researchers, and technologists. Their innovations advanced medicine and contributed to the prosperity of our nation.

To build upon our economy for the future, governments—both federal and provincial—should

focus on three areas: supporting basic research, helping startups, and funding the scale-up of growth companies.

Supporting basic research

Basic research is essential to innovation, providing the groundwork for future discoveries. Canada's universities—home to world-class research—require government support to continue leading in the biotechnology sector. Sadly, many universities are being financially squeezed at a time when they should be receiving increased investment to conduct research and educate the next generation of innovators. Properly funded, Canadian universities can compete at the highest level globally, fostering discoveries that lead to future technological advances.

For instance, the groundbreaking GLP-1 medications, which have made Novo Nordisk one of the top 20 most valuable companies in the world, are based on fundamental research by Canadian professor Daniel Drucker. Without strong government support for such research, these types of innovations do not come to fruition.

Helping startups

Once basic research produces new discoveries, it's up to startups to commercialize them. Support-

ing startups is critical to ensuring that promising ideas are turned into viable businesses. Canada already has the infrastructure to grow its biotechnology sector. Incubators like the Health Innovation Hub (H2i) at the University of Toronto play a vital role in this process. In just a decade, H2i has supported more than 200 startup companies. These firms have created high-paying jobs that contribute enormously to the Canadian economy. Governments should provide sufficient funding to incubators to ensure the next generation of biotech entrepreneurs has the support they need to thrive.

As H2i's co-founder and director stated, "Canada is a sleeping giant that has awoken." With the proper government support, Canada's biotechnology and life science sector can become a global powerhouse.

Funding the scale-up of growth companies

Of the many startups, only a few will emerge as winners capable of scaling their operations. Scaling up requires significant financial capital, and this is where governments can make smart investments. However, governments should not be in the business of directly picking winners because they do not have the expertise needed to identify which companies will succeed, and they tend to make decisions

for political reasons rather than business reasons.

Instead, governments should work in partnership with venture capitalists (VCs) who specialize in assessing high-potential companies in the biotechnology sector. Governments can co-invest alongside VCs, requiring that the VCs contribute at least 50 per cent of the investment from their own resources. This way, government funding supports growth companies while leveraging the expertise and judgment of seasoned investors.

Tax policy also plays an important role in encouraging businesses to take the risks necessary for innovation. Unfortunately, the recent increase in capital gains tax discourages the very investments needed to scale up companies. BIOTECANADA, the association representing the Canadian biotechnology industry, has clearly stated that the "capital gains tax changes are a setback for Canadian biotech competitiveness." To incentivize commercialization and risk-taking, governments should ensure that tax policies are structured to reward innovation and investment.

The efforts to support the biotechnology sector should be part of a broader Canadian industrial policy aimed at building home-grown industries. Our country has the potential to become a global leader in the biotechnology sector, but there is much to be done.

Governments must create an environment where innovation can flourish. Supporting basic research at universities, helping startups commercialize discoveries, partnering with venture capitalists to scale up businesses, and enacting constructive policies are all critical steps. With the right approach, Canada can lead in the development of life-saving medicines and breakthrough health-care solutions, ensuring long-term prosperity for our country.

Frank Baylis is the executive chairman of Baylis Medical Technologies, a medical device company focused in the areas of interventional radiology and neurology. From October 2015 to October 2019, Baylis was the Liberal Member of Parliament for the riding of Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que. *The Hill Times*

A flourishing biotech sector starts by innovating education

Innovating graduate education to support a wider variety of career paths will be key to creating the talent we need to have a vibrant biotechnology ecosystem.

Valerie Ward, Marc Aucoin & Hector Budman

Opinion



Academia provides an ideal environment to de-risk entrepreneurial ventures, write Valerie Ward, Marc Aucoin, and Hector Budman. Photograph courtesy of Unsplash

The site of the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories in Toronto can be thought as the longest-standing host to biopharmaceutical manufacturing in Canada. With more than 100 years of history, it's surprising that more Canadians aren't aware of it. Now owned and operated by Sanofi, it continues to be a major vaccine producer for Canadians, and people around the world. However, the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weaknesses of the Canadian biotechnology and pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. As the world leveraged the amazing innovations of the past decade to produce testing, research, and medical treatments at a previously unprecedented pace, Canada struggled to keep up after decades of bleeding talent to more vibrant biotech ecosystems abroad.

The Government of Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences strategy is a good

beginning towards fixing these problems, but focuses too closely on building a pipeline of talent and infrastructure for manufacturing vaccines and therapeutics. To reduce costs, manufacturing facilities are usually dedicated to a single product, but these facilities cannot—and should not—sit idly waiting to make vaccines for a pandemic. Furthermore, this sector does not have the capacity to absorb the number of highly qualified individuals needed in high demand times—i.e. pandemics—during years of regular operation.

We need a thriving Canadian ecosystem that allows growth, movement, and has the capacity to absorb and supply that talent. The enabling technologies and underlying skills needed in the

biotechnology sector are highly transferrable between different biotechnology fields. The tools used to purify a protein for degrading plastics do not differ from those used to make an antibody treatment. Greater support for the spectrum of biotechnologies is needed for Canada to stay economically competitive and ready to pivot. And it's not just smart pandemic preparedness.

The United States White House issued a report in 2023 on the state of the field that said, "The world is on the cusp of an industrial revolution fuelled by biotechnology and biomanufacturing." This is because the technologies that make it possible to manufacture a vaccine in a year are also driving innovation in environmental, industrial, and

agricultural biotechnology. Along with the report, the U.S. has committed more than US\$3.5-billion in new funding initiatives through all levels of government dedicated to biotechnology and biomanufacturing projects. This additional funding is just to ensure the U.S. retains the title of world leader in biotech. Major biotech companies are increasingly relying on startups or academic labs to conduct much of the basic and applied research needed to invent new technologies. Once the technology has been validated, they prefer to collaborate with or acquire the startup or tech, which is a less risky and more cost-effective approach than developing their own technologies in-house. Consequently, the biotech sector heavily

depends on universities and their startup ecosystems, and there is no assurance that Canadians will have access to technologies or therapies developed abroad. Canada has a lot of catching up to do, and a more comprehensive strategy encompassing other types of biotechnology is needed.

But there are many signs of hope. Canadian companies like AbCellera and Acuitas—both of which are based around technologies that were invented in Canadian academic labs by interdisciplinary scientists—played major roles in responding to the pandemic. Academia provides an ideal environment to de-risk entrepreneurial ventures. Not only do university labs have the infrastructure to develop and support small enterprises, but they also have the long-term subject-matter expertise and experience to facilitate and propel these ventures to the next level.

As chemical engineering professors, we see more students creating innovative biotech solutions for complex global challenges. However, upon graduation, these students face significant challenges in accessing the support they need to commercialize these inventions.

For this reason, we are pioneering a new type of interdisciplinary PhD program at the University of Waterloo to put biotech entrepreneurs in academic labs, and give them the scientific and engineering support they need to develop their technologies and create value for Canadians. Innovating graduate education to support a wider variety of career paths—like entrepreneurship—will be key to creating the talent we need to have a vibrant biotechnology ecosystem, and creating a greater variety of companies will ensure our talent has career growth opportunities at home.

Drs. Valerie Ward, Marc Aucoin, and Hector Budman are members of the interdisciplinary biotech collective Waterloo Bioworks, and are professors in chemical engineering at the University of Waterloo researching topics at the interface between engineering and biology.

The Hill Times

Canada's biotech carpe diem

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trial network, which, in turn, provides investors and partners for Canadian biotech companies. The sector's strategic competencies include regenerative medicine, artificial intelligence, vaccines, clinical trial expertise, and genomics.

The sector's strengths are central to Canada's biotech industry experiencing a generational moment with more than \$26-billion in investment deals flowing through the sector over the past five years. Highlights of this investment flow include major exits and deals involving companies such as

BELLUS, Inversago Pharma, and Fusion Pharmaceuticals; global pharma investments in and partnerships with Canadian biotechs; and exciting growth evident in companies like AbCellera, Aspect Biosystems, Repare Therapeutics, and BIOVECTRA; and significant investments into the ecosystem by global pharma and biotech companies. Combined, all underscore a confidence in our capacity for generating innovation and dynamic biotech companies.

All told, a globally recognized and valued life sciences and biomanufacturing sector in Canada is already in place. Now is the time to capitalize on this

momentum by investing more in enhancing this foundation, which will not only help address the preparedness objective, but—if done strategically and for the long-term—it will also generate and support the creation and scaling-up of companies in Canada.

As our country looks to build its domestic biotech sector, we do so with the knowledge that every other leading economic jurisdiction in the world is also investing heavily into their domestic life sciences sectors as they too understand the vital role biotechnology innovation is playing globally. As a result, the competition globally for biotech ideas, companies,

talent, and investment has never been more intense. Accordingly, to establish the environment for company creation and growth, and ultimately retain what we have, it is imperative that Canada keep pace with other competing jurisdictions, and establish ourselves as a regulatory leader and jurisdiction that rewards investment and talent. This is essential to establishing the right hosting conditions that will attract the firms, talent, and investment required to build competitive national biotech ecosystem.

Canada has clearly demonstrated its ability for scientific discovery, entrepreneurship, and company creation. However, we

have yet to truly capitalize on this strength by creating and retaining a home grown, globally commercial biotech company. Ultimately, the most effective way to grow and strengthen our biomanufacturing capacity and life sciences sector is to translate the global moment before us to create globally commercial companies that can anchor biotech clusters across Canada.

Andrew Casey became president and CEO of BIOTEC-Canada in August 2012. As the head of BIOTEC-Canada, he is the lead spokesperson for Canada's biotechnology industry communicating on the industry's behalf with government, regulators, international bodies, media, and the Canadian public.

The Hill Times

Biotech Policy Briefing

Harnessing the power of Canada's growing biotechnology industry: a perspective from the West

Government investment and policy can help ensure groundbreaking technologies remain in Canada when companies scale up their production especially for international distribution.

Stephanie Willerth

Opinion



The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for both public and private support for the biomanufacturing industry in Canada as well as showcased some of the internationally recognized technologies developed here in British Columbia.

AbCellera demonstrated its antibody platform generated treatments for this disease, while the Victoria-based Starfish Medical worked to produce made-in-Canada ventilators. B.C. has also produced world-class nanotechnology companies such as Acuitas Therapeutics, which provide the lipid nanoparticle technology used by Pfizer for delivering the COVID-19 vaccine. In the cases of AbCellera and Acuitas, along with Canada's largest biotechnology company STEMCELL Technologies, these biotechnology tools were first developed in research labs at the University of British Columbia before becoming commercialized.

The role of government investment and policy can help ensure such groundbreaking technologies remain in Canada when companies scale up their production especially for international distribution. For this reason, our province under the guidance of Brenda Bailey—the minister of jobs, economic development, and innovation—has developed a comprehensive biomanufacturing strategy to help support this growing industry. Retaining these technologies in province will also create highly skilled jobs to retain the talent being trained in the province through programs like the undergraduate and graduate biomedical engineering degrees offered at the University of Victoria, as well as the undergraduate and graduate students being trained at the School of Biomedical Engineering at the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Peter Zandstra, who directs the UBC School of Biomedical Engineering, elaborates: “The success of Canada's biotech sector depends on building an ecosystem that fosters innovation. At UBC's School of Biomedical Engineering, we've shown how academic-industry partnerships and access to state-of-the-art wet lab spaces accelerate

the transition from research to real-world impact. Government and private support have been essential to these efforts. Continued investment is crucial not only for developing the infrastructure and talent needed to advance Canada's biotech industry, but also for educating the next generation of leaders who will drive innovation and improve health outcomes.”

Their school is home to the new BioDevice Foundry, which is a cutting-edge facility for designing, prototyping, fabricating, and testing biodevices that will accelerate biomedical innovation and advance the life sciences industry locally and globally with financial support from PacifiCan and the Conconi Family Foundation. It also houses the biotechnology incubator SBME Innovates, which provides essential wet lab space to startups. They are further expanding the capability of the province with the creation of a new Advanced Therapeutics Manufacturing Facility on UBC's Vancouver Campus—the first facility of its kind in Western Canada—being created with support from Immuno-Engineering and Biomanufacturing Hub hosted at UBC. Equipped with state-of-the-art bioreactors and quality control labs, the 25,000-square-foot facility will enable academic researchers and biotech startups to develop innovative cell- and gene-based therapies, and bring them into clinical trials for Canadians. Such cell-based therapies also include bioprinted tissues being generated by companies like Aspect Biosystems, Axolotl Biosciences, and Voxcell Innovations—all located in B.C.

Similarly, the University of Victoria hosts a Health Core facility that biotechnology companies can rent as a way to access the necessary wet-lab space, and the Vancouver Island Life Sciences group is currently building a scale-up facility located in Victoria to provide a home for biotechnology firms that are looking to scale up their production, led by Rebecca Hof. All of these initiatives would benefit from further investment from both the federal and provincial governments along with support from the private sector, including venture capital funds and organizations like in B.C.

As a founder of an academic spin-off company focused on 3D bioprinting, I feel it is essential to support such companies as we take our technology out of the laboratory through providing access to wet-lab space and equipment given that these facilities require significant resources to establish. The combination of affordable access to the specialized facilities necessary to perform biological sample manipulation along with easier access to capital investment would help encourage more effective and efficient technology transfer from academic settings to industrial applications.

Dr. Stephanie Willerth is a full professor of biomedical engineering at the University of Victoria, and also holds an appointment in the School of Biomedical Engineering at the University of British Columbia. She is the CEO of the award-winning biotechnology startup Axolotl Biosciences.

The Hill Times

Unlocking Canada's greatest economic potential: life sciences

The time has come for us to commit to life sciences as a driver for Canada's economy with the knowledge that this sector can help solve some of our biggest societal challenges.

Alison Symington & Jason Field

Opinion



Why do we believe life sciences is Canada's greatest untapped economic resource? You don't have to look far to find the answer.

The three top biotechnology outfits listed on the NASDAQ are Amgen, Regeneron, and Vertex with a combined market capitalization of US\$429-billion. Compare this to the combined market cap of the 129 companies listed on the TSX/TSXV that constitute the Canadian oil and gas sector, valued at US\$312-billion. In fact, Novo Nordisk's market value recently exceeded that of the entire Danish economy. The irony that this company is founded on the Canadian discovery of insulin is not lost on us.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the life sciences sector has been in the spotlight as a strategic economic and national security priority for Canada. We have seen the launch of the national Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy, as well as several regional initiatives. Our view is that although these strategies are a good starting point, much more is needed to create an environment that will support the sustained level of success to which we aspire. For this short discussion, we focus on three areas, recognizing this is not a comprehensive list. Ultimate success will require a co-ordinated effort across the discovery to commercialization pipeline.

Let's start with the perennial issue at the forefront of these discussions: access to capital. Life sciences, particularly therapeutics, is a high-risk/high-reward type of investment. As such, government policy is best focused at stimulating investment from a diversity of sources using a variety of policy levers. Many programs have focused on stimulating venture capital, but there are other sources of capital that have been underutilized in life sciences, including angel investment, public capital markets, and even pension funds. Frustratingly, even great performance has not been enough to stimulate these investments, as observed in a recent report from the Business Development Bank of Canada: “[the] life sciences sector returns continue to outperform ECT and ICT, despite being relatively underfunded.” The same study also shows the most severe gap in life sciences funding occurs

at the pre-seed/seed stage—typically in the \$2-million to \$10-million range—of investment. “This limits both pipeline development as well the emergence of Canadian champions.” In short, we need a pool of investment capital that is not only deeper, but wider as well.

Next: technology adoption. This is where public policy has a strategic role given our publicly funded health system. The speed at which we can assess, value, reimburse, and deploy innovative technologies is a critical component in our overall competitiveness. To be clear, we are not suggesting sacrificing safety or efficacy standards. During the pandemic, we saw the impact of innovative mRNA technologies that allowed the development of effective vaccines at an unprecedented speed. Importantly, our regulators were equally innovative in assessing and approving these products in record time. Yes, these were exceptional circumstances, but it demonstrated the art of the possible. Recently, we saw the newly formed Canada's Drug Agency adopt a rolling review process reducing the time for reimbursement recommendations. This is the type of policy and regulatory innovation that Canada needs not only to accelerate the growth of our home-grown innovators, but also to attract global investments throughout the Canadian life sciences ecosystem.

Finally, there's been much discussion in the small and medium-sized enterprises community about the need for wetlab space. In particular, the lack of graduation space for startups that are beginning to scale. Other jurisdictions—such as Massachusetts—made significant investments in infrastructure and wetlabs that helped both expand their home-grown life sciences companies, and provided an environment that attracted companies from other jurisdictions including Canada. Having the necessary infrastructure is essential to keeping successful companies at home.

To conclude, Canada has made significant investments that support the production of world-class science from our world-class institutions. However, our economic policies have continued to be rooted in natural resources and traditional manufacturing while this “national intellectual resource” is ready and able to prime the 21st century economy. The time has come for us to commit to life sciences as a driver for Canada's economy with the knowledge that this sector can help solve some of our biggest societal challenges: an aging population, food security, climate change, health equity, prosperity, pandemic preparedness, and so much more. It's time to unlock the potential of Canada's life sciences.

Dr. Alison Symington is the current chair of the board of Life Sciences Ontario (LSO). She owns her own consultancy leveraging more than three decades of experience in drug development in both the private and not for profit sectors. Dr. Jason Field is president and CEO of LSO. Field has more than two decades of professional experience that spans the private, public, and the not-for-profit sectors.

The Hill Times

From crisis to catalyst: Canada's opportunity to drive global health and research innovation

By creating an environment that fuels scientific advancement, Canada can face future crises with confidence, ensuring both its prosperity and global influence.

Pamela Shaver-Walker
& Edward Short

Opinion



The country's readiness to respond to emerging health threats depends on robust research infrastructure, write Pamela Shaver-Walker and Edward Short. *Unsplash photograph by Louis Reed*

In a time of transformative health-care innovations, particularly within the biotechnology sector, Canada stands at a critical juncture. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with geopolitical and economic challenges, has highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the country's domestic research capabilities. With a strong scientific legacy, Canada has the potential to lead this global shift.

As the federal government plans for the future, it's crucial to learn from past decisions where research investment was often neglected. The country's readiness to respond to emerging health threats, including infectious disease, mental health, and chronic cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, depends on robust research infrastructure. While it is not possible to predict the next

global health crisis, preparedness is essential.

Charles River Laboratories (Charles River) is a leading global biopharmaceutical research organization. With four facilities located in Quebec that employ more than 2,500 innovators, we certainly recognize just how much potential Canada holds. From entry-level laboratory technicians to PhD scientists, and more than 500 staff with advanced degrees in various biology and chemistry disciplines, Charles River's workforce has some of the brightest minds and talent responsible for delivering scientific breakthroughs.

Canada holds the potential to lead in key research areas, such as cell and gene therapies, rare disease treatments, vaccine development, and novel treatment development for chronic

disease. However, delivering on this potential requires access to a greater pipeline of talent, attractive investment opportunities for biotech organizations, greater collaborations between private sector and all levels of government, and the capability for experimental development. Canada needs thoughtful policies that facilitate strategic investments, harnessing the nation's vast research potential.

While the federal Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy marked a pivotal moment in acknowledging the sector's immense potential for growth, significant work remains to address several critical barriers to growing Canada's biomanufacturing and life sciences sector. Specifically, a decreasing pipeline of talent, and a lack of much-needed laboratory space for drug discovery activities

are two key factors to achieving long-term success.

Labour market research from BioTalent Canada shows that more than 65,000 new biotech workers will be needed in the country by the end of this decade. This, coupled with the fact that major Canadian cities lack available laboratory space, is preventing the biotech sector from thriving and driving innovation out of the country.

Investing in "accelerators" like vivarium laboratory spaces where biotech organizations can collaborate with necessary resources including expertise, equipment, and instrumentation, or contract their research out can alleviate pressures both from infrastructure demands, and costs associated with staffing. These "pop-up" lab spaces will not only spur innovation and discovery, but can also maximize regional economic development for surrounding communities. Moreover, partnerships with academic institutions should be a cornerstone of Canada's strategy. Charles River has seen great success through its collaborations on curriculum design, lab standards, and research, ensuring that the next generation of scientists is well prepared to lead the charge.

In addition, advancements in predictive toxicology, and responsible AI-driven decision support with regard to drug development are important to reduce the upfront investment required in the discovery and progression of compounds to first-in-human trials. Using the data from both successful molecules as well as those that fail helps to better explain and predict the toxicity and efficacy of molecules, which is in-

valuable to Canada's positioning as a leader in drug discovery.

Lastly, this country can harness its potential by paving the way when it comes to developing innovative research practices by actively embracing new approach methodologies. Through initiatives like Charles River's Virtual Control Groups in nonclinical toxicology, we are reducing animal usage by replacing selected control group animals with matched virtual counterparts developed from retrospective datasets. By advancing responsible and innovative scientific practices, Charles River is championing methods that reflect our commitment to ethical research, patient safety, and cutting-edge technology.

As Canada navigates the uncertainties of a post-pandemic world, we can't afford to fall behind in research. Investing in the country's domestic research infrastructure is crucial not only for protecting our communities and strengthening our economy, but also for asserting Canada's leadership in global health innovation. By creating an environment that fuels scientific advancement, Canada can face future crises with confidence, ensuring both its prosperity and global influence.

Most importantly, investing in research is about creating healthier lives—here at home, and around the world.

Pamela Shaver-Walker is the corporate vice-president, global head of operations for Safety Assessment at Charles River Laboratories. Shaver-Walker is responsible for global operations across more than 20 sites in seven countries and partners with senior leaders across safety assessment to drive initiatives related to harmonization and alignment in areas that converge across operations. Edward Short is the corporate vice-president, human resources at Charles River Laboratories. He has served as a member of BioTalent Canada's board of directors since 2017, where he currently chairs the Governance and Nominations Committee.

The Hill Times

Biotechnology: an opportunity balanced on a knife's edge

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biotechnology field given lengthy and exigent regulatory approval processes.

Funding difficulties also rear their heads on the Canadian academic stage. Our population is amongst the most educated in the world with a public that understands the role of science in shaping and bettering our societies. Canadian scientists themselves are highly regarded internationally, punching above their weight due to a high level

of rigor and quality in academic programs at all levels of education—especially in post-graduate programs. These factors give us the necessary drive and brilliance to excel not only in biotechnology, but also across R&D fields.

Retaining this talent is critical, and many Canadian professionals are being lured to more lucrative opportunities abroad. This brain drain often begins at the graduate level, with Canadian post-graduate studies becoming harder to access as the cost of living rises.

Notably, the scholarships offered to top Canadian graduate students have stagnated since 2004 despite an increase in living costs during this period of 50 per cent or more. As a result, today, the unfortunate choice faced by many Canadian STEM graduates is to face four to six years of poverty in a graduate program that pays far below minimum wage—as low as \$21,000 per year—or to follow better opportunities outside of Canada.

Not everything is doom and gloom. Last April, the federal

government announced plans to substantially expand R&D funding in a new five-year plan, joining key international research initiatives such as the Horizons Europe program, and pledging to increase graduate and postdoctoral scholarships. These initiatives will help to retain Canadian talent, and restore our competitiveness in biotechnological R&D. They are excellent blueprints to follow in future funding efforts.

Without further expansion to these and other R&D-driving

programs, however, Canada's support for home-grown science will continue to lag behind that of international biotech hub countries. Today, we are observing an exodus of talent from our country towards greener pastures, and limited growth in a field of incredible strategic interest. Science is the lifeblood of progress, and we must pledge to safeguard and accelerate the momentum that we have only just begun to build. Otherwise, Canada will be left behind in the ongoing biotechnology revolution.

Adam Damry is an assistant professor at the University of Ottawa, and a Canada Research Chair in Synthetic Biology. He runs a research group that develops medical diagnostic platforms, and engineers enzymes to fight plastic pollution.

The Hill Times

Opinion

Climate-resilient infrastructure: a burning platform

Recent climate-related disasters are shining a bright light on another serious problem: their huge negative impact on critical infrastructure, deepened by infrastructure failings.

Rodrigue Gilbert

Opinion



The risks of our changing climate are getting more obvious. In 2021, torrential rains, flooding, and landslides took out

highways and railways, cutting off Canada's largest port—the Port of Vancouver—shutting down the Trans Mountain pipeline, and forcing the evacuation of several British Columbia cities. In 2023, record wildfires raged out of control, scorching 15 million hectares, and forcing the evacuation of more than 200 communities. In 2024, record heat waves in the east and destructive wildfires in the west have once again underlined that our climate is shifting and shifting fast.

These climate-related disasters are shining a bright light on another serious problem: all of them have a huge negative impact on critical infrastructure and are deepened by infrastructure failings. You are likely picturing Jasper, Alta., right now; I know I am. This is an urgent priority. Resilient infrastructure can help protect lives, property, and communities.

Current investments are not scaled to modernize and upgrade infrastructure to better withstand climate events. To be frank,

current investments are not even up to the more limited task of maintaining Canada's aging and inadequate infrastructure. But what's to be done?

One part of the solution is known. For years now, politicians have highlighted the need for a comprehensive, long-term national plan for infrastructure investment that factors in climate. The government even has an optimistically titled National Adaptation Strategy with a section on infrastructure. That document rightly states "there is a need to significantly scale up investment to support Canadian communities in making their infrastructure more resilient to a changing climate, in ways that match the magnitude and time horizon of the risks being faced." All well and good. However, it does not get to the "how."

How is the vital question. Too often, infrastructure investments seem to be at the mercy of political gamesmanship between parties and orders of government. Too often, decisions seem

based on expediency rather than a thoughtful approach to what is actually needed—the proverbial "shovel-ready project" trumping the "shovel-worthy" one.

The long-promised National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) could be the answer to how. Done right, such an assessment would provide an apolitical way to align federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous needs. An evidence-based NIA, developed in collaboration with industry, would provide the long-term planning that actually gets us to a more resilient—and net-zero emissions—future.

Having a fact-based assessment and sensible plan makes all the difference. Our own industry sector offers a case in point. In 2021, we released an industry report called *Strength, resilience, sustainability: Canada's construction sector recommendations on adapting to climate change*. That paper called for action in a number of areas, and identified joint responsibilities of governments and industry. In a new report released Sept. 9 by the Canadian Construction Association (CCA)—*Climate resilience in construction: Building for a sustainable future*—we are pleased to say that, despite a longtime history as a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, the construction sector has been making strides to curb its impact. Investments in clean technologies and materials are rising, and there has been a notable decrease in emission intensity across various infrastructure asset classes.

That is not to say that the battle is won. In addition to highlighting key developments and best practices, the CCA report is clear-sighted about where

improvement is still needed. Ironically, one of these areas remains the delivery of the National Infrastructure Assessment, which the 2021 paper called for as well.

Even a thoughtful NIA is not a cure-all. To address the linkages between climate risks and infrastructure, governments must also consider broader policy issues, such as labour needs (recruiting future builders and training them); measures to incentivize industry innovation; procurement that recognizes that risk needs to be shared for better outcomes, and that has been modernized to reflect the need for companies to invest in climate resilient materials; and updates to standards and building codes that industry and suppliers can confidently work towards.

Our industry stands ready to work with Canadian governments in all these areas to build a strong foundation for a stronger country. Hopefully, the next time we issue a report on this topic, we will be able to say that significant progress is being made to build infrastructure that is resilient to extreme weather events, and responsive to the specific needs of Canadians. But it is hard to remain optimistic about progress, since, even when the country is literally on fire, there just isn't enough political urgency accorded to addressing the issue.

Rodrigue Gilbert is the president of the Canadian Construction Association. CCA is the national voice for the construction industry in Canada, representing over 18,000 member firms in an integrated structure of 64 local and provincial construction associations.

The Hill Times

The prescription for Canada's health care future

Focus on embracing the rapid pace of scientific discovery, letting innovation drive policy, and fostering collaboration across the health-care system.

Bettina Hamelin

Opinion



The world of life sciences is evolving at an unprecedented pace, offering new hope through groundbreaking treatments for diseases that were once considered untreatable. Yet, as our health-care system confronts these scientific advancements, it also faces the challenge of

adapting to ensure Canadians can access the medicines of tomorrow without unnecessary delays.

Canada can either seize the opportunity to lead, or risk falling behind. This fall, there are three critical areas that must guide the government's approach as Parliament reconvenes, and policies are shaped for today and the coming years.

First, parliamentarians must understand that science is driving unprecedented innovation in health care. This is a golden era for scientific discovery, where breakthroughs in fields like gene editing, precision medicine, and vaccines are rapidly reshaping our understanding of what is possible. Over the past few years, we have seen vaccines developed at an astonishing pace. Today, the industry is revolutionizing our approach to treating rare and chronic diseases and cancers, offering hope to millions of Canadians and people around the world.

Yet even as science moves forward at lightning speed, Canada's health-care system is still designed for a different era. To build a system that can keep up with today's—and tomorrow's—scien-

tific advancements, we need infrastructure that supports advanced diagnostic testing and precision medicine. As we move toward more personalized treatments tailored to the genetic makeup of individual patients, the health-care system must be equipped to deliver these innovations quickly. This means more than just approving new treatments; it requires investment in testing, imaging, data collection, and integration across health-care systems to ensure patients receive the right treatment at the right time.

Second, we need to let science and innovation drive health-care policy, not political point-scoring. Too often, the debate around health-care policy in Canada gets bogged down in discussions about cost. While managing health-care costs is essential, we cannot afford to ignore the value that innovative treatments provide not just to individual patients, but also to society as a whole.

Consider the economic impact of someone who has access to a life-saving drug. They can return to work, contribute to the economy, and live a fuller life. That's not just a health-care outcome; it's a

societal benefit. Yet, our current system tends to focus narrowly on short-term cost containment rather than long-term value.

Instead, we should embrace new models of health-care investment, including outcomes-based or risk-sharing agreements that link payment for new drugs to the results they deliver for patients. Such approaches are already being used successfully in countries like Germany and Australia, and there's no reason why Canada shouldn't follow suit.

Third, we must acknowledge that no single entity can tackle the complex challenges of modern health care alone. Collaboration will be our key to success. Governments, health-care providers, pharmaceutical companies, and patient groups must work together to co-create solutions that ensure timely access to innovative treatments. This requires more than just talking about collaboration—it demands real action.

There are examples where collaboration is already making a difference. Initiatives like Target Zero—which aims to improve access to new medicines by reducing time of review between Health

Canada and the Canadian Drug Agency to zero days—demonstrate that when regulatory bodies and industry work together, patients benefit. But we need more of this, and we need it on a larger scale.

To that end, a crucial first step is ensuring that the government's health-care priorities reflect the voices of patients. Too often, policies are developed without meaningful patient input, leading to gaps in care and delayed access to life-saving treatments. A patient-centred approach to policymaking is not just the right thing to do—it's the smart thing to do, and we owe it to Canadians.

As Parliament returns this fall, we must focus on these three pillars: embracing the rapid pace of scientific discovery, letting innovation drive policy, and fostering collaboration across the health-care system.

Canadians deserve a health-care system that matches the extraordinary scientific advancements being made today. Let's make sure we give them nothing less.

Bettina Hamelin is the president of Innovative Medicines Canada.

The Hill Times

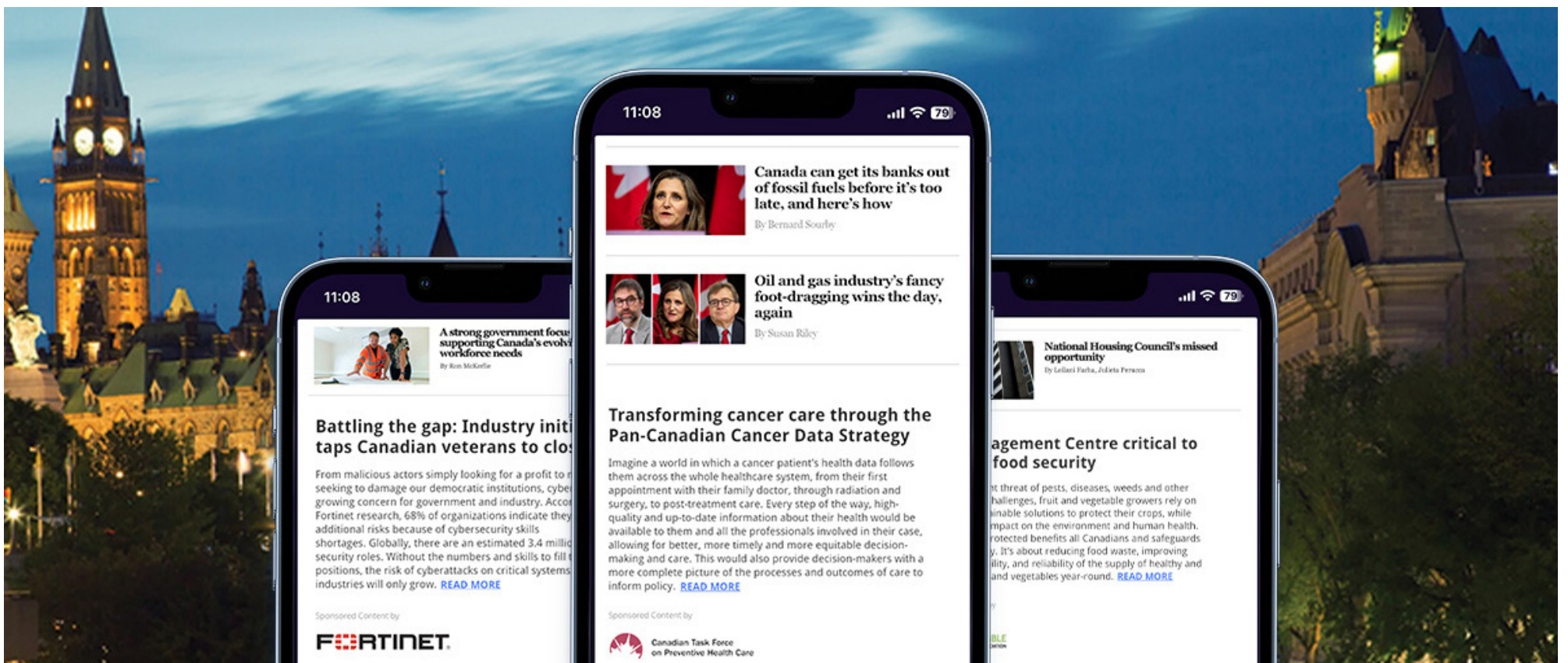
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Opinion



Earlier this month, Björn Höcke and the Alternative for Germany party won two state elections, the first time a far-right party has taken the most votes in Germany since the Second World War. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Steffen Pröβdorf

Four lessons from Germany's state elections

Left feeling unheard, it is a matter of time before voters look to the extreme options.

Milton Chan

Opinion



TORONTO—Much ink was spilled earlier this month about the rise of both the far-right and far-left parties in two German state elections in the former East Germany. Alternative for Germany (AfD) landed its first-ever state election victory in Thuringia, and its second in Saxony. Far-left Sahara Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW, named after its charismatic leader Bündnis Sahara Wagenknecht) landed a solid third in its electoral debut in both states.

German elections use the mixed-member proportional representation (PR) system. Voters get one vote for a *direktmandat*, i.e. local representative, and one for a party, with a five per cent

threshold for list seats. Most party leaders have their name on both a local ballot and the statewide ballot, effectively guaranteeing their entrance into Parliament—barring a complete wipe out.

From protest to direct mandate

AfD's win in Thuringia made for alarming headlines as the last far-right party to win a state election was the Nazis in 1932. This was expected given the AfD won the state in the 2021 federal election. What is more remarkable is AfD winning the biggest share of *direktmandats*, ending the Christian Democrats' (CDU, the mainstream centre-right party) continual claim since German reunification as the party with most local representatives. The AfD's one-third of the constituency vote is a meteoric rise from its 2.2 per cent share two elections ago.

Why does that matter? Local members provide the party with sustained publicly funded grassroots infrastructure. The impact of AfD holding more than half of these states' federal constituencies was clear in these elections. Free Democrats (FDP)—the junior partner in the federal governing coalition—flip back and forth

between a sizable caucus to zero seats both in Berlin and in state legislatures because they never had a secure hold on many *direktmandat*. Their parliamentary absences devastated party infrastructure, and impeded grooming of future leaders.

In Canada, many people dismiss the emergence of Maxime Bernier's People's Party, thinking their support is spread too wide to be a force. As the AfD has demonstrated—and the B.C. Conservatives will likely soon demonstrate in Canada—it might take a while for them to win local contests, but when they do, they will do it with a vengeance.

Lesson: *It would be a mistake to think an extremist party can't win a majority of the seats in a first-past-the-post system.*

Not my government leader

Germans are used to coalitions. PR works fine in delivering governments that reflect the voters' will when there were two dominant parties, plus a couple of smaller parties. With German voters—just like Canadians—increasingly drawn to other options, more parties surpassed the five per cent threshold and won seats. Fractious parliaments make

forming a coalition unpredictable, giving the smaller parties disproportionate leverage—sometimes immediately after electoral thrashings.

The outgoing Thuringia government is a particularly perverse example of PR going awry. The Left Party—successor of the Communists—came to power in 2014 with support from centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), previously the CDU's governing partner. Why is this perverse? The governing CDU not only won that election, but also with an increased mandate. Its junior partner—that election's biggest loser—kept their cabinet jobs by ousting the winner and putting the communists in charge. The third-partner Greens were not in government after making major gains in the two previous elections, but got a fifth of the cabinet seats despite declining support in the next two.

Thuringia's new government will again be a perverse irony. CDU will return to government with 10 per cent less support than when it was ousted. It will likely lead a three-way coalition plus a confidence deal with a fourth party. It will be beholden to two far-left parties despite overwhelming acceptance by its supporters of a coalition with AfD.

Ignoring voters' wishes when they tell you to jump into bed with neo-Nazis is probably the right stance to take, but certainly one that will leave voters feeling unheard.

Lesson: *PR is just as likely to leave voters feeling their votes don't matter.*

Governing ménage à trois

With more small parties gaining seats, winners are winning with smaller mandates. SPD won the last German election with only 25.6 per cent. Olaf Scholz, the first chancellor commanding

less than 30 per cent popular support, leads a "traffic-light" coalition with the Greens and the regulation-cutting Free Democratic Party.

Thuringia and Saxony will likely both end up with CDU-led governments. Given CDU also refuses to govern with the Left, in both states they will need the new ultra-left BSW along with SPD. These threesomes would obviously be out of convenience. Wagenknecht is a former federal leader of the Left who left the party over refugee, vaccination, and Ukraine—three issues on which the Left and the CDU actually align.

These threesomes will also likely be fleeting. When parties with diametrically opposed politics jump into bed together, the fun won't last very long. Just look at the public sniping between FDP's federal finance minister and Green's foreign minister. Such public brawls are driving down support for all three governing parties, which perversely keeps them closer together despite their mutual contempt. They all know an election would spell certain demise for their government, and, for the smallest partner, likely their parliamentary existence.

Lesson: *More parties in PR leads to more partners needed to govern. More partners equals more public disputes, which equals more voter dissatisfaction.*

Make Thuringia great again

The rise of these fringe parties is seen as a response to the failure of mainstream parties—imported from West Germany—in bringing standards of living closer to their neighbours'. Thuringia's location between three of Germany's five wealthiest states has brought little spillover prosperity, but an exodus of youth to those states, contributing to their respective growth.

But the bitterness goes even deeper. AfD's nationalistic message reminds Thuringians of their glory days as the German Empire's cultural centre, provoking resentment for the unfulfilled promises of reunification. This playing out here is no coincidence. Thuringia is where the Nazis first tasted governing power, one of only three states—the other two no longer exist—where they legitimately won elections before Adolf Hitler took over the country.

Lesson: *Left feeling unheard, it is a matter of time before voters are angry enough to give the extreme option a majority—neo or otherwise.*

Milton Chan is an electoral systems nerd who spends too much time editing Wikipedia, and programming spreadsheets. He has volunteered on campaigns in Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Hong Kong, and Taiwan. A bleeding-heart Liberal partisan, Chan has a knack for managing nomination and leadership campaigns. He is ramping up his Duolingo lessons in hope of speaking good-enough German to volunteer in the 2025 German federal election.

The Hill Times

Senate aims to serve up pharmacare for Thanksgiving

The Senate Social Affairs, Science, and Technology Committee will have just four weeks to study the pharmacare legislation before its scheduled third reading vote on Oct. 10.

Continued from page 1

Council of Canadians, the Montreal Economic Institute, and the Conference Board of Canada, as well as academics from Carleton University, Dalhousie University, and the University of British Columbia.

On Sept. 12, British Columbia became the first province to sign a memorandum of understanding with the federal government on pharmacare. After the legislation receives royal assent, funding for the province's estimated \$195-million portion of the \$1-billion program will begin flowing by next April.

While the federal program aims to cover contraceptives and diabetes drugs and supplies, B.C.'s Health Minister Adrian Dix said the provincial program already covers the former, so that portion of the province's funding would instead be used to cover hormone therapy for women.

At a joint press conference in Vancouver, Holland said he remains confident in his objective to sign an agreement with "every jurisdiction in the country" before April 1 of next year, and to get "drugs flowing in every jurisdiction within that timeline."

Independent Senator Ratna Omidvar (Ontario), the Social Affairs committee chair, told *The Hill Times* there had been plans to complete the study before Parliament rose for the summer. But since the legislation only ascended to the Senate on June 3, that had been far too late, she said.

"It just wasn't possible for the Senate to do its job and review the legislation before the summer," Omidvar explained.

Instead, Omidvar said the committee has now been prescribed an Oct. 10 deadline for the legislation to be returned to the Senate for a third reading, meaning the clause-by-clause study must be completed earlier that week.

"We've given ourselves the requisite amount of time we will need to study this important bill," Omidvar said, adding that alongside the two regular weekly



Senate Social Affairs Committee chair Ratna Omidvar says the group will have the 'requisite' time it needs to study the pharmacare legislation by Thanksgiving. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

meetings, extra meetings will also be scheduled to study the bill.

Non-affiliated Senator Marc Gold (Stadacona, Que.), the government's representative in the Senate, told *The Hill Times* that he had received agreement from the leaders of each Senate group for a third reading vote by Oct. 10, which he said will "hopefully" pass without amendment.

Six pieces of government legislation are currently before the Senate, all of which Gold said he considers priorities. Alongside pharmacare at the top of that list is the amended Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, Bill C-49. Gold said the Senate Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources Committee is scheduled to complete its study of the bill and return it to the Senate for third reading by Oct. 1.

The remaining four pieces of legislation Gold said are priorities for the Senate this fall include the third attempt to establish a Public Complaints and Review Commission for the RCMP, Bill C-20, which was sent to the Senate National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs committee on June 20; the telecommunications cybersecurity legislation, Bill C-26, awaiting second reading; the Miscarriage of Justice Review Commission Act (David and Joyce Milgaard's Law), Bill C-40, also awaiting second reading; and a bill to protect elephants and great apes, S-15, which completed committee study on June 20, and is currently awaiting its third reading.

As for whether he believes there is added pressure on the Senate now that the supply-and-confidence agreement is no more, Gold said his colleagues have demonstrated a "good track

record of balancing serious and comprehensive studies of legislation while also moving quickly and expeditiously."

"I think we've shown that we're able to dig in and do our serious study while—at times—accelerating those studies with extra meeting slots, and working that much harder to get things done," Gold said.

The dissolution of the Liberal-NDP deal doesn't have a direct impact on the Senate's operations since its current makeup functions as a "permanent minority" already, "however—and it's a big however—Senators don't work in a silo," said Gold.

"Senators understand we're part of a legislative institution that works in complement to the House of Commons, and, in most cases, we're supposed to be the final step in that process," Gold explained. "Senators know that minority Parliaments are more challenging, and we cannot assume any proposed amendment will pass."

Gold said there is "no question" that the end of the deal—and the greater instability it will bring to Parliament—will factor into the decision-making of some Senators as they study legislation before them.

While Omidvar said she won't "presuppose" whether or not the committee will return the legislation with any amendments for the

House of Commons to consider, she said there has already been a "great deal of interest" in the study from stakeholders.

As of publication deadline, seven briefs from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Canadian Generic Pharmaceutical Association, Food Allergy Canada, the Canadian Association for

Pharmacy Distribution Management, Best Medicines Coalition, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation have already been submitted to the committee for consideration.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, Social Affairs Committee member and Independent Senator René Cormier (New Brunswick) said that the group's review of Bill C-64 is consistent with the Senate's "commitment to due diligence and thorough scrutiny."

"As always, the Senate is fulfilling its duty of sober second thought, and [the committee] is giving the bill the utmost attention, as it does with all legislation," Cormier wrote.

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, fellow committee member and Independent Senator Donna Dasko (Ontario) said she has heard "rumours" that some committee members may plan to add amendments to the legislation once the committee's study has been completed, but nothing more concrete.

While Dasko said she doesn't feel as if anyone is "breathing down her neck" to get the legislation passed, she said that "on a macro level," she does feel added pressure from the increased "volatility of the current political environment."

Additionally, as pharmacare was initially negotiated as part of

the supply-and-confidence agreement, Dasko said that any amendment the Senate passes could lead the House of Commons down a "very awkward path" if the NDP or Liberals decide to renegotiate those original terms.

"I think whether or not the legislation will need changes will become apparent once we get into the meetings," Dasko said, noting that there can always be unforeseen issues or ones that had been placed on the "back burner" that can "suddenly emerge."

However, Dasko said she remains hopeful the committee will be able to complete its study in the timeframe allotted, adding that it's possible to "bulk up" on meetings in the final weeks before Thanksgiving.

NDP House Leader MP Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) said that while it is unfortunate that the legislation couldn't have been adopted in June as had been the original goal, the summer and the final weeks before Thanksgiving have provided time to "ensure that people are aware of how much help it will provide."

"The reality is there's up to six million Canadians with diabetes who will benefit," explained Julian, who also serves as his party's health critic. "People with diabetes are paying between \$1,000 and \$1,500 a month for their diabetes medication and devices, and if they can't afford that, they end up hospitalized or die."

According to a 2018 study by the Canadian Federation of Nurses Union, approximately 270 to 420 Canadians die every year from diabetes due to "cost-related non-adherence" to prescribed medications.

As for whether seeing pharmacare receive royal assent places any pressure on the NDP to continue supporting the Liberal government, Julian reiterated that the NDP would approach confidence motions "case by case." Still, he said an "imperative" exists to ensure pharmacare crosses the finish line.

"There are a lot of Canadians waiting to get this support," Julian said. "It is absolutely critical that we get this done, [and] I know the Senators certainly understand that, so that's why I'm hopeful."

Julian said he isn't concerned about whether a successful non-confidence motion in the House could derail that progress, as "Poilievre brings non-confidence motions every month."

Regardless of whatever "shenanigans" Julian said the Conservatives may attempt in the coming weeks, the NDP has laid out "all of the tools" needed to not only see the legislation receive royal assent, but also begin providing contraceptives and diabetes medication and devices "in a few weeks."

"I think Senators understand how essential that is, and the provinces have certainly indicated the same," Julian said. "So, let's get going on pharmacare; there's no reason for further delay."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Government Representative Marc Gold says that the pandemic proved the Red Chamber can move both 'comprehensively and expeditiously.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

Poilievre says he can negotiate a softwood lumber pact with the U.S., but trade analysts are skeptical

Trade analysts say domestic political calculations in the U.S. are what is standing in the way of resolving the softwood lumber dispute.

Continued from page 1

prime minister Stephen Harper had negotiated a deal shortly after taking office. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) and Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) “on the other hand, have had nine years and three separate presidents, yet not only has he failed to strike a deal, but the tariffs are getting worse,” Poilievre said in an Aug. 14 statement.

Trade analysts told *The Hill Times* that a potential Poilievre-led government would likely face similar difficulties trying to push its southern neighbour to negotiate a new agreement. The agreement reached between the Harper government and that of then-U.S. president George W. Bush in 2006 expired days before the 2015 election.

Queen’s University emeritus professor Robert Wolfe, an expert

on Canadian trade, said it wasn’t just the Liberal government that has been unable to reach an agreement since 2006, but the previous Harper government also failed to renew the pact.

“Had there been a new deal there to get, of course, they would have gone for it,” he said. “The political economy of the lumber industry in the United States is not going to change overnight just because of a change of government on either side of the border.”

“The nature of the lumber industry works against our interests,” he said. “There’s still going to be powerful domestic lobby groups in the U.S. who will do what they can to keep Canadian lumber at a high price so they can sell their lumber at a high price.”

“We are faced with this because we don’t vote in U.S. elections. If people in lumber communities across Canada were sending members to the House of Representatives, then the situation would look different,” he said.

Carlo Dade, director of trade and trade infrastructure at the Canada West Foundation, said the U.S. is likely happy to take the increased fees and continue with the status quo.

“Folks in Canada just don’t realize the geography of softwood lumber production in the U.S. It is in the Pacific Northwest, it’s Texas, it’s Georgia, it’s the Carolinas. You look at a perfect lobby group composed of red and blue states and Congressional

districts,” he said, remarking that if the White House negotiated a softwood lumber agreement with Canada, it would become an issue for American lawmakers back in their districts.

“You would probably have a couple of dozen Congress folks that have to go back to their districts and do some explaining,” he said.

U.S. unwilling to negotiate, asserts Liberal government

The Canadian government remarked in March that the U.S. “has not demonstrated any concrete interest in meaningful negotiations” in response to a report on softwood lumber duties by the House International Trade Committee.

“Resolving the softwood lumber dispute is a top priority,” the response noted. “The government has deployed significant efforts and resources to achieve a mutually beneficial and durable resolution to the dispute, and to defend the interests of the Canadian softwood lumber industry through litigation and in U.S. trade remedy proceedings.”

While Poilievre’s August statement indicated that the government “failed” to raise the topic during U.S. President Joe Biden’s visit to Ottawa in 2023, the government’s response to the House committee noted that during the visit Trudeau “took the opportunity ... to again remind President Biden of the need for a mutually acceptable outcome and to encourage active U.S. engagement toward a resolution.”

Dade said he doubts that a solution to the dispute is possible, as it has been ongoing since the 1800s.

“I think it’s a feature of the North American trade architecture at this point,” he said. “Businesses have learned to internalize the costs.”

The U.S. has consistently defended the additional duties on Canadian softwood lumber by arguing that Canada subsidizes its lumber industry. While American lumber comes from privately owned land, most Canadian lumber comes from Crown land paid through a stumpage fee.



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre says he would sign a long-sought softwood lumber agreement with the U.S. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Dade said the deal that was struck in 2006 was “partially fortuitous circumstances” as Canada had built goodwill with the Americans through combat camaraderie.

“It wasn’t brilliant negotiating, it was the result of our involvement in Afghanistan,” he said.

He said the industry could do more to diversify away from the U.S., and look at additional market access opportunities in countries like Mexico.

“If you’re selling softwood lumber in Brownsville, Texas, why don’t you go 50 yards across the border?” he questioned. “I don’t think the industry has taken the diversification thing as hard as they could.”

“If you are having that much trouble with the Americans, you really should be pushing harder on all fronts to try to diversify,” he said.

‘We’re in a much more protectionist time,’ says Eric Miller

U.S.-based trade consultant Eric Miller, president of the Rideau Potomac Strategy Group, said the last softwood lumber agreement in 2006 was a “unique moment” that was created out of a close relationship between Harper and Bush.

“Unfortunately, though, instinctively we’re in a much more protectionist time. Both [former U.S. president Donald] Trump and Biden have been highly resistant to negotiating anything that looks like market access,” said Miller, a former senior adviser in the Canadian Embassy in Washington. “Getting market access is increasingly difficult at the present time, and it would only come from a prime minister that built a close enough personal relationship that the president would be willing to

overcome the natural reticence within the U.S. system to negotiate such an agreement.”

“It’s not impossible, but the bar is high, and has gotten higher in the years since the softwood lumber negotiation,” he said.

Miller said the pathway towards a softwood lumber agreement will largely depend on looming Canadian and American elections, with any work towards a compromise not expected beforehand.

“Generally speaking, these things have only got put into a temporary holding pattern because the president has been willing to do that for his friend, the prime minister,” he said.

The question will become—in a potential Conservative government—whether Poilievre is able to build a close relationship with his American counterpart, but not be seen as being too close.

But with other trade priorities emerging in the coming months and years, such as the review of the North American trade pact in 2026, there is an open question of whether a Canadian prime minister would want to spend their political capital with the U.S. president on softwood lumber.

“I think the situation certainly needs resolution, but they’re going to have to assess at the time, what’s the art of the possible,” Miller said.

“It’s good [the Conservatives are] showing that they’re focused on the issue. It’s good that they want to get some resolution on the issue because that would be something that the Canadian industry—both in the East and the West—would dearly love to see. But we should also be realistic about how difficult this process will be,” he said. “But, of course, the first step to negotiating any agreement is prioritizing a willingness to want to do it.”

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



International Trade Minister Mary Ng, right, and the Liberal government have claimed that U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, left, and the Biden administration don’t have an interest for ‘meaningful negotiations.’ *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Heard on the Hill

Feature

Roméo Dallaire brings his book to Ottawa on Oct. 27

Continued from page 2

Canada, 395 Wellington St., as part of the Ottawa International Writers' Festival.

The former UN commander told CTV this book—which he co-wrote with **Jessica Dee Humphries**—“is essentially a guide to say there is an ultimate aim to humanity that is lasting peace, and that our diplomatic structures and security structures and political institutions have focused on really trying to get rid of a problem versus trying to solve it, and, ultimately, bring us peace.” Following nearly four decades in the Canadian military, Dallaire was appointed by then-prime minister **Paul Martin** to the Senate in 2005. He stepped down in 2014.

Walter Natynczyk to receive Vimy Award



Then-chief of the defence staff Walter Natynczyk in 2012. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright.

Here's some more news about retired soldiers: former chief of defence staff **Walter Natynczyk** has been tapped as this year's Vimy Award Laureate—which Dallaire himself received back in 1995.

The Conference of Defence Associations Institute made the announcement on Sept. 12.

The 66-year-old retired general is being celebrated “for his significant and outstanding contributions to Canadian security and defence, and to the promotion and preservation of Canadian democratic values,” according to the CDAI press release.

Natynczyk first joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1975, and rose through the ranks while serving on various tours in the former Yugoslavia, Cyprus, East Timor, Eritrea, and Iraq. He was in Ottawa during the 1998 ice storm, leading his regiment during recovery and clean-up operations in the area.

He served as vice-chief of defence staff from 2006 to 2008, and then as full chief from 2008 until his retirement in December 2012. Afterwards, he became president of the Canadian Space Agency from 2013 to 2014, and then spent seven years as deputy minister of Veterans Affairs from 2014 to 2021.

The current chief of defence staff Gen. **Jennie Carignan**, national security and intelligence adviser **Nathalie Drouin**, and associate deputy minister of defence **Natasha Kim** are among the selection committee members who chose this year's laureate.

“I am inspired by Natynczyk's can-do attitude, his impressive career, and his relationship with our troops,” said Carignan in the press release. “Canada needs more people like Walt who step forward with

character, competence, and commitment to get the job done and serve their country either in or out of uniform.”

Natynczyk will be presented with the Vimy Award at the eponymous gala taking place at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa on Nov. 6.

GG welcomes seven new envoys

Seven heads of mission from six countries presented their letters of credence to Governor General **Mary Simon** at a ceremony at Rideau Hall on Sept. 13.

As reported by **Neil Moss** in his June 26 Diplomatic Circles column, the wife-and-husband team of **Tjorven Bellmann** and **Matthias Lüttenberg** will rotate wearing the German ambassadorial hat during their time in Ottawa.

The other new heads of mission to Canada are **Nahida Sobhan** (Bangladesh), **Jarl Kåre Frijs-Madsen** (Denmark), **Can Dizdar** (Turkey), **Uthman Lebbe Mohammed Jauhar** (Sri Lanka), and **Ngole Philip Ngwese** (Cameroon).

Champagne, Vestager to chat in Montreal

Innovation Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** will be speaking in Montreal on Sept. 25 at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations.

He will be joined by **Margrethe Vestager**, executive vice-president of the European Commission for a Europe fit for the Digital Age and commissioner for competition. The two will take part in a bilingual discussion titled “Seizing Emerging Tech Opportunities: A New Chapter in Canada-EU Co-operation.”

This event will take place at the Centre Mont-Royal, 2200 Mansfield St., in Montreal.

Hill Times wins five local newspaper awards

Now for a little tooting of our own horn: *The Hill Times* cleaned up in three categories at the Canadian Community Newspaper Awards, which were announced on Sept. 16.

Our regular columnists **Erica Ifill**, **Rose LeMay**, and **Michael Harris** came in first, second, and third place, respectively, in the category of “Outstanding Columnist.” Judges described Ifill's “fiery” columns as a “must-read”; LeMay as giving a “voice in her columns to people who do not have one loud enough to effect change in greater society”; and Harris noted for his “thoughtful, well-reasoned, and engaging” writing.

Our editorial cartoonist **Michael de Adder** came in top spot for “Best Local Cartoon” for his creation titled *Vultures circle Trudeau*, which the judges said was an “excellent thoughtful political cartoon reflecting Parliament Hill as a local concern.”

And *Hill Times*' website came in first place in “Best Community Newspaper Website.” According to the CCNA judges, hilltimes.com is “an excellent website that provides comprehensive information on the federal government and Canadian politics.”

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

U.K. High Commission officially opens its doors

The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia



Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, left, and United Kingdom High Commissioner Susannah Goshko at the official opening ceremony for the new British High Commission building at 140 Sussex Dr. on Sept. 4



Members of the Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds team Edward Soye, left, Philip Rochon, and Rich MacDougall.



Minister of State of the U.K. for Europe and North America Stephen Doughty delivers remarks.



Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, left, and former Liberal cabinet minister David Collenette.



The Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, performs a flypast over the new building.

Turkey marks Victory Day



Turkish Ambassador Can Dizdar delivers remarks during a Victory Day reception at his official residence on Aug. 30.



Brigadier General Jose Alberto López Martínez, air and military attaché at the Mexican Embassy, left; Captain Juan Horacio Márquez Frías, naval attaché at the Mexican Embassy; and Captain Marco Antonio Castro of the Peruvian Embassy.



Sezen Ünal, left, her husband military attaché Colonel Hikmet Ünal; Demet Dizdar, and her husband Ambassador Dizdar.



Russian Embassy defence attaché Andrey V. Sboev, left, and Jorge F. Huaman, air attaché at the Peruvian Embassy.



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

Environment Minister Guilbeault in the market for a new chief of staff

Plus, Housing Minister Sean Fraser has a new communications adviser, and Hill Climbers catches up with some former staff.

Environment and Climate Change Minister **Steven Guilbeault** will soon be hiring a new chief of staff for his office, with **Jamie Kippen** preparing to make his exit later this month.

Kippen was tapped to lead Guilbeault's office in September 2023 amid the staff shakeup that followed that summer's cabinet shuffle. He'd previously been chief of staff to then-health minister **Jean-Yves Duclos**.



Jamie Kippen, right, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Kippen has been with the Liberal team on the Hill since 2011, having joined then-interim Liberal leader **Bob Rae**'s office to tackle political operations after that year's election, which saw the Liberals slip to third-party standing in the House. He left the leader's office just as now-Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** was elected as the party's new head to become director of operations of the Ontario Liberal Party.

Kippen was a Liberal campaign strategist during the 2015 federal election, after which he joined Trudeau's PMO as a regional affairs adviser for Ontario. He worked there through to the 2019 election, after which he became chief of staff to then-diversity, inclusion, and youth minister **Bardish Chagger**. Ahead of the 2021 election, Kippen left to join party headquarters as senior director of election readiness, and was national field director during the subsequent campaign, after which he returned to lead Duclos' office.

Stay tuned for another update on Guilbeault's office soon—as well as any news on where Kippen has landed.

Over in Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Minister **Sean Fraser**'s office, there's one staff addition, one promotion, and one departure to note.

Sofia Ouslis was hired as a new communications adviser to the minister in late August.

She was most recently working as a research assistant to Western University associate professor **Zack Taylor**, having studied for a bachelor's degree in political science and government at the school.

Ouslis is a former chief operations officer for the National Panhellenic Conference, and has previously interned for King Township Councillor **Jordan Cescolini**, among other past jobs.



Sofia Ouslis is a communications adviser to Minister Fraser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Communications manager **Micaal Ahmed** has been promoted to senior communications adviser to Fraser. While he's got a new title, Ahmed continues to fill the function of press secretary to the minister.

An ex-intern at *The Hill Times*, Ahmed is a graduate of Carleton University's bachelor of journalism program—he also holds a master's degree in political management from the school—and has experience with *Esprit de Corps*, the military magazine co-founded by *Hill Times* columnist **Scott Taylor**; as well as with *The Kingston Whig Standard*; and *iPolitics*. Ahmed first started working on the Hill as an MP's assistant in 2018, and in 2022, he landed a job as a writer in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**'s office. He was bumped up to senior writer in the PMO before exiting in the fall of 2023 to work for Fraser.



Micaal Ahmed is now senior communications adviser to Minister Fraser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Matthew Dillon continues as director of communications, and also oversees digital communications adviser **Camellia Celestino**, and lead creative media adviser **Justin Manoni-Millar**.

In other office news, deputy director of housing policy **Micah Richardson** has bade Fraser's team farewell. **Hill Climbers** understands he's set to return to Nova Scotia.

Richardson is a former director of fundraising and digital for the Nova Scotia



Micah Richardson has left the housing minister's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Liberal Party, and an ex-communications director for the provincial Liberal caucus. He joined the staff ranks on the Hill in May 2022 when he was hired as a policy adviser to then-housing, diversity, and inclusion minister **Ahmed Hussen**, and was promoted to his most recent title after Fraser took over the housing file following the July 2023 cabinet shuffle.

Kyle Fox remains director of policy to Fraser, overseeing senior policy advisers **Matthew Paisley** and **Michael Kurliak**, and policy adviser **Josh Mbandi**.

Savannah DeWolfe is chief of staff to the minister.

Catching up with former staffers

Speaking of the environment minister's office, **Dominic Cormier**, who preceded Kippen as chief of staff to Guilbeault, joined aluminum company Alcoa as senior director of government affairs for Canada this past June.



Dominic Cormier is now working for Alcoa. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

A former Quebec Liberal staffer, Cormier was a senior policy adviser in the PMO between 2018 and 2021, and became chief of staff to Guilbeault after the minister took over the environment portfolio following the 2021 election.

Alex Steinhouse—who was chief of staff to then-justice minister **David Lametti** up until last summer's shuffle, which saw Lametti moved out of cabinet and replaced by Justice Minister **Arif Virani**—is now a counsel with Fasken in Montreal.

Steinhouse joined the law firm this past June after a months-long career break. An ex-lawyer with Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg LLP, Steinhouse first joined then-justice minister **Jody Wilson-Raybould**'s office

at the end of 2016, beginning as a policy and parliamentary affairs adviser. He was promoted to director of parliamentary affairs in 2018, and to chief of staff in the fall of 2020 under then-minister Lametti.

Another former cabinet chief of staff, **Lindsay Hunter**, who ran then-seniors minister **Kamal Khera**'s office from the end of 2021 until August 2023, is now government relations manager with Sysco Canada.

Khera was shuffled into the diversity, inclusion, and persons with disabilities portfolio as part of the July 2023 shuffle, which saw **Seamus O'Regan** named minister for seniors and labour—a role taken over by **Steven MacKinnon** this past July upon O'Regan's announcement that he would not seek re-election.

Hunter joined Sysco back in February of this year. An experienced Ontario Liberal staffer, including as a past senior adviser to then-Ontario premier **Kathleen Wynne**, Hunter joined Trudeau's PMO as an Ontario regional adviser (working alongside Kippen) at the start of 2016. She went on to also serve as director of parliamentary affairs and digital government to the Treasury Board president, starting under then-minister **Scott Brison**, and as director of parliamentary affairs and operations to then-infrastructure and communities minister **Catherine McKenna**.

Emma Kristensen, who likewise left the Hill in the wake of the 2023 summer shuffle and had last been director of cabinet, appointments, and parliamentary affairs to then-transport minister **Omar Alghabra**, is now manager of policy and government relations for Canada for DoorDash.



Emma Kristensen now works for DoorDash. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Alghabra—who also announced his intentions to stand down from his seat in the next election—was shuffled out of cabinet in July 2023, and replaced by Transport Minister and Quebec Lieutenant **Pablo Rodriguez**.

Kristensen started in her new job back in March. She spent roughly six years working for the Trudeau government in all, starting as a 2017 summer intern in the PMO. Kristensen was subsequently hired as executive assistant to the PMO's director of operations. She went on to also work as a special assistant for operations and policy to then-infrastructure minister **François-Philippe Champagne**, communications manager in the Liberal research bureau, and as a senior operations adviser to then-economic development and official languages minister **Mélanie Joly**.

Brian Peebles, who had been a senior policy adviser to Lametti as then-justice minister, left the Hill following last summer's shuffle, and soon after was hired as director of outreach and engagement with the Law Commission of Canada. A former assistant dean for strategic planning with McGill University's faculty of law, Peebles had been an adviser to Lametti since February 2022.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
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A woman's place is on the Hill: Women on the Hill event goes at Château Laurier on Sept. 19



Cybele Wilson attends the 2019 Women on the Hill event, which returns on Sept. 19 at the Fairmont Château Laurier. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10—TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

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

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

House Sitting—The House will resume sitting on Monday, Sept. 16, and will sit for four weeks from Sept. 16-Oct. 11, but will take Monday, Sept. 30, off. It breaks Oct. 14-18, and resumes sitting on Oct. 21. It sits Oct. 21-Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18 to Dec. 17.

Conference on Afghanistan—The University of Ottawa and the Embassy of Afghanistan host a day-long "Conference on Afghanistan: Changing the Approach and Reversing the Trajectory," exploring the current multifaceted crisis in Afghanistan with a focus on the ongoing global efforts to adopt and implement a new integrated approach. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 9 a.m. at FSS 4007, 120 University Priv. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

'How Canada Can Matter More to the U.S.'—The Empire Club of Canada hosts a discussion titled, "Borderline: How Canada Can Matter More to the United States—and the Rest of the World" featuring Public Policy Forum president Edward Greenspon, and Janice Stein, founding director of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St. W. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

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.utoronto.ca.

CBA on the Hill Reception—As the voice of more than 60 domestic and foreign banks operating in Canada and their 280,000 employees, the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) is looking forward to productive discussions with parliamentarians during our Hill Day to ensure that Canada's financial system remains strong, innovative, and competitive. Join us at our CBA on the Hill evening reception on Wednesday, Sept. 18, at the Métropolitain Brasserie and Restaurant, 700 Sussex Dr., from 5-7 p.m. ET. Please contact Brighid Berszényi, senior administrative assistant, government relations, at bberszényi@cba.ca to RSVP.

Cocktail Reception on the Copyright Act—The Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions hosts a cocktail reception: "100 years of the Copyright Act: Towards a law for our times." Wednesday, Sept. 18, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET, in Room 310, Wellington Building, Parliament Hill.

Beverly 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.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 19

Webinar: 'Lobby Like a Pro'—The Beacon North Mentorship Academy hosts the first in a two-part online course, "Lobby Like a Pro: Plan and Execute a Successful Lobby Day." This first session will cover effective strategies for securing meetings, preparing stakeholders, managing logistics, and following up to build strong relationships. Thursday,

Sept. 19, from 12-1:30 p.m. ET. Details: beaconmentorshipacademy.com.

Women on the Hill Reception—Earncliffe hosts the "Women on the Hill" reception, a gathering with women from politics, government, media, business, academia, labour, diplomacy, and civil society. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. Space is limited. Thursday, Sept. 19, at the Fairmont Château Laurier's La Terrasse, 1 Rideau St. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20

Press Gallery Mugging—Members of the Parliamentary Press Gallery are invited to a lunch to bid farewell to former PPG members. Friday, Sept. 20, at 12:30 p.m. ET in Room 100, Sir John A. Macdonald Building, Parliament Hill.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21

Panel: 'Burning Questions'—CBC's Nahlah Ayed will moderate a "Burning Questions: Confronting the Challenges of our Global Climate Crisis" conversation between award-winning author John Vaillant and global climate policy thinker Catherine Abreu, part of the ongoing Toronto International Festival of Authors. Saturday, Sept. 21, at 4 p.m. ET at the Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 231 Queens Quay W., Toronto. Details: festivalofauthors.ca.

Canada Strong and Free Regional Networking Conference—Conservative MP John Barlow, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, and former MP Stockwell Day are 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 CRTC 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. Arguing against the motion are former Liberal cabinet minister John Manley, and the University of Calgary's Martha Hall Findlay. Tuesday, Sept. 24, at 5:15 p.m. at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: cdhoweregntdebate.org.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 24—WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

BIONATION 2024—BIONATION, hosted by BIOTECCanada, celebrates the Canadian biotech sector's strategic economic and social importance by bringing together researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, policy makers and the workforce of today and tomorrow. The two-day program will explore the opportunities ahead for the sector, and includes speakers such as Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne. Visit: biotech.ca/bionation for details or info@biotech.ca.

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 Pélouquin, 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. 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 at the Centre Mont-Royal, 2200 Mansfield St., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 26

Webinar: 'Maximize Impact Post-Lobby Day'—The Beacon North Mentorship Academy hosts the second in a two-part online course, "Maximizing Impact After Your Lobby Day." This second session will explore the steps to take after your lobby day to ensure your advo-

cacy efforts produce results. Thursday, Sept. 26, from 12-1:30 p.m. ET. Details: beaconmentorshipacademy.com.

'Wildfires and the Need for Resilient Communities'—Emergency Preparedness Minister Harjit Sajjan will discuss "Canadian Wildfires and the Urgent Need for Resilient Communities" with Celyeste Power, president and CEO of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Ottawa. Thursday, Sept. 26, at 12 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Liberal MP Fortier to Host Spaghetti Dinner—Liberal MP Mona Fortier hosts a spaghetti dinner featuring conversations with community members. Thursday, Sept. 26, at 6 p.m. ET at the Centre Pauline Charron, 164 Jeanne Mance St. Ottawa. Details: liberal.ca.

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 Pélouquin, 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.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 29

MP Majumdar to Attend Party Fundraiser—Conservative MP Shuv Majumdar will take part in a special evening with Conservative candidate Roman Baber in support of the York Centre EDA. Sunday, Sept. 29, at 6:30 p.m. at the National Event Venue, 1000 Finch Ave. W., North York. Details: events@conservative.ca.

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