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TRUMP IS OFF HIS ROCKER, GOP POLITICS IS OFF THE RAILS

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Exclusive News: INSIDE



THE HILL TIMES

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NEWS

'A lot of tension' in both Ottawa and Quebec City sparks shifting alliances between parties

BY IAN CAMPBELL

As Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet amps up his pressure on the federal

Liberal government, how the party leverages its newly influential position in Parliament will likely spur more interplay between federal and provincial counter-

parts in the coming months, say observers.

"There's a lot of tension in both Quebec City and Ottawa," said former NDP staffer Karl

Bélanger. "There are so many players with so many different interests at play."

"The most immediate impact is the kind of alliances or part-

nerships that are being formed between the provincial parties and the federal parties," he said.

The Bloc Québécois, led by Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, Que.), has taken on a newly influential role in the House of Commons since NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) ended his party's supply-

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NEWS

Conservatives' path to victory propelled by women, young voters, and a deep desire for change, say pollsters

The Liberals don't have the geographic or demographic base to build from right now, and they're losing in every province. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre may not be 'everybody's cup of tea,' but it's about choice and change, and he's the only option, says pollster Darrell Bricker.

BY CHRISTOPHER GULY

The federal Conservatives are poised to form one of the largest majority governments in Canadian history, and push the



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, pictured on the Hill on Sept. 17, 2024, has been able to position his party as 'different,' while the NDP has lost support due to its close alignment with the Liberals, says Darrell Bricker. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

Disasters the result of 'our actions or inaction,' Ottawa emergency management conference hears

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

The head of the United Nations agency responsible for disaster risk reduction in the Americas told an Ottawa conference last week that, as climate change creates greater threats, it's time to change the view of disasters as "natural" occurrences.

"The event, the hazard, can be of natural origin, or can be of biological origin or technology, [but] the disasters are the results of our actions or inaction," said Nahuel Arenas Garcia, chief of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction's Americas and Caribbean office. "The hazards, the events will continue, but we have the responsibility to make sure

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Christina Leadlay
Heard On The Hill

Gosh, don't go: U.K. high commish Goshko to leave Ottawa Oct. 31



British High Commissioner Susannah Goshko, right, pictured with Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe on Sept. 24, 2024, will be leaving Ottawa on Oct. 31 for a new posting. *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

After four years in Ottawa, British High Commissioner **Susannah Goshko** will be leaving on Oct. 31, a high commission spokesperson confirmed to **Heard on the Hill** last week.

The career diplomat will “move on to a new posting,” **Hebe Hewitt** told HOH by email, but didn’t elaborate on where. Goshko arrived in Ottawa in September 2021. Her previous postings include

Havana and two stints in Washington, D.C., according to her official biography.

On Sept. 23, the United Kingdom’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office announced that **Robert Tinline** will replace Goshko in February 2025. Also a career diplomat, Tinline has been on posting to Bogota, Basra, Madrid, and to the European Union. He’s been director of the Americas division at headquarters since 2022, according to his bio.

Francis Fox died on Sept. 24



Former Liberal MP and Senator Francis Fox, pictured in 2009. *The Hill Times file photograph*

Former **Pierre Trudeau**-era cabinet minister, Liberal MP, Senator, and ex-lobbyist **Francis Fox** died, aged 84, on Sept. 24.

A lawyer from Montreal, Fox was first elected to the House as MP for the riding of Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes, Que., in 1972.

“When my father was prime minister, Francis served as solicitor general of Canada, minister of communications, and secretary of state for Canada,” said Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** in a statement that day.

Fox’s early political career was besmirched by scandal in 1978 when he resigned after news broke that he’d forged the signature of his then-girlfriend’s husband so she could get an abortion. Fox was also married at the time, but soon divorced his wife **Joan Pennefather**.

He returned to cabinet after the 1980 election, but lost his seat in 1984. He then worked as a lobbyist until 2003 when he returned to political life to help **Paul Martin**’s transition team, and stayed on as his principal secretary until quitting in 2004. But back to the Hill Fox came in 2005 when he was appointed to the Senate in 2005. He retired in 2011.

Civil engineer named to the Senate

Quebec’s seats in the Senate are now all filled thanks to Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau**’s Sept. 25 announcement that award-winning engineer **Suze Youance** is the newest senator for that province.

The list of Senate vacancies now drops to four, with two openings in British



Suze Youance has been named to the Senate. *Screenshot courtesy Réseau ETS’s YouTube*

Columbia, and one each in Nunavut and Ontario.

Originally from Haiti, civil engineer Youance immigrated to Canada in 2006. Having worked for many years at Quebec engineering-consulting firm CIMA+, she’s also taught at Montreal’s École de technologie supérieure, hosted two TV shows on engineering and sustainable development for Savoir media, and is a member of the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec. She volunteers for groups that promote science, math, and engineering, as well as organizations that support the Haitian community.

U.S. confirms first ambassador-at-large to the Arctic

Mike Sfraga has been confirmed as the first U.S. ambassador-at-large to the Arctic.

U.S. Ambassador to Canada **David Cohen** posted his congratulations X on Sept. 25. “Dr. Sfraga’s deep expertise and strong relationships with Arctic leaders, including those in Canada, are vital for this important role,” he wrote. “My team at the U.S. Mission to Canada looks forward to collaborating with Dr. Sfraga on our work in the Arctic.”

Born in Alaska, Sfraga is a geologist who founded the Polar Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Cher believes in Bill S-15

Legendary American musician **Cher** offered her support for Bill S-15 last week.

“Elephants deserve freedom!” she posted on X last week. “With Dr **Jane Goodall**, I endorse Canada’s Bill #S15, proposing world’s 1st law to end [elephant] captivity. Bill S15 will also protect captive lions,

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CLARIFICATION:
The Hill Times, Aug. 21 issue

On Aug. 21, 2024, *The Hill Times* published an op-ed by Conservative Senator Don Plett, leader of the opposition in the Senate, titled “Trudeau’s experimental Senate changes are turning out to be a dud.”

On Aug. 22, 2024, Alison Korn, issues manager and media adviser at the Senate of Canada, requested that a clarification be made to part of Sen. Plett’s piece, which compared actual expenditures of the Senate in 2014-15 to a projected budget in 2024-25: “Its expenditures rose from \$85.4-million to \$134.9-million from 2014-15 to 2024-25,” Sen. Plett wrote.

The Senate request was to compare either actual expenditures or projected budget, rather than between an instance of actual expenditures and an instance of projected budget.

At the time, *The Hill Times* mistakenly believed that the message came from Sen. Plett’s office—though neither the email signature, nor the content of the email, suggested it was coming from that office—and made the changes to the budget figures.

This change was not requested by Sen. Plett’s office, and after correspondence from his office objecting to changes made to his op-ed without his consent, we reverted back to the original figures in his piece on Aug. 28.

The Hill Times apologizes to Sen. Plett for not clarifying with his office before making the change.

Rising hostility among party leaders and Bloc's demands put minority Parliament on edge

The lifespan of the longest minority Parliament in over 70 years is in doubt after the Bloc announced its plan to attempt to topple the government if two bills are not passed by Oct. 29.

BY ABBAS RANA & STEPHEN JEFFERY

The Liberals managed to stave off a Conservative non-confidence motion last week with the support of the NDP and Bloc Québécois, but the fractious relationship between the party leaders has political observers speculating that an early election still remains a possibility.

At the same time, however, only the official opposition seems especially keen for an election to be called immediately, says Nik Nanos, founder and chief data scientist at Nanos Research.

"It can't happen soon enough for the Conservatives. I think for the Bloc and for the New Democrats, they want a little bit of breathing space—not necessarily a snap election, but just a little more time," said Nanos. "For the Liberals, the last thing that they would want right now is any kind of federal election because it would probably be devastating for them."

In a high-stakes game of chicken last week, the Liberals managed to avert a political crisis with the support of the Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party. On Sept. 24, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) moved an opposition day motion of non confidence. The motion simply read "that the House has no confidence in the Prime Minister and the government."

However, a majority of the House—composed of the Liberals, Bloc, NDP, Greens, and Independent MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.)—voted to defeat the non-confidence motion on Sept. 25 with 211 nays and 120 yeas.

Despite surviving the motion, the political landscape appears continuing to shift under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) feet. Another non-confidence motion will be voted on this week.

Heightened tensions among party leaders and the NDP's withdrawal from the supply-and-con-



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government survived the first non-confidence motion since the NDP ended the supply-and-confidence agreement, but more motions are to come. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

fidence agreement with the Liberals have sparked speculation that an election could happen this fall.

Until now, the Liberals have been operating on the assumption that the next election will most likely be triggered on the next budget in the spring, but the NDP's abrupt decision to "rip up" the agreement earlier this month sent shockwaves in the federal political landscape.

The agreement was instrumental in providing stability to the Liberal minority government, and now the governing party has to negotiate with opposition parties on each confidence vote.

At this stage, an election can be held no later than Oct. 20, 2025. But the minority Parliament is already the longest lasting in more than 70 years at 1,043 days so far. By comparison, Trudeau's first minority Parliament ran for 619 days, the two minorities under then-prime minister Stephen Harper lasted 858 and 888 each, and the minority under his immediate predecessor Paul Martin lasted only 421 days.

The next attempt to bring down the government could come from Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil-Chambly, Que.) who has given the government an Oct. 29 deadline to pass two of his party's bills, or else he will call a non-confidence motion. According to a Sept. 25 Bloc press release, the Oct. 29 deadline would allow for an election to be held before Christmas.

The first bill, C-319, An Act to amend the Old Age Security Act (amount of full pension), would increase Old Age Security for those aged 65 to 74 by 10 per cent. Introduced by Bloc MP Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, Que.), the Parliamentary Budget

Office estimated the bill's implementation would cost \$16-billion over five years. Bill C-319 passed the House committee stage on March 19. It was backed at second reading by every party, with the exception of the Liberals and independent MP Dong.

The second bill, C-282, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act (supply management), would provide protections to supply management systems in trade negotiations.

The bill, introduced by Bloc MP Luc Thériault (Montcalm, Que.), passed third reading in the House on June 21, 2023, by 262 votes to 51. Members of all parties supported the bill, though two Liberal MPs and 49 Conservatives voted against the proposed legislation.

As previously reported in *The Hill Times*, advocates from non-supply-managed agriculture sectors have argued that the bill would hurt other export-reliant sectors by curtailing the agreements that officials will be permitted to negotiate.

Prior to Blanchet's ultimatum, Nanos said the Bloc's demands provided a no-lose scenario for the party. Old Age Security, in particular, could also assist the party in attracting an older base of voters who typically would not consider voting for them.

"Politically, there's no downside for Blanchet to ask for this because if he gets what he wants then it's a win for him. If he doesn't get what he wants, he gets to blame the Liberals," Nanos said.

Polling has consistently shown the Conservatives leading in every province except Quebec. An Abacus Data poll from Sept. 15 showed the Bloc as the party of

choice for 35 per cent of respondents in that province, followed by the Liberals on 24 per cent, the Conservatives 23 per cent, and the NDP 10 per cent.

Polling aggregator 338Canada last week projected that the Bloc would pick up an additional nine seats in Quebec if a federal election result reflected current polls, while the Conservatives would pick up another four, and the NDP one additional seat. The Liberals would drop from 33 seats in Quebec to 21.

If the Bloc does trigger a motion of non-confidence in the government after Oct. 29, it would be remarkably close to a prediction made by *La Presse* bureau chief Joël-Denis Bellavance on CPAC earlier this month.

"I will be bold: Canadians will go to the polls on Monday, Nov. 25, in my sense, and the government will be defeated third week of October on a motion of non-confidence initiated by the Bloc Québécois," Bellavance said during a panel discussion on CPAC's *Primetime Politics* on Sept. 20.

In the same show, Bob Fife, the Ottawa bureau chief for *The Globe and Mail*, said that he would not rule out the possibility of a fall election, but believed next spring remained the probable option.

Tonda MacCharles, *The Toronto Star's* bureau chief, also said that it's "conceivable" that a late fall election could happen, following the provincial elections in October and the American presidential election on Nov. 5.

"Certainly, the Conservatives think this government is going to come back with some kind of a budget and fall on their own terms. That's a strategy other governments have used, but is it

going to happen? Look again, and we don't hear that directly from the Liberal government, but why would they telegraph their strategy?" she said.

Outside the political manoeuvring, attacks between the leaders of each party have become more targeted. Poilievre routinely appends the insult "sellout" to the name of NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.). He has also called Singh a "fake," "fraud" and "a phony," while using similar language about Trudeau.

Lately, the prime minister and his cabinet ministers are also responding in kind with aggressive political rhetoric in the daily Question Period. The prime minister accused the Conservatives of "casual homophobic comments" in Question Period on Sept. 25 after he said a Conservative MP suggested that he "was sharing a bathtub with Tom Clark" in his New York City condo.

NDP MP Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, Alta.), Canada's first openly two-spirit MP, said he also heard a "very derogatory, homophobic and cowardly comment come the Conservative benches directed at the prime minister. Clearly, Conservative MPs heard it because many of them started to laugh. I have listened to the feed on ParlVu, and we can hear the remark."

The Conservative leader also regularly blasts Blanchet for not voting against the government on confidence motions.

Because of the changing dynamics in the minority government and rising tensions amongst party leaders, the daily Question Period has become raucous.

It came to a head on Sept. 19, when Poilievre called Singh "a fake, a phony and a fraud." According to CBC News, two MPs said they saw NDP leader stand up and shout at the Conservative leader, "I'm right here, bro."

Nanos said Poilievre's attacks on Singh could be an attempt to suppress support for the NDP by tying it to the current Liberal government.

"The other thing is so that the New Democrats don't become a place for progressive voters to park... the Liberals are not enthusiastic, and he's trying to basically spread that lack of enthusiasm [to] the New Democrats, so that there's no real galvanizing force against him," he said.

For the Liberals, Nanos said there appeared to be little in the way of a clear vision for a potential new term in office.

"What they've been basically doing is running the 2015 'greatest hits' and hoping that that will work," he said. "Let's assume that Justin Trudeau will lead the Liberal Party into the next election. Is he excited about fighting the next election? What are the ideas that he wants to put on the table in order to mobilize progressive voters? It's a bit of a head scratcher, that there's a lack of excitement, lack of motivation and there haven't been more proactive ideas or direction in order to engage [voters]."

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HAPPY 75TH ANNIVERSARY

TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
1949-2024





In Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China: China's Big Development Means New Opportunities for the World

On October 1, the People's Republic of China will celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Over the past 75 years, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has led the Chinese people in finding a Chinese-style modernization path that suits its national conditions. As a result, the Chinese nation has achieved a great transformation from standing up to growing rich, and to becoming stronger, a miracle in the history of human development. China has remained the second largest economy and the world's largest country in manufacturing, trade in goods, and foreign exchange reserves. Its average annual GDP growth rate from 1952 to this year is 7.9%, and per capita disposable income of the Chinese people has increase by 6% on average every year. Length of China's high-speed railway accounts for more than two-thirds of the world's total. And its e-commerce and mobile payment transactions both rank the top among all countries. It has the largest higher education system, and the number of full-time equivalent of R&D personnel has been the highest in the world for 11 consecutive years. The production and sales volume of new energy vehicles has ranked first in the world for nine consecutive years. And the total installed capacity of renewable energy power generation accounts for nearly 40% of the global total.

Over the past 75 years, the CPC has put the world's well-being at the forefront of its agenda, and has made it its mission to seek progress for humankind and common good for the world. As the tenacious builder of world peace, China has always adhered to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and has actively contributed Chinese solutions to hotspot issues such as the Ukraine crisis and the Palestine-Israel conflict. As the never-absent contributor to global development, China's contribution to world economic growth has remained above 30 per cent for many years in a row. As a developing country and a member of the "Global South", China has invariably stood in solidarity with fellow developing countries through thick and thin, and made contributions to developing countries' growth. As the firm defender of the international order, China advocates an equal and orderly world multi-polarization and universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. It has been the second-largest contributor of funds to the United Nations and the largest contributor of peacekeepers among the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Since China entered the new era, under the strong leadership of the CPC Central Committee with Xi Jinping at its core, China has achieved two miracles: rapid economic development and long-term social stability. We have historically eliminated absolute poverty, built a moderately prosperous society in all aspects, and achieved its first centenary goal on schedule when the CPC

marked its 100th anniversary. In the first half of this year, China's economy made steady progress, with a GDP growth of 5 percent, the fastest among the world's major economies. We have put forward the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, and promoted the building of a community of a shared future for mankind, contributing a series of important public goods for the world.

In July this year, the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the CPC was successfully held. At the session, China laid out systematic planning and deployment to further deepen reforms in a comprehensive manner and to promote Chinese-style modernization. It announced more than 300 important reform measures covering trade, investment, finance and other areas. We will always adhere to the basic state policy of opening up, enhance our capacity of opening up while we expand international cooperation, build a new open economy with higher standards, and continue to unleash the potential of our super-size market. This will create new opportunities for all countries in the world, including Canada.

This October will mark the 54th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Canada. Over the past 54 years, China and Canada have achieved fruitful results in practical cooperation, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries. It's been more than four months since I arrived as the new Chinese Ambassador to Canada, my biggest impression from the exchanges with all walks of life in Canada is that there are so many people who support China-Canada friendship, and that China-Canada exchanges and cooperation have great potential. Not long ago, Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly paid a successful visit to China. And the foreign ministers of the two countries reached important consensus on the future development of China-Canada relations. Next year will mark the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Canada, as well as the 20th anniversary of the establishment of China-Canada strategic partnership. China looks forward to working with Canada to deepen practical cooperation in various fields on the basis of right perception, mutual respect, seeking common ground while reserving differences, and win-win cooperation, so as to promote healthy and stable development of bilateral relations, in an effort to better benefit the people of the two countries, and inject more positive energy into the stability and prosperity of the region and the world at large.

H.E. Wang Di, Chinese Ambassador to Canada

For more information please visit: <http://ca.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/>

Photo 1: China's transportation construction is entering a rapid development phase with continuous infrastructure improvements.
Photo 2: The world's third and Asia's first salt tower type photo-thermal power station was connected to the Chinese state power grid.



News

‘They put a phone in your face and start filming you and insulting you’: MPs call out growing aggression, harassment by Hill protesters

Liberal MP Rob Oliphant was chased down the street, Bloc MP Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné says a protester grabbed a colleague’s coat, and NDP MP Lori Idlout was called a ‘Nazi’. MPs say they should be able to walk to and from the Hill without being harassed.

BY IREM KOCA

MPs and cabinet ministers say there is “a different tone” to the protests on the Hill recently with “really unpleasant” interactions in which politicians have been chased, heckled, and harassed, triggering “significantly tightened” security measures in the Parliamentary Precinct.

“Parliament Hill’s security faces a delicate balance between protecting democratic institutions and managing increasingly bold, far-right protests,” Public Services Minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que.) told *The Hill Times* on Sept. 25 in a statement.

“As Members of Parliament, we have a responsibility to avoid encouraging hateful behaviours,” added Duclos, who was the health minister when the so-called “Freedom Convoy” protests erupted in January and February of 2022.

Security measures on Parliament Hill have been tightened in the past month in the wake of increasingly aggressive approach from protesters—some of whom have been associated with the “Freedom Convoy.”

Protesters have been gathering in front of Parliament Hill every day—by the entrance to West Block and across Wellington Street—often shouting slurs at MPs and ministers, and following politicians from Parliament to their office buildings or neighbouring businesses in downtown Ottawa.

Some protesters have been seen carrying “Fuck Trudeau” flags, while others have been yelling “traitors” to journalists and politicians passing by. Several MPs from different parties said they have been harassed or intimidated by protesters.

Liberal MP Rob Oliphant (Don Valley West, Ont.) told *The Hill Times* that he was followed by protesters as he moved around the Parliamentary Precinct recently.

“I was chased down the street on Friday, and I had to go back into my building. I had to get help, and PPS came out, five people,” he said. “I couldn’t go to the restaurant I wanted to go to, as I just wanted lunch, and PPS was very helpful. They de-escalated it and got the person to leave.”

The Parliamentary Protective Service (PPS) and Ottawa Police Service have been monitoring the situation since MPs returned to the House for the fall session. PPS told *The Hill Times* in an email that the it has “significantly adjusted its security posture and is ready to intervene as required.”

The security concern in the capital reached its peak when NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) encountered two protesters outside the West Block earlier this month, with one calling him a “corrupted bastard.” Singh confronted the two men, and called one a “coward” after he denied hurling the profanity at Singh.

NDP MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut), who was called a “Nazi” by a protester, described the incident as a symptom of racism in an interview with CBC Radio.

Liberal MP Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, B.C.) also told CBC Radio that he was pushed out of the way by a protester as he was leaving the Hill last week.

Liberal MP Pam Damoff (Oakville North-Burlington, Ont.) reportedly told PPS in a letter that she felt unsafe. “I am worried that someone is going to be seriously injured,” Damoff wrote, according to CBC.

MPs welcome increased security

With more reports of MPs being followed and confronted, lawmakers say they welcome the heightened security, but also

voiced serious concerns over the deterioration of civility and respect towards politicians which they say threaten Canada’s democratic institutions.

Bloc Québécois MP Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, Que.) told *The Hill Times* in a phone interview that she is pleased to see the PPS is taking the situation seriously. She described one “really unpleasant” incident where a protester grabbed a colleague’s coat after they refused to respond to questions and yelled at them.

“They put a phone in your face and start filming you and insulting you. This should not happen. I’m in my office and I go to the House of Commons. I shouldn’t be harassed on my way there. I’m working. It wouldn’t be tolerated in any other workplace,” said Sinclair-Desgagné.

In an email to *The Hill Times*, NDP MP Taylor Bachrach (Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.) said the tightened security is “sadly, warranted” given the incidents. Bachrach said he steers clear of the main gates to access the West Block.

“Certainly, I’ve had people scream at me from a distance. I don’t think it’s right that MPs aren’t able to use the main entrance off Wellington without being harassed,” Bachrach said.

Public access to the West Block entrance where the House Chamber is located, once freely allowed, has now been restricted. New barricades, installed by the PPS, limit entry to those with “parliamentary business,” meaning only Hill pass-holders are permitted.

‘Different tone’ to protests, says Oliphant

Oliphant argued that there had been periods before where “people have been upset” with politicians, and that people have raised their issues and concerns, but that “there’s a different tone right now.”

“I think civility is being challenged, and good manners and behaviours are being let go. There’s a trend in social media that kind of allows people to say anything they want as though it’s okay, and respect for basic human beings is not being followed,” Oliphant told *The Hill Times*.

Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge (Brome—Missisquoi, Que.) shared a similar view.

“It’s unfortunate that we’re seeing our social and political climate degrade, and I hope that we don’t see what’s happening in the United States happen here. Such political violence is unacceptable and should be for everyone,” St-Onge told *The Hill Times* in the Commons foyer on Sept. 25.

St-Onge said MPs should take responsibility for their conduct both inside and outside the House, and warned that the language used by parliamentarians influences the public, and normalizes aggressive behaviour.

“Seeing the leader of the opposition, for example, attacking journalists constantly... is a behaviour that is absolutely unacceptable, and it legitimizes people who think that being bullies, using intimidation tactics, is a normal practice, but it’s not normal,” St-Onge said.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) and some of his MPs have been scrutinized for engaging with and showing support for what he called the “peaceful elements” of the “Freedom Convoy” movement back in 2022.

Such an interaction was recorded in an April 23 video, in which Poilievre was spotted visiting an anti-carbon tax convoy site near the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border where he reportedly accused Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) of “lying about everything.”

The video shows Poilievre leaving an RV that has drawings on its door—including the Diagon logo— and, a mention of “Dacey Media” which is a media platform controlled by Chris Dacey. Dacey is a “Freedom Convoy” representative, and one of the live-streamers who has been following MPs and ministers around downtown Ottawa.

Another figure who has been confronting politicians outside the Parliament is a man who goes by the name “Right Blend” on Facebook. A Sept. 17 post by the user shows him chatting with Conservative MP Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.) at an Ottawa restaurant with the caption reading “I appreciate [Cooper] taking time from his

dinner to hear my thoughts and concerns.”

However, Cooper distanced himself from the protesters in a Sept. 18 press release saying he is “in no way associated with these individuals and was not meeting them”. Cooper did not respond to *The Hill Times’* questions about security and protesters on the Hill.

Another Conservative MP, Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont.), was filmed engaging with protesters in a Sept. 11 video. Barrett says, “Name the 11, I agree,” repeating a protester’s slogan, as he enters West Block, referring to a National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians report that alleges 11 candidates were implicated in foreign interference by China in the 2019 federal election.

Parliamentarians should act responsibly, say MPs

When asked if protesters are encouraged by MPs’ rhetoric or conduct in the House, Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Ont.) said “I don’t think Poilievre can walk away from his selfies with the Convoy crowd when they were here, and certainly some of his members have shown an unhealthy embrace of not only the people, but the ideas that they apparently are putting forward.”

McKay told *The Hill Times* in a phone interview that it is “counterproductive” and “foolish” if the protesters are “under some illusion that this kind of behaviour will persuade us to their particular viewpoint, whatever that might be.”

Sinclair-Desgagné stressed that MPs have a “moral responsibility” to be respectful and lead by example if they believe in democracy. While she emphasized that not all Conservative MPs support the protesters outside, she claimed “some have been seen outside cheering with them.”

“Even if most of these protesters support the Conservatives, the Conservatives should tell them to calm it down, to stop insulting colleagues, instead of fueling the protest and the inclusivity in some protesters,” she said.

St-Onge also touched on the importance of fostering a safe environment for politicians. “We want people to feel free and secure, to participate in public life, to get elected, to talk about their ideas,” she said, adding, “This is a democracy. This is how it should be.”

‘A few charges might cool the enthusiasm’: McKay

All MPs emphasized their support on the public’s right to protest, but agreed the aggressive nature of the recent demonstrations are destructive to democracy.

Liberal MP Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds-Dollard, Que.) told *The Hill Times* in a phone interview that he tries to listen to protesters—the ones who are not swearing at him—and asks them about their day. Having an “human interaction” with the protesters is “important,” argued Zuberi.

The Hill Times

Parties appear ‘unwilling’ to ‘manage their own house’ amid foreign interference in nominations: national security expert Carvin

Former Liberal minister Sheila Copps says a court challenge or grassroots push could force change, while former Conservative staffer Fred DeLorey says parties should set their own rules.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Elections Canada is preparing recommendations seeking to strengthen the security of nominations and leadership races, but so far the federal political parties seem to want to “kick the can down the road” rather than “fix it,” says national security expert Stephanie Carvin.

“Foreign interference in the election has become this political issue, but when it comes time to fixing it, the parties have been extremely demure,” said Carvin, an international relations professor at Carleton University.

On Sept. 24, Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault appeared before the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. There, Perrault categorically ruled out the idea of Elections Canada running party nomination meetings, saying it would be logistically impossible to administer hundreds of these each election cycle.

But he left the door open to proposing tighter rules on party leader and candidate selection. He said those recommendations are still in the works, but will be ready in time for the commission’s policy discussion stage which is set to run from Oct. 21-25.

A summary of the commission’s August interview with Perrault, released on the day of his appearance, indicated those recommendations may call for “minimum rules” such as stricter voter eligibility requirements, and



On Sept. 24, Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault told the Public Inquiry on Foreign Interference that Elections Canada should not administer nomination races, but he would propose tighter rules on how parties choose their leaders and candidates. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“transparency measures” for the rules and results.

That aligns with a draft Elections Canada memo obtained by *The Canadian Press* via an access-to-information request earlier this year. That report said some proposals under consideration included restricting non-citizens from voting, and requiring parties to publish nomination contest rules and results. That includes voter identification requirements, details about how the voting process would work, how to challenge the outcome, and—at the conclusion of the race—the vote distribution and total ballots cast.

In his Sept. 24 appearance, Perrault did not offer detail on the final recommendations, but said Elections Canada is paying attention to political parties’s views as it develops them.

When asked how much weight should be given to “party autonomy,” he said that’s an important factor.

“Parties in Canada have enjoyed—and should continue to enjoy—a certain degree of latitude in deciding not only who runs for them, but what are the circumstances that surround that decision, including to disallow a person to be a candidate for their party,” said Perrault.

“This is really at the core of political parties’ freedom, in my view, just as much as deciding what their party platform is.”

However, he added, that’s not the only value he is weighing.

He said reports on foreign interference have “highlighted the vulnerability” of nominations and leadership contests, and “the trust of Canadians has been shaken.”

“For the reason of better protecting the processes, but also reinforcing trust of Canadians, I think it’s important to consider what can be done,” said Perrault.

However, it’s unclear if the parties—who in a minority Parliament collectively hold the legislative keys to amend the Canada Elections Act—will be willing to accept any additional rules.

The top staffer for each of the main federal political parties appeared at the commission between Sept. 19 and 20. Their responses generally left the door open to consider Elections Canada’s coming proposal, but they were reluctant to commit to new measures such as stricter voter eligibility requirements.

The federal parties have also told *The Hill Times* in response to past inquiries that they see their present nominations systems as robust, and have been reluctant to embrace reforms.

‘We need to restore confidence’: Carvin

Carvin said that Perrault is right to say that it is up for the parties to “manage their own house,” but said they have “increasingly shown that they are unwilling to do so.”

“The key thing here is we need to restore confidence in this process,” said Carvin.

With political parties “having raised this issue of foreign interference as being important, I think they need to be seen as doing something about it,” she said. “This is where they’ve just so far proven unwilling.”

Former Liberal cabinet minister Sheila Copps—who was a part of a contested nomination in 2004—said if the central party leadership is not willing to support reforms proposed by Elections Canada, change may require pressure from the grassroots of one or more of the parties.

She said the Liberal Party’s youth wing has a tradition of pushing resolutions at conventions not initially favoured by senior officials, but that eventually became party policy.

Copps said this could be an effective approach to better regulate nominations—but would likely only work if Election Canada’s proposal does not call for raising the age of who could vote in a nomination race.

She said another avenue could be a court challenge by a candidate who was dissatisfied with the outcome of a nomination, and did not receive a satisfactory appeals process with their party.

Former Conservative Party staffer Fred DeLorey, who previously served as his party’s director of political operations and who oversaw hundreds of nominations, said Elections Canada should not impose further regulations, and it’s up to voters to send a message to parties whose rules they dislike.

DeLorey said prescribing who can vote in a nomination contest is an example of a regulation that would not “solve anything,” but would be difficult to enforce, and create “chaos” and “difficulties” for the volunteers trying to organize nomination meetings.

He said he favours the Conservative Party approach, which allows only citizens and permanent residents to vote, but if other parties want to let any resident of Canada vote—as the Liberals currently allow—that’s their choice.

He said it should be up to the members of those parties to change the rules from within, or for voters to send a message directly if they want change by voting against candidates in the general election who were chosen by a party whose nomination process they disagree with.

“If this is an issue Canadians are concerned about ... parties will have to explain on their own to the electorate what steps they’ve taken. That is not something the government should be doing,” said DeLorey.

Veteran Liberal Party organizer Jack Siegel said in “an ideal world” deciding who can vote in a nomination is “absolutely something that should be up to the parties.”

He added that opening these races as widely as possible would generally be desirable to political parties because it is a “valuable recruiting tool.”

“But we’re now in a different world,” said Siegel, a lawyer who previously served as his party’s Ontario campaign co-chair. “We’ve seen this potential abuse [with foreign interference]. We’ve got people all agitated.”

He said this means “now it’s a political question, not an ethical or principled one,” and that should lead the parties to consider change. He said it might be politically advantageous to the parties to accept tighter rules on voter eligibility, since these would be difficult to enforce but give the appearance of action.

“That will calm some people down,” he said.

He added that if such a rule were to be brought in, Canadians should see it as a “positive step,” but not a “panacea,” because it would be difficult to enforce.

“If you assume the problem has been cured ... then you’re living in a fantasy world,” he said.

Cristine De Clercy, a political science professor at Trent University where she holds the Jarislawsky Chair in Trust and Political Leadership, said the issue comes to down to a “tension” between two important principles in a democracy.

“Modern democracies ... depend on associations like political parties that are not necessarily purely democratic,” she said. “The lack of transparency, the lack of internal party democracy, can cause large problems over time.”

She said there is an assumption that any political party has “the right to freely structure itself ... in a way that that the state doesn’t entrench upon.” And that leads to the view “it shouldn’t be regulated in a free democracy.”

However, she said, this must be balanced with the reality that internal party affairs “inevitably affect the public life.”

“So Elections Canada has a role and a duty to try to ensure that these rules are as fair and as transparent as possible,” said De Clercy.

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The Hill Times

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Editorial

Tighter Hill security can't be the long-term solution to harassment

Security was beefed up on Parliament Hill earlier this month, mere days after politicians returned to Ottawa for the fall.

As Laura Ryckewaert reported in *The Hill Times* on Sept. 19, the general public is unable to freely walk up the stairs leading to West Block's southern doors, nor through the gate on the southwest entrance leading to the Hill, or along the street lining the building.

New barricades have been erected at those entrances, and Parliamentary Protective Service officers have been stationed next to signs directing that only those with "parliamentary access" being permitted entry. Other parts of Parliament Hill—including the Centennial Flame and the route to the Welcome Centre—are unaffected.

The new measures were implemented shortly after protesters tailed NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh in a parking lot outside Parliament, and called him a "corrupted bastard." Singh, for his part, turned around and demanded to know who said the insult before calling one of the men a "coward." The man wouldn't repeat it to his face and folded like a cheap suitcase.

This incident has followed months of harassment—both in person and online—that politicians have experienced in Ottawa. In June, a man spat on Liberal MP Marco Mendicino. That man—like those who confronted Singh—wilted as soon as he faced the slightest rebuttal

from his target, but the fact that this kind of event for politicians and their staff has become a fact of life in Ottawa is concerning.

Ever since the so-called "Freedom Convoy" was dispersed in February 2022, a diehard contingent of supporters has remained in town, frequently seen on the Hill spouting conspiracy theories and throwing about charges of "treason" and of being a "traitor" against national leaders or to anyone unfortunate enough to be within earshot.

But even outside the national capital, politicians have been confronted and harassed. Whether it's in-person, over voicemail, or online, the attacks have been cited by more than one outgoing MP as a core reason for their decision to bow out of politics.

But this is not a problem for which the public should be blamed. The incendiary rhetoric that goes well beyond playing the proverbial ball and into personal attacks is not just cooked up in fringe forums; it appears frequently in the House, and in fundraising emails to party supporters.

Putting up physical barriers between politicians and the people they represent is a short-term tactic to make federal officials safer in their workplace, but it cannot be the long-term strategy to prevent this type of harassment.

After all, once such measures are implemented, they are very rarely reversed.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor



Photograph courtesy Pexels

Only proportional representation can save us from an extremist party winning power with a minority of the vote: readers

Re: "Four lessons from Germany's state elections," (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 16). Milton Chan's misconceptions about Germany attribute instability and the rise of the far right to proportional representation.

In reality, the opposite is true. Proportional representation has contributed to decades of stable, moderate governments, transforming Germany into an economic powerhouse in Europe while preventing the far right from gaining access to the levers of power. In 18 elections since 1957, no party has won a one-party majority, yet the 18 coalition governments have been stable. They negotiate in public, in a very co-operative fashion.

Germany's proportional electoral system was established after the Second World War as part of denazification, ensuring German voters would be fairly represented with compromise built into the system, including a five per cent threshold for parties to win seats.

As the far right rises across many Western democracies today, Germany's proportional system has worked exactly as intended, ensuring that no party—including the far right Alternative for Germany (AfD)—can seize all the power with less than 50 per cent of the vote.

In Canada, if a right-wing party were to get 32.8 per cent—as the AfD recently did in Thuringia—we would see them on the edge of winning a majority.

Not only has proportional representation protected Germany from the AfD coming to power, the nation's other parties, representing the vast majority of voters, have refrained from inviting them into any government at all.

Germany has 16 states and a federal government—that's 17 elections where every other party keeps refusing to work with the AfD, opting to work with each other instead.

While broad coalitions may be called a government of "convenience," Germans do, indeed, find them convenient—not to mention fair. That is exactly what Germa-

ny got in 2005, 2013, and 2017: a grand coalition of the Social Democrats and the conservative CDU.

Like voters everywhere, German voters may be cynical about politics, but they appreciate that almost every vote counts. In the last national election, 76.6 per cent turned up to vote with a turnout of over 70 per cent among youth.

A 2023 study showed that citizens in Germany value proportionality more highly than every other attribute studied, and numerous studies have shown that voters in countries with PR are more satisfied with their democracy.

Despite 80 years of stability and success with proportional representation, some people are pointing to two unusual local state elections last month—Thuringia and Saxony—where the far-right AfD has captured almost one-third of the vote.

These state elections saw not only the traditional mainstream parties and the AfD on the ballot, but a new party, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, a populist left-wing party founded by 10 of the Left Party's MPs. Such developments are evidence of a system that is able to adapt to frustrated and disenchanted voters by offering them new and meaningful choices at the ballot box.

The likely outcome of both elections is not an AfD government, but a cooperative government of parties other than the AfD—possibly including populists—but led by the same centre-right party that led the previous government; that's German stability.

On one point Chan is quite right: the first-past-the-post system cannot protect us from an extremist party winning all the power with a minority of the vote. Only a system of proportional representation, such as Germany has, can prevent that.

**Wilf Day, retired lawyer,
 Port Hope, Ont. and
 Anita Nickerson, executive director,
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Colbert underscores the obvious: Poilievre is Canada's Trump

Poilievre's media hatred is well-known, but his disdain for fellow MPs has recently come into greater public focus.

Sheila
Copps

Copps' Corner



Stephen Colbert, left, called Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre a 'Canadian Trump' during his interview with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last week. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia

Stephen Colbert belled the cat. Before Canadians get too triumphant about how we would never vote for Donald Trump, the host of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* underscored the obvious.

Pierre Poilievre is Canada's Donald Trump.

As Canadians get closer to an election, Conservative pundits are explaining that Poilievre's caustic campaign attitude would soften were he to become prime minister.

American pundits said the same thing when Trump was headed to the White House.

After the cliffhanger surprise victory in the November 2016 election, it was suggested that his toxic behaviour would change once he became the president.

But what we observed was the exact opposite. By empowering a

bully, American Trump supporters managed to feed the ego of an even bigger bully.

Poilievre is certainly Trump-like in his attacks on everyone who opposes him, and even some of those who don't.

The Conservative leader issued a prohibition last week against talking to any reporter with CTV news after it was revealed that his comment on dental care was edited.

But his fatwa did not stop there. He also insisted that all Conservative MPs refrain from holding any meetings with executives, lobbyists, or any other representative of Bell Media, even though CTV "unreservedly" apologized for the alleged misrepresentation.

CTV News issued a second statement on Sept. 26, saying two CTV News staff members were responsible for "altering a video

clip, manipulating it for a particular story," and are no longer members of the CTV News team. CTV News "sincerely and unreservedly" apologized, and said its duty is "to provide accurate, fair, and balanced coverage of the issues that matter to Canadians."

Poilievre attacked the head of CTV's parent company—and previous Conservative party donor—BCE president Mirko Bibic blaming him for a recent downgrading in the company's valuation by Moody's.

Poilievre also claimed that Bibic was pulling the editorial strings in the newsroom to make the Conservatives look bad, and prop up the government.

Forget about Bell's leadership. What about the almost 45,000 people who work for the company that is struggling along with other conglomerates because of the changing media landscape?

Bibic has actually donated to the Conservative Party in the past. He even supported Jean Charest's leadership bid, which perhaps accelerated Poilievre's angry tone last week.

Poilievre has already trashed the CBC, claiming that as prime minister he would end its funding. He has also consistently attacked The Canadian Press for allegedly writing stories that are carried verbatim by dozens of news outlets across the country (which is their mandate).

Poilievre's media hatred is well-known, but his disdain for fellow MPs has recently come into greater public focus.

After NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh ripped up the supply-and-confidence agreement with the government earlier this month, but then refused to join in Poilievre's non-confidence motion last week, the Conservative leader called his NDP opponent "a fake, a phoney, a fraud, and a liar."

The move follows the same example as Trump who loves burning his bridges with aggressive and over-the-top rhetoric.

This is strange behaviour for someone whose prime ministerial future could depend on his capacity to work with other parties.

If he is elected by a minority of voters, Poilievre would have to make common cause with other leaders in order to survive.

And having a workable relationship with Singh should be on his agenda, not increasing the

temperature to the point where Singh was implying to "bro" that he step across the aisle and fix their differences with their fists.

Trump has amply proven that you can't take the bully out of the man. Even when he was in a position of authority, as the president of the United States, Trump acted as though he still had to double down permanently on all his enemies, including—and especially—those who had formerly been his friends.

As for Poilievre, he has pretty much smoked everyone in the so-called "heritage media."

But he won't get his message out by simple social posts or Rebel regurgitations.

Last week, Rebel was denied the right to receive media support because, according to a recent Federal Court judgment, it doesn't create enough original news.

According to Revenue Canada, less than one per cent of Rebel's content is original, so it cannot claim the financial payment offered by the Liberal government to existing media outlets.

That decision will no doubt enhance Poilievre's attacks on everyone in the media, but it is a stretch to assume that the president of CTV's parent company would have any say on what goes on in the national news room.

The legal beagles at Bell are probably reviewing their slander options today. If Poilievre were as fulsome outside the House as he was inside, he will probably be served with a notice to apologize for his comments.

But, like any bully, that may only make him angrier.

As Colbert said: Poilievre is Canada's Trump.

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

The Bloc's recipe for success

The Bloc Québécois has suddenly emerged as a force in this country, a force that can't be ignored.

Gerry
Nicholls

Post Partisan Pundit



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet in a Hill scrum on Sept. 18, 2024. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

OKAVILLE, ONT.—Canada's political playing deck includes an interesting wild card.

I'm talking, of course, about the Bloc Québécois, a political party that has been flying under the radar for years, but which has suddenly emerged as a force in this country, a force that can't be ignored.

For one thing, now that the NDP has torn up its supply-and-confidence agreement

with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Bloc is in a strong position to determine whether the minority Liberal government stands or falls.

Plus, the Bloc made national headlines when it scored a stunning victory in a recent Montreal byelection, stealing away a riding that had been a strong, seemingly unassailable Liberal bastion for years.

All this for a party which is a vestige from another era.

Keep in mind, the Bloc was formed more than 30 years ago, a time when Quebec's place in Canada was a hotly debated topic.

Back then, the Bloc's prime purpose was clear: to push for the political secession of Quebec from Canada.

But over time, the separatist fervour in Quebec faded away, seemingly robbing the Bloc of its main *raison d'être*.

Yet, despite this, the Bloc has survived. Indeed, the party is surprisingly resilient.

After the 2011 federal election, for instance, when it went from holding 49 seats in Parliament to a mere four, losing official party status in the process, it seemed as if the party was on a path to extinction.

Yet, it rebounded dramatically in both the 2019 and 2021 federal elections, winning 32 seats each time.

And it could increase that number after the next federal election.

So how is this party—which seems to have outlived its original goal—able to maintain its relevance?

Well, one reason, I'd argue, lies in its unique ideological mix.

On the one hand, the Bloc's economic, environmental, and social policies have a distinctly progressive flavour, placing it firmly on the left, meaning it shares the same ideological turf as the Liberals, the Greens, and the NDP.

On the other hand, however, the party's desire to protect Quebec's cultural values gives it a definite right-wing populist vibe, which puts it more in line with the Conservatives.

So, essentially, the Bloc Québécois has the potential to reach across the political spectrum for support.

Another advantage the Bloc possesses is that, as a military strategist might say, it operates on interior lines of communication.

That's to say, since the party's entire voting universe lives within the boundaries of Quebec, its strategists can tailor their message to meet the specific needs and desires of that province's voters, without worrying about

whether or not it will resonate in other parts of the country.

In short, when it comes to safeguarding Quebec, the Bloc can always out-promise the other guys.

Mind you, there's more than just ideology and strategy working to the Bloc's advantage.

As Woody Allen once said, "80 per cent of success is showing up."

And right now, just by "showing up" the Bloc is, in fact, achieving success, due to factors totally outside its control.

After all, Prime Minister Trudeau is unpopular, he's politically weakened, and he can no longer count on the NDP's parliamentary support, all of which, as noted earlier, gives the Bloc a great deal of parliamentary leverage.

Meanwhile, both the Conservatives and NDP have leaders whose power base lies outside Quebec, which works well for the nationalist-oriented Bloc.

So, that's the recipe for the Bloc's ability to stick around; take some ideology, mix it with a dollop of strategy, and then stir in a heaping teaspoon of luck.

Gerry Nicholls is a communication consultant.
The Hill Times

Politics

Donald Trump is off his rocker, and GOP politics is off the rails



You can't make up the stuff that's coming out of Donald Trump's mouth with zero pushback from the gaggle of sycophants trying to ride his crazy coattails to power. He talks like a guy who is always writing a sidebar story for the *National Enquirer*, writes Michael Harris. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The scariest word on the horizon should Trump win the White House is 'water'. Let's call this one Trump's 'Very Large Faucet' whopper.

Michael Harris

Harris



HALIFAX—No sense mincing words.

For the last year, and with each passing day, it is getting clearer that Donald Trump is off his rocker, and GOP politics is off the rails.

You can't make up the stuff that is coming out of Trump's mouth with zero pushback from the gaggle of sycophants trying to

ride his crazy coattails to power. According to Trump: Haitians in Springfield, Ohio, are eating their neighbours' cats and dogs; shoplifters would be shot in their tracks, as he advised the recent Republican convention; U.S. General Mark Milley, former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, should be executed for speaking with a Chinese general; illegal migrants are taking over whole American towns with weapons the U.S. military has never seen before; immigrants need to be rounded up and shipped out by the millions.

"Get them out!" is the new chant at Trump rallies; a vast arsenal of federal power should be used against immigrants; women won't even think about abortion if Trump gets elected because he will be their "protector"; you can't vote for Vice-President Kamala Harris because she is a communist; what if Russia wins the war with Ukraine? After all, Trump notes, they beat Napoleon and Hitler; every time Volodymyr Zelenskyy comes to the U.S., he goes away with \$100-billion. You, too, can buy "authentic" Trump coins for only \$100—to go with your MAGA hat, digital mugshot

trading card, and Trump Bible; a 100 per cent tariff on Chinese cars is a great idea.

A 200-per-cent tariff on John Deere tractors assembled in Mexico is a great idea—unless you're a farmer who wants to buy one of the famous machines; and since when does a former U.S. First Lady get a quarter-of-a-million-dollar appearance fee to speak to Log Cabin Republicans? Did donors pay? Who?

All of these things are the stuff of nasal coffee rockets, or at least they would be if 52 per cent of per cent of Americans didn't believe Trump's presidency was a success.

With all that happened in those four years of pandemonium: the eight trillion dollars added to the national debt, a million people dead from COVID, disarray in NATO, playing huggy-bear, kissy-face with the Putin-Kim-Orban set, no wall on the southern border, and two impeachments—most Americans still call that success.

Which means that Trump's absurd candidacy is no laughing matter for Canadians. There are so many ways that a sec-

ond incarnation of President Trump could hurt this country. And let's not kid ourselves. If Trump thinks that Harris is a communist, just imagine how he would size up Justin Trudeau in a second term.

Actually, you don't have to use your imagination at all. Trump has already called Trudeau a two-faced, far-left lunatic whose real father might have been Fidel Castro. He talks like a guy who is always writing a sidebar story for the *National Enquirer*.

When Trump ran the White House, he didn't hesitate to use his country's vast economic influence over Canada. That's what can happen when you send 80 per cent of your exports to one country.

Back then, Trump increased duties on soft-wood lumber from Canada, and imposed punishing tariffs on our steel and aluminum that led us to impose counter tariffs.

The sad fact is that a great deal of what can be done in Canada on a variety of files depends heavily on the attitude of the administration in power in the United States.

The life-and-death struggle against climate change, for example, depends on a closely integrated effort by all polluters if the planet is to have any chance of meeting emission targets. The world got a great break from the Americans when President Joe Biden rejoined the Paris climate agreement.

Trump doesn't have an environmentalist bone in his body. Nor is he a free trader. He is an arch protectionist and isolationist. He is the guy who pulled the Americans out of the Paris Agreement, and he may do that a second time if he wins in November. Remember, he is firmly on the record saying that he doesn't believe global warming is caused mainly by human activities. Cows breaking wind, you see.

Trump has the power to undermine much of what the Trudeau government is doing on the climate front. The former president has already said that it was a mistake to cancel the Keystone pipeline. That is perfectly consistent with his new motto if he wins in November: "Drill, baby, drill."

And there is another ominous implication if Trump regains the White House. During the Biden Administration, the president encouraged the transition from gas to electric vehicles. He did that with a combination of subsidies, building charging stations, and generous tax credits.

Trump has promised that he will reverse the Biden EV mandate on Day One of his presidency to protect the jobs of auto workers in Michigan.

So what will that mean for the billions of dollars Ottawa and the provinces have invested in massive battery plants in Canada? Would anyone be surprised if Trump imposed outlandish tariffs on Canadian-made EV batteries as he has promised to do on Chinese EVs?

But the most frightening word on the horizon should Trump win the White House is "water". Let's call this one Trump's "Very Large Faucet" whopper.

Campaigning in parched California, Trump said: "You have millions of gallons of water pouring down from the North, with the snow caps and Canada, all pouring down. And they have, essentially, a very large faucet and you turn the faucet, and it takes one day to turn, and it's massive ... and you turn that, and all of that water goes aimlessly into the Pacific. And if you turned it back, all of that water would come right down here, and right into Los Angeles."

Reality check. Except in Trump's confabulating brain, there is no such system to channel water from Canada or the Pacific Northwest to Southern California.

But never mind that. The big news is that Trump is already thinking about Canadian water.

Michael Harris is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hill Times

A diverse menu, but nothing appeals

The ideal prime minister would be someone with no political baggage, no embarrassing internet history, no ideological quirks, with razor-sharp debating skills, a sense of humour, and a warm heart.

Susan Riley

Impolitic



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh. After years on the fringes of every consequential election in this country, perhaps the moment has finally come for 'none-of-the-above,' writes Susan Riley. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

CHELSEA, QUE.—After years on the fringes of every consequential election in this country—regarded as a joke at best, a sad commentary on politics at worst—perhaps the moment has finally come for “none-of-the-above.”

With the “serious” candidates deeply unacceptable to significant segments of the electorate, with the profoundly unlikeable Pierre Poilievre actually leading in the polls, and the limp Jagmeet Singh becoming less likeable by the day, where is the disheartened progressive—or even just the voter seeking civility—to turn?

To the prime minister, presumably. But Justin Trudeau is even more despised than Poilievre, although for different reasons. He doesn't inspire rage so much as ennui in many quarters. But the people who do dislike him do so fervently.

The venom is puzzling to those who don't share it: yes, the prime minister sounds tediously rehearsed, overly fond of the sound of his own voice, and is often cloyingly virtuous. On the other hand, he handles himself with dignity on the world stage, and is still earnestly evangelical—as he was on Stephen Colbert's show last week—about the liberal values he, and many Canadians, hold dear.

Say what you will, his is not the grudge-based politics so rampant these days.

Is it the lack of substantial follow-through, the overselling of modest initiatives, the seeming emptiness of his pose that rankles so many voters and accounts for his dismal polls? Is it that he has become boring after nearly 10 years?

Probably, but surely there are worse traits.

Making up childish nicknames for your opponents, retailing flat-out lies so often they become unremarkable; snideness, arrogance, incuriosity, an inability to ever acknowledge a doubt, or “lose” a conversation: those are all pretty off-putting.

A head-spinning reversal on, arguably, the most pressing issue facing the country is another instant buzz-kill. Singh, lacklustre if inoffensive until recently, managed to abandon his party's green pretensions, betray legions of NDP veterans, and remove his party from contention for many disillusioned Liberals by recently announcing his doubts about the federal carbon tax.

It wasn't only the carbon tax reversal that stung, of course—the tax is a modestly useful tool in reducing emissions and, arguably, as important symbolically, as practically. The real “sell-out” was Singh's implicit endorsement of the lie that Poilievre has been pedalling relentlessly: that this single tax is, almost alone, fuelling inflation, driving up the cost of everything, and, that future

increases will create a “nuclear winter,” “mass hunger and malnutrition,” with seniors forced “to turn the heat down to 14 or 13 C just to make it through winter.”

The correct, sane, response to this kind of hyperbole is laughter, not tacit agreement. At the very least, Singh should know the majority of Canadian families are better off thanks to quarterly carbon rebates. And, if he had any kind of green consciousness—nowhere in evidence so far in his leadership—he would focus on the real problem with the carbon tax: governments have been too slow to provide green alternatives to consumers who want to reduce their carbon footprint, starting with an extensive EV-charging network, and less complicated incentives to adopt cleaner forms of heating for homes and businesses.

The sooner Singh finds a soft landing in a Toronto law firm in favour of someone who actually shares NDP values, and cares about climate, the better.

That antagonism will be particularly bitter if Singh helps vote down the Trudeau government, and delivers the country to Poilievre in coming months. And he thought the Liberals were bad! It will be curtains—or sharp curtailment—for the dental and pharma initiatives for which the NDP takes such extravagant credit. (The Jack Layton example is instructive: the former NDP leader refused to back Paul Martin and helped elect Stephen Harper in 2005, at the same time torpedoing the Kelowna Accord, which could have hastened Indigenous reconciliation, and killing a nascent national child care program.)

There are others names on the ballot along with “none of the above,” of course. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May is rightly esteemed for her honesty, common sense, and diligence. She doesn't personalize arguments over climate, foreign wars, or anything else. She sticks to the issues, cites verifiable facts to defend her position, and is always open to collaboration.

You can see why she is entirely unsuitable to the moment, which, inconveniently, is also a treacherous moment for the planet and the climate. May is also handicapped by the lack of anything resembling a functioning political

party. The Greens have made inroads in provincial legislatures, and have attracted talented individuals. But those names will only prompt blank stares for most federal voters; there is no sign, so far, that disillusionment with mainstream leaders, and parties, is helping the Greens.

Citizens of Quebec, of course, have the Bloc Québécois and—but for one unfortunate glitch—leader Yves-François Blanchet could offer progressive Canadians—socially liberal, environmentally responsible—an appealing alternative. The glitch, of course, is that Blanchet has no particular interest in representing Canadians outside of Quebec. Indeed, he wants to take his province out of Canada, and that road, as we know, leads to ceaseless, unproductive, soul-searching.

These are not mere impressions. Pollsters have been recording net negatives for all the party leaders for months. That means the people who don't like them outnumber those who do, with Poilievre closest to breaking even, followed by Singh, and trailed by the prime minister. As Angus Reid reported back in April, “for the first time in 50 years, all three major leaders had net negative ratings of -12 or worse at the same time.”

That could change, although a sudden wave of affection for any members of the current roster seems unlikely at this depressing juncture. Most voters will likely choose the least awful. Noses will be held. Some will stay home. Others will muse fondly about an 11th-hour dark horse entering the race—Manitoba's still popular and politically adroit premier, Wab Kinew, perhaps, or the widely admired former Alberta NDP leader Rachel Notley. Mark Carney? Is he still a thing?

Certainly, appealing candidates do exist outside of Ottawa. The Liberal leader in New Brunswick Susan Holt, for instance, has run a disciplined, content-rich campaign, and visited every hospital, school board, town festival and small-town diner in the province in recent months. Hers is a positive vision, and it may yet prevail on Oct. 21 when New Brunswickers go to the polls. If Holt defeats one of the grumpiest conservatives in the country, Premier Blaine Higgs, her victory will brighten the political scene generally.

The ideal prime minister, of course, would be someone with no political baggage, no embarrassing internet history, no ideological quirks, possessed of razor-sharp debating skills, a disarming sense of humour and a warm heart. Indeed, it could be someone currently operating under the radar: a familiar name, but underestimated, dismissed by opinion leaders, said to be difficult to work for, with no particular political victories to trumpet. Someone like Kamala Harris.

Until then, or until we are forced to choose, “none-of-the-above” remains a formidable contender.

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

The Hill Times



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May, pictured July 9, 2024, is rightly esteemed for her honesty, common sense, and diligence, but she's also handicapped by the lack of a functioning political party. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, pictured on the Hill on Sept. 16, 2024. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Opinion



Trans Mountain's Westridge Marine Terminal, pictured. The final tally is estimated to be \$34.2-billion. While some will blame the government for the cost overruns, the truth is the same private sector managers that would have built this for Kinder Morgan stayed in charge, and costs would have risen regardless of ownership, writes Thomas Gunton. *Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Codex*

How the Canadian taxpayer ended up on the hook for \$34-billion to build a pipeline for the oil industry

There's no reason taxpayers should be subsidizing the oil transportation costs for the profitable fossil fuel industry. With a cost recovery levy and better scrutiny of future taxpayer investments in the energy sector, taxpayers can get the protection we deserve.

Thomas Gunton

Opinion



The Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion finally opened in May of this year, tripling the

capacity to ship oil from Alberta to Vancouver. But with the completion comes a large bill for Canadian taxpayers to cover the \$34.2-billion costs of the expansion, and the \$4.4-billion government purchase of the pipeline from Kinder Morgan.

So how did the Canadian taxpayer end up on the hook for \$34-billion to build a pipeline for the oil industry?

To answer this question, we need to go back to 2018 when Kinder Morgan decided to shelve the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion (TMX) due to rising costs, growing opposition to the project, increased competition from other pipelines, and the prospect of declining demand for oil resulting from stronger climate policies.

Ignoring the wisdom of Kinder Morgan's conclusion that TMX was no longer a viable investment, the federal government bowed to pressure from the oil sector and purchased the pipeline in 2018.

When the government purchased the pipeline, costs had already escalated from the original forecast of \$5.4-billion and—given the track record of energy project cost overruns—would be expected to increase even more.

And increase they did. The final tally is estimated to be \$34.2-billion, more than six times the original estimate. While some will no doubt blame the government for the cost overruns, the truth is that the same private sector managers that would have built this for Kinder Morgan remained in charge, and the costs would have risen regardless of ownership.

If Kinder Morgan had retained ownership, they would have kept TMX on the shelf unless they were able to de-risk the project by ensuring that the rising costs would have been recovered from tolls charged to the oil companies using the pipeline.

But the federal government proceeded without updating the cost estimate used to determine tolls, which they could have done in 2019 when it reapproved TMX, and without attempting to revise the shipping contracts with the oil companies to reduce the risk.

The result is that the tolls submitted to the Canadian Energy Regulator cover less than one-half the costs of building the expansion. In total, \$18.8-billion of TMX's cost has been omitted from the rate base for determining tolls with the result that the oil firms will pay less than one-half of the

cost of shipping oil based on the rate base toll system.

In short, the Canadian taxpayer is providing a subsidy to the oil industry of up to \$18.8-billion, or \$1,255 per household. The subsidy could turn out to be lower depending on financial assumptions—ranging from \$8.7-billion to \$18.8-billion—but regardless of the final estimate, hard-pressed Canadian taxpayers should rightly ask why they should provide any subsidy to the highly profitable oil industry.

Some may suggest that the subsidy is justified because it will generate higher oil prices and tax revenue. There is, however, little evidence to suggest that oil prices will be higher due to TMX given that they are determined by world markets, and the differential between Canadian oil prices and world prices has not changed since TMX opened.

Further, the forecast of higher oil prices resulting from TMX were made when the estimated cost of construction was \$5.4-billion, and the tolls were in the range of \$5 per barrel. With the \$34.2-billion cost, the tolls are now about 2.5 times higher, and higher than the costs of shipping on other pipelines. Despite being heavily subsidized, oil companies

may actually end up receiving lower returns shipping on TMX.

Also, when all the other costs such as greenhouse gas emissions are included, the building of TMX will result in a significant net loss to Canada in the range of \$23-billion.

But even if TMX did generate higher oil prices, this still does not justify the taxpayer providing subsidies when the primary beneficiaries of the higher prices are the oil industry, not government.

Clearly, oil firms should fully cover the costs of transporting their oil to market without taxpayer subsidies. Therefore, the government needs to follow through on its commitment to remove all inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and impose a special levy on oil companies to recover the subsidy it is providing through TMX.

The government should also be required to justify any investment in the energy sector by completing an independent comprehensive benefit cost analysis that verifies the project is in the public interest, and that taxpayer funding will be repaid in full before the investment is made.

No such study was completed by the government prior to its investment in TMX, and Canadians are now paying the price.

There is simply no reason Canadian taxpayers should be subsidizing the transportation costs of the oil for the highly profitable fossil fuel industry. By applying a cost recovery levy and ensuring better scrutiny of future taxpayer investments in the energy sector, Canadians taxpayers can receive the protection they deserve.

Dr. Thomas Gunton is a professor and founding director of the resource and environmental planning program at Simon Fraser University. He has just published a report assessing the financial costs of TMX for the International Institute of Sustainable Development.

The Hill Times

Let's make Canada wilder



A baby whooping crane, also known as a chick, and its parents at the Wilder Institute's Archibald Biodiversity Centre. Canada has ambitious plans to address Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: to protect 30 per cent of our landscape before 2030. However, for more than 270 species at risk, writes Grainne McCabe. Photograph courtesy of the Wilder Institute

The Wilder Institute will be pitching the case for making Canada wilder with the largest co-ordinated approach to managed species recovery in this country's history. Now is the time to act.

Grainne McCabe

Opinion



Global biodiversity loss is about to take centre stage in Colombia at the Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16) later this month. Canada, with its vast geography and incredible biodiversity, will play a global leadership role. We at the Wilder Institute will be there to make the case for making Canada wilder with the largest co-ordinated approach to managed species recovery in this country's history. Now is the time to act.

Before we get to Colombia, it's important to put into context what's at stake.

If you have had the privilege to spend time out in nature, you might have been surprised by how loud it is.

Contrary to what spa and yoga studio soundtracks may have us believe, nature is not just the peaceful trickle of a creek. Nature is noisy, it lets itself be heard.

I am sure many of you have experienced the buzz of insects

like cicadas and grasshoppers, the chorus of birds early in the morning, the alarm call of small mammals like squirrels seeing an approaching predator. You may even recall a study published a few years ago that found how loudly fish can chatter under the water—the din can be deafening at times—but these are the sounds of healthy ecosystems.

Eleven years ago, I moved to Central Africa. When I stepped into the lush tropical primary rain forest outside the centre where I lived and worked, I was ready to hear that incredible forest soundtrack I had heard so many times before in other places around the world.

But what I heard instead was almost silence. This seemingly lush forest and many natural landscapes around the world are experiencing what we call Empty Forest Syndrome: beautiful habitat, forests, grasslands or wetlands virtually emptied of animals.

Species in these habitats have been pushed to or past the brink of extinction from a variety of pressures, often a silent extinction that we don't notice because the landscape appears to still be intact.

That's why Canada's Wilder Institute created the Wilder Canada Action Plan. A public-private partnership for managed species recovery on a national-scale never before delivered.

Canada, like many countries around the world, has ambitious plans to address Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: protect 30 per cent of our landscape before 2030, and this is absolutely necessary. However, for more than 270 species at risk in Canada, protecting land is not enough. Many are tracking to extinction—some within less than a generation—due to small or fragmented populations.

Species such as the Atlantic whitefish (an endangered endemic freshwater species from Nova Scotia), Long's Braya (an endangered endemic plant from Newfoundland), or spotted turtles (endangered from Ontario and Quebec) have such small or fragmented populations that they will not recover with land or water protection alone. They need us to take co-ordinated, evidence-based, collaborative action—not more assessment, not more high-level policy, not more meetings. Action, not just talk.

With over three decades of experience breeding and reintroducing wildlife at risk, moving animals between wild locations to bolster populations, and working in close collaboration with Indigenous nations and local communities, industry, other conservation NGOs, government and academic institutions, we know how to form effective collaborations that help bring species back from the brink of extinction. And we are ready to help Canada do this at scale, building and equipping a national movement around wildlife conservation translocations.

An example of our impact through collaboration is the conservation of the endangered whooping crane. In the 1940s, there were an estimated 21 whooping cranes left in the wild. Today, there are almost 800 birds, over 700 in the wild—3,800 per cent growth—a big part of this success is our collaborative breeding and reintroduction program with experienced partners here in Canada and the United States. And our work on this program continues today as we aim to establish sustainable populations in other parts of their range.

These proven, evidence-based activities are at the heart of Wilder Institute's Wilder Canada Action Plan. It's our contribution to Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy, the Nature Accountability Act,

the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. At COP 16, the world will be discussing how we will measure successful progress towards the Global Biodiversity Framework's Goals and Targets. Target 4 under this framework is focused on halting species extinction, and reducing extinction risk.

For the more than 270 species where conservation translocations are relevant and needed according to published recovery plans, the Wilder Canada Action Plan will lead and deliver action collaboratively with key invested parties around the country, and support other actors in the breeding and translocation space. We will be able to measure our contribution to Target 4 based on the increased number of species that benefit from translocations, and the increase in the number of species where population decline is slowed or stopped altogether.

But this plan is more than just a conservation organization leading on translocations. It will also address Target 20 of the GBF: Strengthening Capacity-Building and Sharing, Technology Transfer, and Scientific and Technical Cooperation for Biodiversity.

This plan is about empowering others to act in the conservation space. Providing resources, skill-sharing, knowledge exchange, and mentoring as needed or desired with Indigenous nations and local communities, NGOs, or others who have or would like to develop or co-develop a plan for the conservation translocation of species to bolster wild populations locally. A priority of this plan will be to listen, learn from, and support the traditional conservation leaders in Canada, Indigenous Peoples, with translocation programs for nature recovery on their lands. Success will include increasing the number of new actors implementing

conservation translocations for species at risk in Canada.

The Wilder Canada Action Plan will also support Target 2 (restore 30 per cent of all degraded ecosystems), Target 9 (manage wild species sustainably to benefit people), Target 19 (mobilize \$200-billion per year for biodiversity from all sources), Target 21 (ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action), and Target 22 (ensure participation in decision-making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Species Survival Commission said this about our plan: "With a large, experienced and globally respected scientific team, substantial organizational, industry and donor support, and the ability to scale its resources to deliver on this ambitious plan ... the Wilder Institute can help Canada showcase its leadership on the global biodiversity crisis, presenting a model to target species conservation specifically and inspire similar action around the world."

With the world gathering in Cali, Colombia, for COP16, we have the opportunity to showcase Canada as a country that leads the way with an innovative, whole-of-society approach to restore, protect, and sustain a healthy environment and healthy populations of Canadian species for future generations. My team and I will be there advocating for the Wilder Canada Action Plan to be activated for all Canadians. Let's work together to make Canada Wilder.

Dr. Grainne McCabe is the chief conservation officer of the Wilder Institute. To find out more about action is being taken for species at risk please visit our website at www.WilderInstitute.org.

The Hill Times

Comment



On this National Day of Reconciliation, Canadians should use their sacred spaces to raise awareness about reconciliation, to build consensus to demand change together, and to build hope about a future in which policing safely serves Indigenous Canadians,' writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Dying from police intervention in an era of reconciliation

On this National Day of Reconciliation, we need police in Canada to make a historic apology for the loss of Indigenous lives at their hands, the lack of service in the face of Indigenous need, and the delay it took for police to even realize their role in it all.

Rose LeMay

Stories, Myths, and Truths



OTTAWA—Six Indigenous individuals died by police in a two-week span in this country.

In the time between when this column was written and when it makes it to press, I hope nobody else is killed, but I do almost expect it. I hope no other family suffers the take-my-breath-away fear that the police might be called for a mental wellness check on a family member, because this might get an Indigenous family member killed. I hope no other family has to go through this, but Canada seems complacent about doing anything differently.

We are supposed to be in an era of reconciliation, but Indigenous Peoples are still at a much higher risk of getting shot, run over, or beaten to death by police forces across this country. Whatever we are doing in police education that facilitates the deadly use of force against Indigenous Peoples, it appears

we are doing it remarkably consistently.

We are supposed to be in an era of reconciliation, but apparently the police haven't got the message. Who is supposed to ensure that message sticks?

You are. Canadians are the ones to ensure the message sticks. The police work for you, after all.

Reconciliation is the responsibility of Canadians to push elected leaders to serve Indigenous Peoples as equitably as any other Canadian. Reconciliation in police is the responsibility of Canadians to demand they protect Indigenous Peoples like they are family. Demanding better of police is the responsibility of Canadians, just like you.

There's a myth that somebody else will do reconciliation. But it's a myth.

Reconciliation starts local in your family and in your network. When your dinner dis-

ussion tonight includes talking about the inequitable risks that Indigenous neighbours face when interacting with the police, you are doing reconciliation. When allies reach out to police officers in your network or family to ask how they are challenging systems that allow such treatment of Indigenous Peoples, reconciliation makes some progress. When police officers ask these questions of their peers, reconciliation has a chance.

We could all sit around and wait for provinces, territories, and the federal government to write some laws down about police and cultural competence, or we can get to work now and apply some nice peer pressure on people we know in our circles.

Yes, we have to fundamentally change systems, there is no doubt about that. But systems change faster when people push the change with each other. That's our role.

Reconciliation is about ensuring the safety and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in your neighbourhood, in this country. It's about families demanding that every neighbour, brother, or sister feels like the police are safe, instead of a deadly risk. That's not too much to ask, is it?

On this National Day of Reconciliation, we need police in Canada to make a historic apology for the loss of Indigenous lives at their hands, the lack of service in the face of Indigenous need, and the delay it took for police to even realize their role in it all. This is the first step for police committed to doing reconciliation. The role for Canadians from coast to coast is to start the conversations and influence your circles about how policing has to change in this country.

On this National Day of Reconciliation, I reflect on the role of the dinner conversations at home and the hallway conversations at work as the powerful places of change. Use these sacred spaces to raise awareness about reconciliation, to build consensus to demand change together, and to build hope about a future in which policing safely serves Indigenous Canadians.

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

The Hill Times



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured in this file photo on the Hill. Trudeau, besieged at home, deserves credit for trying last week in New York City to strengthen UN efforts to make the world a better place, writes Doug Roche. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Suddenly, there he was all over the United Nations

Justin Trudeau was ubiquitous, with a burst of commitment to UN causes that, had he shown it when Canada was running for a Security Council seat, might have brought the country into a powerful political position.

Douglas Roche

Opinion



EDMONTON—Suddenly, there he was all over the United Nations. First, a visionary speech to the Summit of the Future. Then a meeting with Haiti's prime minister to shore up UN support for that beleaguered island state. On to co-hosting a meeting of the Sustainable Development Advocates

to drive action on the 2030 agenda on education, climate change, and gender equality. Co-hosting a meeting with the president of the European Commission. In between, private meetings with a dozen figures ranging from Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy presented him with the Order of Freedom.

You couldn't stop Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when he got to New York City last week. He even bounded across Manhattan to the CBS studios for an encounter with late-night talk show host Stephen Colbert.

Trudeau was ubiquitous, with a burst of commitment to UN causes that—had he shown it a few years ago when Canada was running for a seat on the Security Council—might well have brought the country into a powerful political position. “Canada is back,” Trudeau boasted in 2015, during his first appearance at the UN as prime minister, but the performance never matched the rhetoric. Canada's participation in peacekeeping and international development assistance—two of the UN's mainstays—was dismal.

Perhaps recognizing that this might be his last chance to

shine on the international stage, Trudeau rose to the occasion presented by the Summit of the Future. Four years in the making, the two-day massive gathering of world leaders, international organizations, and civil society leaders laid the groundwork for overhauling the present UN system to deal with an inter-connected world that the founders of the UN—nearly 80 years ago—never envisioned.

The summit had to contend with the hostility—not comity—that characterizes modern international relations. Trudeau's speech was only five minutes long, but it was elegant and impassioned. He said the world is at a global infection point with multiple crises causing havoc around the globe. He offered the leaders a choice: bury their heads in the sand, or work together for the sake of future generations. “We can recognize that, collectively, we have a responsibility to set our differences aside, to confront the serious global challenges, and to deliver on a pact for the future,” he said.

Then Trudeau was off to multiple meetings that revolved around revitalizing the global efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality. With the sustainable development goals at only 18 per

cent of their target—largely because money that should go to development is being siphoned off by the wars now being fought—poverty-stricken countries are still mired in debt. Trudeau spoke with Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley on her Bridgetown Initiative to reform the international financial architecture that continues to discriminate against vulnerable countries. Their plight was eloquently summed up by the deputy prime minister of the Pacific Island state of Tuvalu who told the summit, “The reality is that we will either drown in debt, or be drowned by the sea.”

Trudeau also spent time dealing with restoring order in Haiti, plagued and virtually paralyzed by gang violence. Strengthening the Haitian police force is an urgent priority for Canada.

The summit's outcome document, *The Pact for the Future*, addresses five crucial areas: sustainable development and financing, international peace and security, science and technology, youth and future generations, and transforming global governance. Its 56 action points are mired in turgid prose that I doubt many people will read. But buried in the pact are the seeds of some ideas that could significantly improve UN work.

For example, the document says the Security Council will be enlarged to make it more representative and inclusive. Africa, which in a few years will contain one-quarter of humanity, may be given two permanent seats. The use of the veto, which now cripples Security Council work, may be limited in the future.

The pact was adopted with a nominal consensus, but not before Russia tried to derail it by submitting an amendment that would have severely curtailed the scope of UN work. The assembly rejected Russia's obstruction by a vote of 141 supporting the pact, seven opposed, and 15 abstaining. The president then gavelled the pact through, but it was clear that moving the UN forward would not be easy.

The agonies of the world—depicted in daily headlines—persist. Trudeau, besieged at home, deserves credit for trying to strengthen UN efforts to make the world a better place. The prime minister of Canada, of course, plays a minor role at the big tables. But the enthusiasm Trudeau brought to his foray at the UN showed what Canada can do—when the top political leader exerts himself.

He even appeared to be enjoying himself as a guest on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. “You have to be fundamentally hopeful,” he told Colbert. “If you don't believe you can make a positive difference, you're not in the right line of work.” The studio audience applauded loudly.

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

The Hill Times

News

Conservatives' path to victory propelled by women, young voters, and a deep desire for change, say pollsters

The Liberals don't have the geographic or demographic base to build from right now, and they're losing in every province. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre may not be 'everybody's cup of tea,' but it's about choice and change, and he's the only option, says pollster Darrell Bricker.

Continued from page 1

governing Liberals into third—if not fourth place—in the House following the next general election, say pollsters.

Whether the national win will eclipse Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative victory in the 1984 federal election that resulted in a 211-seat majority in the then-282-seat House, the Conservatives will almost certainly capture at least 200 ridings in the newly configured 342-seat Commons if polling trends continue.

Their current official opposition status could also shift to the Bloc Québécois that is holding the Tories back in Quebec—the only region in the country where the Conservatives are not leading. Meanwhile, the narrowing gap in polls between the Liberals and the NDP will dictate the number of parliamentary seats each party receives.

A seat projection by 338Canada on Sept. 22 places the Conservatives with a solid majority of 219 House seats followed by the Liberals with 64, the Bloc with 39, the NDP with 18, and the Greens with two.

Beyond benefitting from fatigue for the Liberals, the Conservatives have amassed support from women and young people, both of whom have traditionally favoured progressive parties such as the Liberals and the NDP.

Those two groups will help propel Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) into the Prime Minister's Office as they did with Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) in becoming Canada's 23rd prime minister in 2015.

In an Abacus Data poll of 2,964 Canadians conducted earlier this month, 37 per cent of women said they would vote Conservative, compared to 23 per cent who plan to vote Liberal.

Perhaps more surprisingly, 39 per cent of voters between the ages of 18 and 29, and 44 per cent of millennials (30 to 44 years old) said they plan to vote Conservative. The Liberals received 24 per cent and 14 per cent support from those once key demographics respectively in the survey, which also found that Poilievre "is far more popular among those under 30 than those over 60."

For Abacus Data founder, chair and CEO David Coletto, the results represent "the biggest story of Canadian politics in the last three years."

Today's millennials "were essential in giving the Liberals their majority in 2015," and along with the younger cohort, "sustaining the Liberal wins in 2019 and 2021," said Coletto.

The prime minister appointed himself minister of youth after the 2015 election "in recognition of how important young people are," Coletto said, and during that year's election campaign committed to issues important to them, such as electoral reform by replacing the first-past-the-post system—a promise withdrawn two years later—and legalizing cannabis, which happened in 2018.

"When we look at how young people are feeling today, they are the most likely to be skeptical and pessimistic about the future," said Coletto. "They're the ones struggling the most under the weight of the housing crisis, and they're increasingly worried about their job security, if they even have a job. And they're the most likely to say that immigration is a problem because so many couldn't get a job this summer."

He said the younger generations that Trudeau counted on for support over the past decade believe it's time for him "to pass the torch" as prime minister.

Geographically, the Conservatives have 46 per cent support

in Ontario compared to 25 per cent for the Liberals. Toronto is in play for the Tories, said Coletto, who sees the numbers amounting to "a perfect storm against the Liberals," and paving the way for Poilievre.

The Abacus poll, which reported the Conservatives with 43 per cent support compared to 22 per cent for Liberals and 18 per cent for the NDP, also found respondents believing that such issues as the federal deficit, economic growth and managing immigration would improve under a Conservative government.

Sixty-two per cent of Conservative supporters said they would vote for the party "no matter what happens," driven by "a deep antipathy" for Trudeau, "rather than a deep affinity" for Poilievre, said Coletto in his survey comments.

Nanos Research's numbers, released on Sept. 24, and involving 1,059 respondents, show the Conservatives with a sizeable lead at 42 per cent, followed by the Liberals at 25 per cent and the NDP at 21 per cent.

"The mood for change is strong, especially in Ontario, and if Toronto isn't a fortress for the Liberals, all bets are off for them," said Nik Nanos, president, CEO and chief data scientist at Nanos Research, who added that the Conservatives are projected to make electoral gains across the country except for Quebec. In that province, the Bloc could lead, buoyed by new support from older Quebecers for the party's push for a 10-per-cent increase in Old Age Security benefits in its private member's Bill C-319.

"For Pierre Poilievre, his main advantage is that he is not Justin Trudeau, and the Conservatives are not the Liberals," said Nanos, who expects the government will be defeated on the federal budget vote next spring.

The latest Nanos survey found Poilievre with a 34.5 per cent approval rating for prime minister, compared with Trudeau at 21.7 per cent.

Nanos said he expects the Liberals would win more seats than the NDP in the next election. But the governing party could end up back in third position in the House as they were before they won the 2015 election, when Trudeau brought the Grits "out of the wilderness."

The results of an Ipsos poll, released this month, found about 67 per cent of Canadians disapprove of Trudeau as prime minister, and only 26 per cent of the 1,001 respondents surveyed chose him as best to fill that role. Poilievre received 45 per cent support in that category.

In a general election, the Conservatives could receive 45 per cent of the vote, with the Liberals at 26 per cent and the NDP at 16 per cent.

"The Liberals don't have a geographic base to build from, and they don't have a demographic base to build from," explained Darrell Bricker, CEO of Ipsos Global Public Affairs. "In every province, they're losing."

"Pierre Poilievre is not everybody's cup of tea—but it's really about choice and change. If you want to change the government, he's really the only option for you," said Bricker.

Bricker, who has been polling since the mid-1980s, said he sees two similarities to what is unfolding with the Conservatives' sweep in the next federal election.

One, at the federal level, occurred in 1993 when the Progressive Conservative government was reduced to two House seats, neither of which were won by then-prime minister Kim Campbell.

The other happened at the Ontario level when Doug Ford's Progressive Conservatives reduced premier Kathleen Wynne's Liberals to third place with seven seats in the 2018 provincial election, one short of holding official party status in the legislature.

"It wasn't that Ford was especially appealing to voters, and it wasn't anything specific that he was saying that was appealing to voters. All that mattered was he was the biggest change that people could make from Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals—and that's where Pierre Poilievre stands right now. He personifies change," said Bricker.

He credited the Conservatives as positioning themselves as "different," unlike the NDP that has lost support, which Bricker said he believes happened by its close alignment with the Liberals through the supply-and-confidence agreement from which the New Democrats recently withdrew.

"Usually, the decline of the Liberals leads to an increase for the NDP," said Bricker. "This time around [it's] not, and that's because people don't differentiate the two. Whereas the Conservatives stand out uniquely and alone on the national ballot as change."

However, the Tories face one challenge that could affect that change. In Ipsos' recent polling, only 44 per cent of respondents believe the opposition parties should defeat the Liberal government "at the first opportunity and trigger an election."

For Bricker, this suggests that Canadians "need to be convinced that an election will actually create a change in government."

He explained that in the last two federal elections—in 2019 and 2021—the Conservatives won the popular vote, but the government remained in Liberal hands.

"A lot of people wanted change back then, too, but they did not think the Conservatives would actually win. So, Poilievre has to convince them that, 'yeah, if we go into an election, I am actually going to win and this government will actually change,'" said Bricker.

"That's what Doug Ford did really, really well against Kathleen Wynne. He was able to convince Ontarians the government would change."

Bricker noted that when public support for a change in the federal government reaches 60 per cent in polling, the Conservatives will be joined by the other opposition parties in a non-confidence motion in the Commons against the Liberals whose fate, he said, rests squarely on its leader.

"Justin Trudeau is the entire personification of the Liberal Party and this Liberal government, and the only thing he can do to reset the board is to leave himself," said Bricker, who characterized the prime minister's time in office as a circle of Ds: from "darling" in 2015 to "disappointment" in 2019, to "dislike" in 2021, and now a major push for him to "depart."

Frank Graves, president of Ekos Research Associates Inc., has found similar results as those of his polling colleagues.

An Ekos poll involving 967 respondents released last week put the Conservatives at 40.4 per cent, the Liberals at 24.8 per cent and the NDP at 16.9 per cent. The Tories lead everywhere but in Quebec where they are in third place behind the Grits and the Bloc.

With women, the Liberals and Conservatives are tied at 31 per cent, while the Grits are more popular with the 65-plus crowd at 36.5 per cent with the Tories at 29.6 per cent.

Graves said that the Conservatives can also count on their voting "base," which consists of people who are "angry" and "disinformed" and against any vaccine mandates, along with the "self-identified working class" drawn to Poilievre's clarion call for a federal election to "axe the tax" regarding the Liberals' carbon-pricing scheme.

The Hill Times

'A lot of tension' in both Ottawa and Quebec City sparks shifting alliances between parties

In a 'bizarre twist of logic,' François Legault is trying to tie the Parti Québécois 'with the survival of Justin Trudeau's Liberals,' says former NDP staffer Karl Bélanger.

Continued from page 1

and-confidence agreement with the Liberals on the eve of the fall sitting. The current seat count in the House requires all recognized opposition parties—the Conservatives, Bloc, and NDP—to vote against the Liberal government in order to defeat it, meaning the support of even one opposition party is enough to keep the government in power on any vote.

On Sept. 18, Blanchet pledged he would support the Liberals on the first confidence vote of the sitting without any specific policy concessions. But on Sept. 25, the same day the Bloc—along with the NDP—voted to keep Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) government in office, Blanchet made it clear his support will be conditional going forward, and set a firm deadline for his demands.

Blanchet said he wants the Liberals to ensure two Bloc private members' bills—one on pensions, and another on supply management—are passed by Oct. 29, or he will move to bring down the government. The bill related to pensions would cost Ottawa more than \$3-billion in its first year, and more than \$16-billion over five years, according to analysis by the Parliamentary Budget Office. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) has strongly criticized the Bloc for its new willingness to keep the Liberals in power.

Meanwhile, the sparring in Ottawa drifted into the Quebec provincial scene, where Quebec Premier François Legault waded into the fray. Legault's nationalist CAQ government has been trailing in public opinion for months, while the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ)—which promises to hold another referendum if returned to power—is leading in the polls.

Legault dismissed the Bloc's decision to support the Liberals by describing the PQ as the Bloc's "sister party." He called not on Blanchet, but on PQ Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon to pressure



On Sept. 19, Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet, left, said he was 'neither a Conservative, nor a Liberal, nor a caquiste' in response to Quebec Premier François Legault's calls for Blanchet to defeat the government. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

the Bloc to bring down the Liberal government, which Legault has been at odds with over immigration policy.

Former Liberal staffer Jeremy Ghio, who's now a director with the government relations firm TACT, described Legault's intervention as "a bit of a desperate move."

"His logic was 'the friend of my enemy is my enemy,'" said Ghio. "So we're seeing kind of a clumsy manoeuvre to put pressure on the Parti Québécois that finally ended up boomeranging in its own face."

On Sept 25, Legault attempted to reframe his comments as he came under fire in the Quebec legislature, saying "I never said I support one party over another."

"What I asked is why does the Bloc not take advantage of the confidence vote to demand the Trudeau government finally

significantly reduce the number of immigrants," said Legault.

Ghio said Legault could have chosen to "take advantage" of the present circumstances by saying, "Let's try to get as much as we can from the federal government right now and benefit from its situation of weakness' ... rather than antagonizing the federal government and creating a conflict."

He said there is "no way" the Liberal government will now be keen to deliver Legault any wins, but Blanchet remains in a good position to negotiate.

He said the Liberals have a strong motivation to find common ground with the Bloc because "everything they give to the Bloc Québécois, you could also argue that you're giving Quebec."

"There's no path to a government for the Liberals without Quebec," said Ghio.

Legault has 'rubbed' Blanchet 'the wrong way'

Bélanger, who is now president of Traxxion Strategies, said Blanchet is using a "simple" strategy with "clear" demands.

"They're very straightforward—there's only two—and there's a clear deadline," he said.

However, there's still some risk for Blanchet even though pensions and supply management are popular issues that "play well" in Quebec, said Bélanger.

"I'm not sure that it's going to resonate as much as what is the current point of conflict between Quebec and Ottawa," which is immigration, he said.

Bélanger added that because Legault had pressured Blanchet to focus on immigration, it's now far less likely the Bloc leader will prioritize that issue.

"The way Legault went at it clearly has rubbed Yves-François Blanchet the wrong way, and I do not see Blanchet going back to that file as a core demand for Trudeau's survival in the House anytime soon," said Bélanger. "He's a very stubborn guy."

Bélanger questioned how well this approach would serve Legault when it comes to netting a policy win.

It might have been more productive to work with the Bloc "behind the scenes to come up with an agenda that would satisfy the Quebec government," he said.

But on the political side, it's possible Legault might get some benefits, even if his claims are far-reaching, said Bélanger.

"In this bizarre twist of logic, [Legault is] trying to associate Paul St-Pierre Plamondon and the

Parti Québécois with the survival of Justin Trudeau's Liberals, which is a bit of a stretch," said Bélanger. "But the thing that's working out in [Legault's] favour is that he is fighting really hard against the immigration policy of the federal government, and the CAQ strategists are hoping that this will rise above the noise."

Former Conservative staffer Philippe Bolduc said going after Trudeau—"the most unpopular politician in country"—can only help Legault, and the Bloc is running a risk by supporting the government.

"The Bloc needs to be careful in becoming the automatic defender of the Liberals," said Bolduc, who is now a director at Wellington Advocacy. "That could really hurt them, and then it could also hurt the PQ, because there is an obvious link there."

Even if the Bloc extracts some policy wins, it may not serve them because the Liberals will take credit, said Bolduc. He noted the NDP's troubles claiming credit for supply-and-confidence agreement policies.

He added Poilievre has the capacity to do a "great job getting under Blanchet's skin."

"Pierre is a master communicator," said Bolduc. "They're going to be, I think, very successful in tying the Bloc to the Liberals, just like they did the NDP."

He said Legault's CAQ may also outmanoeuvre the Bloc.

"Legault is actually doing a pretty good job of saying, 'this is what we want ... [on] immigration control,'" said Bolduc. "The Bloc isn't able to deliver that for Quebec, so their strategy is going to be kneecapped by the premier."

If Conservatives win the next federal election, that could help Legault deliver his priorities, Bolduc added.

"He'll have a much friendlier government who is much more respectful of provincial jurisdiction, I would say, and who isn't interested in running each province."

Sovereignty 'game plan' back in play

However, if the next federal election were to return a larger contingent of Bloc MPs, that's also a win for separatist forces, and would increase the likelihood of a PQ government and an eventual referendum, said Bélanger.

"We're basically back to the three-period strategy ... of the sovereigntists during the [Lucien] Bouchard-[Jacques] Parizeau era [in the 1990s], which is win big in Ottawa with the Bloc, form government with the PQ in Quebec, and then win a referendum," said Bélanger. "That game plan is now back into relevancy."

Ghio said the PQ's lead in the polls means that Quebec's relationship with the rest of Canada is once again "a question of the present time."

"We're going to see more and more debate about national unity because the reality is that the leading party in Quebec—provincially speaking—is for Quebec's independence," said Ghio.

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Tying Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's survival to the Parti Québécois is a 'bizarre twist of logic' by Premier François Legault, said Karl Bélanger. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

News

Disasters the result of 'our actions or inaction,' Ottawa emergency management conference hears

The Canadian Emergency Preparedness and Climate Adaptation discussed options for future disaster resiliency in Canada as federal MPs probed the response to the Jasper wildfire in committee.

Continued from page 1

that our development is sustainable, and our investments are informed by risks."

Arenas Garcia told the inaugural Canadian Emergency Preparedness and Climate Adaptation conference that losses from disasters such as wildfires and floods tend to be underestimations.

"Take wildfires, for instance. We tend to estimate the economic cost of wildfires—particularly when they reach assets, properties, infrastructure—where humans are affected," he said. "But we tend to underestimate the losses in areas where there's very little human activity. We have difficulty estimating biodiversity and ecosystem services losses."

The UN General Assembly adopted the "Pact for the Future" on Sept. 20, committing to 56 resolutions "to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations."

Among the resolutions was a commitment to "prioritize urgent action to address critical environmental challenges and implement measures to reduce disaster risk and build resilience," as well as to share disaster early warning systems, and "promote a disaster risk-informed approach to sustainable development that integrates disaster risk reduction into policies, programmes and investments at all levels." It also called for the private sector to "to contribute to sustainability and protecting our planet and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals."

Arenas Garcia said that for every dollar businesses invested in resilience, they avoided almost \$4.60 in losses. "For every dollar invested in disaster-risk reduction, we save \$15 in post-recovery investment," he said. "Early warning systems—perhaps some of the most effective ways to reduce human and economic loss-



The remains of the Palisades Centre in Jasper National Park after a July wildfire. The inaugural Canadian Emergency Preparedness and Climate Adaptation conference discussed the future of this country's disaster resilience. Photograph courtesy of Parks Canada

es—24 hours' warning can reduce economic losses by 30 per cent. So we have the evidence, we have the data, we know what works. However, we are not investing, and this is not only the responsibility of the public sector."

The future of Canada's disaster resilience framework was also discussed at the conference. Michel Doré, associate professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal, said it is important for data to be available about the root cause of each disaster.

A starting point, he said, would be requiring an independent investigation of an event that requires the provision of federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA), similarly to reports from coroners or transport accidents.

"If we, as Canadian taxpayers, are funding DFAA and investing in a number of millions of dollars every year on financial assistance, why don't we get a good return on our investment?" he said. "That could re-adjust accountability and properly enlighten the whole of society, not about who should do what, or who has responsibility, but

what contributions can be made together to make Canada more resilient."

Doré also suggested moving from the use of "roles and responsibilities" to one of "contributions." That could also involve equipping civilian bystanders with the tools required to become effective first responders during mass casualty events, such as earthquakes, when civilians spontaneously assist with recovery efforts.

"This is something where policy can make a difference, not trying to limit and overload the assets, not trying to overestimate the capabilities of the publicly funded assets, but let's bring it all together as a common, whole of society approach," he said.

Adam McAllister, the national chair of UN-ARISE, a private sector alliance for disaster resilient societies, called for a national co-ordinating body for disaster response, as well as more standardization of responses. He noted that such a body already exists for wildfires with the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

"The federal government would be well placed to be that co-ordinating body. It would take a lot of effort, a lot of money to do, and it would have a significant impact," he said. "I believe if we can move towards that, that enables us to share resources across the country, because we don't have enough resources at the province or the municipality."

'There was no stopping this fire'

Just down the road from the conference, Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, Que.) told a parliamentary committee that there was no stopping the wildfire that destroyed approximately 30 per cent of the Jasper, Alta., townsite in July, and added that the disaster could have been far worse without preventative measures.

"If we hadn't put in all of these efforts—and when I say 'we,' this is Parks Canada, the City of Jasper, the Government of Alberta and Indigenous Peoples—if all of this work had not been done in order to create a protective zone around the city, the impacts would have been far worse," Guilbeault told the House Environment Committee on Sept. 26 in French. "You must understand: Jasper is one of the cities best equipped to deal with something like this."

Lightning sparked wildfires in the forests surrounding the Jasper townsite, which is wholly situated in Jasper National Park, on July 22, forcing the evacuation of approximately 20,000 people. The fire moved through the town, destroying approximately 30 per cent of structures, and leaving an insured damages bill that the Insurance Bureau of Canada estimated was about \$880-million. Firefighter Morgan Kitchen was killed on Aug. 3 while battling a wildfire near Jasper.

Questions have been raised about the federal response to the fires, which was the subject of last week's committee meeting. Guilbeault, whose portfolio includes Parks Canada, said that "there was no stopping this fire, and no forest was going to escape its path."

The minister did not directly answer a question from Conservative MP Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, Alta.), whose riding includes Jasper, about whether the government accepted "responsibility for the failure to protect the people and the town of Jasper."

"You're telling me this preparation is paying off. Minister, if this is an example of preparation and success, what does failure look like?" he asked.

Guilbeault then said Jasper was one of the best-equipped towns to deal with fire.

"I know the Conservative Party has an issue with this, but we are facing climate impacts like we have never dealt with before, floods, tropical storms and—yes—fires," he said.

Questions were also asked about the co-ordination between the federal and provincial governments on the fires.

"I do think that the collaboration between the provincial government and the federal government was wanting, and those looking in saw confusion and fights," said NDP MP Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, Alta.). "Whether that was just on the news is one thing, but that's what Albertans saw."

Guilbeault said the firefighters on the ground from multiple jurisdictions were working together.

Asked by Bloc Québécois MP Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, Que.) about apparent discrepancies between Alberta and federal drought maps, Guilbeault said "the goal of the federal government is not to dictate what provinces do, and force them to adopt our way of doing things. There's partnership, there's information sharing, there's cooperation, but we don't always have the same criteria as our provincial counterparts."

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Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault told the House Environment Committee that the Jasper wildfire could have been worse without preventative measures put in place. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Indigenous business verification for procurement 'just not working,' MPs hear

Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Joanna Bernard says the lack of a consistent verification approach 'creates a risk of false claims, tokenism, exploitation by bad actors.'

BY IREM KOCA

There is "no consistent way of verifying the legitimacy of Indigenous businesses," according to Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Joanna Bernard's testimony at a parliamentary committee examining issues in federal contracts awarded under the government's procurement strategy.

Philip Ducharme, vice-president of entrepreneurship and procurement at the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB) echoed Bernard's assessment during the first meeting of the House Government Operations and Estimates Committee on Indigenous procurement on Sept. 24. Both witnesses told MPs that Indigenous communities and organizations need to be part of the verification process and policies around government procurement with Indigenous businesses.

Bernard said the AFN has concerns with the lack of transparency, as well as the eligibility criteria and definitions for the types of business who qualify as Indigenous.

The lack of a consistent verification approach "creates a risk of false claims, tokenism, exploitation by bad actors," said Bernard.

The federal government's Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business (PSIB) to encourage participation in federal procurement has been under scrutiny for its vulnerability to exploitation. Media reports and Indigenous community leaders' remarks pointed to loopholes that have allowed non-Indigenous businesses to benefit from the PSIB through self-identifying as Indigenous, or by using so-called "rent-a-feather" schemes, where an Indigenous individual fronts a non-Indigenous company to secure contracts.

According to government records, from 2022 to 2023 the government awarded \$33.5-billion in contracts to Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses. Of



AFN Regional Chief Joanna Bernard told MPs that there is 'no consistent way of verifying the legitimacy of Indigenous businesses.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

that, \$1.6-billion—or 6.27 per cent of all contracts—were awarded to Indigenous businesses.

Bernard also said businesses' ability "to win federal contracts should not be impeded" by the government's "lack of proper recognition of First Nation citizenship programs or anti-imposter protections," she said.

'It's just not working'

The AFN regional chief also argued that First Nations and other Indigenous communities must lead the process of recognizing identity—whether for individuals, businesses, or organizations—to ensure its legitimacy.

Bernard emphasized the need for a verification process for claiming Indigeneity, citing concerns that the five per cent quota outlined in the PSIB may not be fairly distributed among Indigenous businesses.

"It is just not working," said Bernard, responding to Liberal MP Jaime Battiste (Sydney-Victoria, N.S.) who asked the witnesses whether they think each Indigenous community should determine membership "instead of having a box approach to Indigeneity." Battiste is the first Mi'kmaq to be elected to Parliament, and a former Assembly of First Nations regional chief.

The federal government has had a procurement strategy for Indigenous businesses since 1996 to boost participation. It was revamped in 2021, and became the PSIB with a mandate requiring at least five per cent of contract value to be allocated to Indigenous businesses. In 2018, more than \$170-million in contracts were awarded to Indigenous businesses under PSIB, which represents only one per cent of the total value of contracts awarded by the federal government that year. The value of government contracts awarded under the program has reportedly risen to \$862-million in the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Indigenous Services Canada has recently apologized to the Algonquin Anishinabeg Tribal

Council after an official suggested they could upload "any" document, even a photo of a rabbit, to qualify as an Indigenous supplier.

During the meeting, Conservative MP Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.) highlighted a previous exchange with Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior North, Ont.) at the House Indigenous and Northern Affairs Committee on March 20.

"The minister says that the purpose of this program is to verify Indigenous identity, and then spectacularly fails to put systems in place to verify Indigenous identity," Genuis said in reference to the government's Indigenous Business Directory (IBD).

The government says the IBD is "the primary source" it uses "to determine if there are Indigenous businesses available to fulfill federal contracts."

In March, Hajdu told MPs the IBD is "to provide assurances to other departments, including Public Services and Procurement Canada, that the people on that list are Indigenous."

"To understand the Indigenous business directory, you have to understand what it's for," she said. "That is the sole purpose of the list. It's about Indigeneity."

At the time, Genuis pressed Hajdu to answer how many Indigenous people benefited from the controversial Dalian contract.

"I'm kind of annoyed by this question because it implies that if an Italian person owned a company, then only Italian people should benefit from that company's business. In that is an implicit, I would say, stereotype," Hajdu said. "Indigenous business owners... are just like non-Indigenous business owners, and they're looking to turn a profit," she explained.

Issues in Indigenous procurement surfaced this year as the ArriveCan debacle unfolded. Dalian Enterprises—the contractor that received the second-largest sum for ArriveCan's development—secured federal contracts through an initiative supporting Indige-

nous businesses. Its president, David Yeo, has also been under scrutiny for failing to disclose a conflict of interest as a federal contractor before joining the Department of National Defence.

On Sept. 24, MPs also asked the witnesses to explain the disconnect between the government's and Indigenous Peoples' definitions of an Indigenous business organizations and communities.

"It's because there's no verification," Bernard replied. "That's where the problem lies. When anybody can walk in the door and say, 'I'm Inuit,' 'I'm Métis,' or 'I'm First Nations' without any verification." She noted that First Nations people have status cards proving their identity.

"We know where the needs are within these policies, so please take that into consideration before moving forward again, going behind closed doors and saying, 'Well, we heard from them, this is what we came up with,'" Bernard said.

"You've wasted government money, as well as your time and my time," she added.

'A few bad actors' can't affect crucial support, warns Ducharme

Ducharme said increased attention on alleged misuse of Indigenous procurement strategies has fueled a negative narrative that undermines the legitimacy of Indigenous businesses.

"This narrative is affecting public perception and, I fear, influencing policy decisions. We cannot allow a few bad actors to cause us to move backwards on crucial support mechanisms designed to lift Indigenous communities," he said.

Bloc Québécois MP Julie Vignola (Beauport-Limoilou, Que.), speaking in French, asked the witnesses how the government can "ensure that an Indigenous businesses is not used as a front."

Ducharme said this can be achieved through audits of the actual contracts.

"If you look at the contracts, if it's a joint venture, and you go through all the subcontracting you see where the payments are going, how much of the money is actually staying with the Indigenous community," Ducharme said.

Ducharme also explained that in million-dollar joint contracts only a small percentage is allocated to Indigenous businesses, so that amount should be reported as Indigenous spending to provide a more realistic representation of the benefits reaching Indigenous businesses.

Business directory in the spotlight

The government's Indigenous Business Directory lists 2,960 companies, ranging from construction and technology firms to gourmet food businesses. To be listed on the IBD, a business must be at least 51 per cent owned and controlled by Indigenous Peoples. The Canadian Council for Indigenous Business also has a list of Indigenous businesses which is not recognized by the government, but is used by private businesses, according to Ducharme.

Ottawa's definition of an Indigenous business refers to a sole proprietorship or a limited company, co-operative, partnership, or a not-for-profit organization where Indigenous persons have at least 51 per cent control. As for joint ventures, the government defines it as consisting of two or more Indigenous businesses, and a non-Indigenous business.

Both witnesses expressed support for a potential investigation into fraud in Indigenous procurement by Canada's Auditor General Karen Hogan.

There is no audit underway by Hogan at this time, according to Natasha Leduc, spokesperson for the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). However the OAG received a letter on Sept. 5 from the AFN, Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council, and the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador requesting an audit of the Indigenous Business Directory due to allegations of "negligent management."

"We have responded to the letter we received with an invitation to meet with their representatives to gather additional information as part of our ongoing process," Leduc said by email.

In February Hajdu said the federal government is reviewing procurement policies to determine who can claim to be Indigenous when bidding for federal contracts set aside for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Barriers in procurement for Indigenous businesses outlined in a Sep. 24 report by the CCIB, include lack of accountability in joint ventures, subcontracting arrangements, and other partnerships related to ensuring benefits allocated to Indigenous partners flow to them effectively. The report also highlights "infrequent and superficial auditing" as well as lack of access to resources and training, discrimination and colonial legacy in Canada.

In February, five national Indigenous economic groups formed the First Nations Procurement Organization with the stated aim to help First Nations Peoples and businesses overcome systemic barriers in accessing federal procurement opportunities, and to help ensure the federal government meets its minimum five per cent Indigenous procurement target by measuring progress and data.

The 2021 Census shows that over 1.8 million people in Canada identify as Indigenous, making up five per cent of the country's population.

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Heard on the Hill

Cher believes in Bill S-15



Cher—yes, that Cher!—tweeted her support for Bill S-15 on Sept. 24. Screenshot courtesy of Twitter/X.

Continued from page 2
 tigers, apes & more. Ask [Canada's]Parliament to pass Bill S15 and help Canada set the example for the rest of the [world]"
 The bill, sponsored by Senator **Marc Gold**—the government's rep in the Senate—got to second reading in the Senate on Sept. 25.

Reporter Kirsty Kirkup has a concussion

The Globe and Mail's Ottawa-based national affairs reporter **Kirsty Kirkup** announced last

week that she's been recovering from a concussion.
 "So, it is Concussion Awareness Week. I've been working through a serious one after a crash in mid-July. It's been ... a journey. Learn the warning signs. Take care of your brain. It's serious business," she posted on Sept. 24 on X.

PEN Canada honours jailed journalist Jimmy Lai



UK journalist Jimmy Lai. Photograph courtesy of Twitter @SupportJimmyLai

PEN Canada named UK journalist **Jimmy Lai** this year's One Humanity Award recipient on Sept. 21.
 The 76-year-old writer and owner of the now-closed Apple Daily newspaper has been in sol-

itary confinement since December 2020, and faces a potential life sentence for his journalism in Hong Kong, according to the press release.

"The lawfare directed at Jimmy Lai confirms that Beijing's National Security Law, imposed on Hong Kong four years ago, was always intended to chill expression," said **Grace Westcott**, PEN Canada's president. "We condemn this travesty of justice and human rights, as should every government that values freedom of expression and democracy."

The award will be presented at a private ceremony hosted by PEN Canada in October. A representative will receive the honour on Lai's behalf.

Andrew Coyne goes after Ana Poilievre

Oh, the joys of the Twittersphere.

What started with **Ana Poilievre** replying to NDP leader **Jagmeet Singh** following his recent in-person harassment on the Hill ended up with *National Post* columnist **Andrew Coyne** questioning whether the Conservative leader's wife should have commented at all given her role.

"For days now, bullies in Ottawa have been spewing hate and harassing Canadians who don't agree with them," Singh posted



The Official Opposition leader's wife, **Ana Poilievre**. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

on X around 8:45p.m on Sept. 17. "That's the country **Pierre Poilievre** wants."

"I am sorry you were harassed today," began Mrs. Poilievre's lengthy reply just over an hour later, which soon shifted to: "Mr. Singh, what country are you exactly suggesting my husband wants?"

"I'm tired of you and your friends portraying my husband as someone he is NOT."

Coyne chimed in on Sept. 18, musing that "There's a Geneva Convention in politics, that holds politicians' spouses to be non-combatants. As such they are, rightly, off-limits to political attacks. Should they, then, be stepping onto the field to take whacks at their spouse's rivals?"

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September 30 at 2-4 pm

allsaintsottawa at 330 Laurier Avenue East

Discussion on Reconciliation

On the National Day of Reconciliation it's time to talk about reconciliation in Ottawa, and specifically "The Other Hill". Community and inclusion is local, what does reconciliation look like in your neighbourhoods? Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the west coast who lives in Ottawa, a national and international keynote speaker with decades of experience in the world of reconciliation and anti-racism. Gather with community to enhance your understanding and credibility in reconciliation discussions, best practices for Indigenous inclusion, and how to support each other to make change.

Today is about hope.



Rose LeMay (Bi'di) is an unrelenting champion for the inclusion and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. From Taku River Tlingit First Nation, she is a trainer and speaker in cultural competence and anti-racism. She has over twenty years of experience in policy and program development in health and mental health development in government and non-profit sectors. She is a Certified First Nations Health Manager, certified in Prosci Change Management, and a 2021 Global Pluralism finalist. LeMay is a board member on the Canadian Coalition for Police Reform, and has a regular column in *The Hill Times*.



Stuart Benson
Party Central

Celebrating Canada's BIONATION at the NAC and Space goes to SJAM



Andrew Casey, BIOTEC Canada's president and CEO, left, and Oliver Technow, BIOTEC Canada board chair and CEO of BIOVectra Inc., right, present Christine Ha, CFO of Ventis Therapeutics, with an award at the BIONATION 2024 reception on Sept. 24 at the National Arts Centre. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*

The second week of the fall social scene blasted off with Space Canada's annual reception on Sept. 23 featuring the first moon-bound Canuck in history, and the BIONATION reception on the next day to celebrate the best of Canada's space-age biotech industry.

BIOTEC Canada (BIOTEC) hosted parliamentarians, parliamentary interns, staffers, and biotechnology industry executives and stakeholders for a reception at the National Arts Centre on Sept. 24 to cap off the first day of its annual BIONATION conference.

Following on the heels of a keynote address by Innovation Minister **François-Philippe Champagne**, who announced the launch of Health Emergency Readiness Canada—a new department under Innovation, Science and Economic Development to “strengthen preparedness” for the future attendees headed upstairs to the O’Born room for some free drinks and a quick presentation of the final two “Gold Leaf Awards,” which recognizes companies and individuals who’ve made significant contributions to the industry this past year.

At the reception, BIOTEC awarded **Christine Ha**, CFO of Ventis Therapeutics, the “Most Promising” award, and **Tamer Mohamed**, CEO of Vancouver-based Aspect Biosystems, the “Best Biotech Company of the Year” award. Earlier in the day, the “Community Leadership” award was presented to Dr. **Peter Zandstra**, director of the Michael Smith Laboratories at the University of British Columbia, and Dr. **Clarissa Desjardins**, director of Xenon Pharmaceuticals.

Mohamed's representative in the House of Commons, NDP MP **Jenny Kwan**, who presented him with his award, was one of the few parliamentarians **Party Central** spotted at the reception that evening, alongside her caucus-mate **Richard Cannings**, Liberal MP **Joyce Murray**, and Senators **Colin Deacon** and **Andrew Cardozo**.

While **Party Central** spotted several of the Bluesky Strategy Group team, including co-founder **Susan Smith**, *The Hill Times'* **Tessi Sanci**, and almost all of the Parliamentary interns, it wasn't until attempting to organize a photo with the “BIONATION Builders,” the conference's main sponsors, that the actual makeup of the crowd became apparent.

After getting impatient waiting for the companies' executives to assemble and

assuming it would be helpful, **Party Central** utilized his vocal projection skills to call for “all of the presidents and CEOs” in the room to step forward.

“How many industry executives could there possibly be in one room?” this reporter thought, very stupidly, as almost 20 people stepped forward.

After narrowing that down to the nine actually needed for the photo—after snapping a larger group shot for which **Party Central** didn't even attempt to get a cutline—the reception began to wind down.

While this would usually be where the quip about heading home before 7 p.m. would appear, given conference attendees would need to be up for an 8 a.m. breakfast keynote with Health Minister **Mark Holland** and lunch with an actual astronaut, Colonel **Chris Hadfield**, **Party Central** will respect that responsible choice and give it a pass.

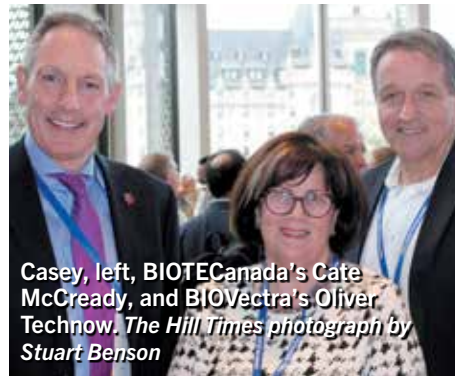
The former resident Canadian on the International Space Station wasn't the only Canuck-naught on the Hill this week either.

The day before, on Sept. 23, Space Canada also hosted its annual reception inside the Sir. John A. Macdonald building, with special guest **Jeremy Hansen**, the Canadian fighter pilot and astronaut with a first-class ticket to the Moon next year.

While **Party Central** was unable to attend due to the merciless taskmaster known as the Wednesday print deadline, friend-of-the-column **Cynthia Münster** was able to snag a few pictures, and provide the pertinent party details. Unfortunately, most of those details served to further distract from the task at hand with severe jealousy over not getting to try the VR-Space demos.

According to Münster and *Politico*, the promise of meeting the soon-to-be Moonman and VR headsets was also an effective draw for parliamentarians from both sides of the aisle, as Space Canada CEO **Brian Gallant**, the former premier of New Brunswick, was joined by Minister Champagne, Liberal MPs **Bardish Chagger** and **John McKay**; Conservative MPs **Pierre Paul-Hus**, **Phil Lawrence**, **John Nater**, **Shuv Majumdar**, **Larry Maguire** and **Luc Berthold**; former Conservative leader **Erin O'Toole**, now president and managing director of ADIT North America, and House of Commons Speaker **Greg Fergus**.

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Casey, left, BIOTEC Canada's Cate McCready, and BIOVectra's Oliver Technow, with the 'Gold Leaf' for 'Best Technow.' *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



NDP MP Jenny Kwan, centre, and Casey, awarded Tamer Mohamed, left, CEO of Aspect Biosystems, with the 'Gold Leaf' for 'Best Biotech Company of the Year.' *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



Liberal MP Joyce Murray, left, and Senator Colin Deacon, with Rami Fayed, left, vice president and general manager of AbbVie Canada, Senator Andrew Cardozo, AbbVie Canada's Natacha Raphael, Aspect Biosystems' Mohamed, and AbbVie Canada's Lauren Fischer. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



Bluesky Strategy Group's Raphael Brass, left, Jordan Paquet, Leah Young, Manuela Boeira, and co-founder Susan Smith. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



Roche Canada's Cassandra McCrory, left, CEO Brigitte Nolet, and Shikra Viridi. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



Parliamentary interns, Justin Langan, left, Maya Mohammed, Emily Wheaton, Anjana Balachandran, Noah Fon, Christina Koikaran, Jesse Lafontaine, and Quinlan Cho. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



The 'BIONATION Builders', AstraZeneca's Gaby Bourbara, left, Novartis' Caroline Barber, IRICor's Elizabeth Douville, adMare BioInnovations' Gordon McCauley, AbbVie's Rami Fayed, BioTalent's Rob Henderson, Stem Cell Network's Cate Murray, Penny Walsh-McGuire, CEO of Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences, Fonds de Solidarité FTQ's Maxime Pesant, and Casey. *The Hill Times photograph by Stuart Benson*



Astronaut Jeremy Hansen speaks at Space Canada's reception on Sept. 23. *The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster*



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left, and Space Canada CEO Brian Gallant. *The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster*



Hansen, left, and International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen. *The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster*



CSA President Lisa Campbell, left, Liberal MP Churence Rogers, Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, and astronaut Jeremy Hansen. *The Hill Times photograph by Cynthia Münster*



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Staff updates for the PMO, Minister LeBlanc down a policy director

Chris Rodgers, who'd been in charge of policy related to the democratic institutions file, has bade farewell to Minister LeBlanc's team.

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** saw some movement in his office this past summer with three departures, two hires, and one promotion to catch up on, including the exits of deputy director of operations and outreach **Udita Samuel**, and lead speechwriter **Alexandre Gravel**.



Deputy director Udita Samuel has left the PMO and is Oxford bound. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

After almost two-and-a-half years in the PMO, Samuel is headed back to school and is moving across the pond to begin a master's degree at the University of Oxford.

She first joined Trudeau's office as an Ontario regional affairs adviser in May 2022, and was promoted to her deputy director title almost one year ago.

"If I've learned anything in politics, it's that connecting Ottawa with real people across Canada is what matters most," wrote Samuel in a recent note shared with **Hill Climbers** on her decision to leave.

"Over the past two-and-a-half years, it's been a real pleasure to help plan the Prime Minister's public engagements, strengthening our government's connection with diverse communities from coast to coast."

Responsible for co-ordinating with ministers, MPs, staff, and others across the country to arrange events with Trudeau, Samuel noted that, "[a]s an extrovert and a people person, I've simply loved this job." She added that she's "immensely grateful" to her colleagues "for their support and collaboration," and for having "worked alongside such a talented and passionate group of individuals."

Prior to joining the PMO, Samuel was director of operations to then-labour minister **Seamus O'Regan**, and before that she spent almost a year-and-a-half working for then-diversity, inclusion, and youth minister **Bardish Chagger** beginning as an operations adviser and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary,

and ending as manager of operations. An ex-field organizer with the federal Liberal Party, Samuel also previously spent six months as a special assistant for tour in the PMO, starting in February 2020 just before flights were grounded as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jeff Valois remains director of operations and outreach.

Gravel bade farewell to Trudeau's office in August, and noted his decision to leave in a LinkedIn post earlier this month, writing that after four years in the top office, he was leaving "ready to tackle new challenges."

"As head speechwriter, I wrote hundreds of speeches. From the pandemic to the war in Ukraine, from the Emergencies Act to welcoming President [Joe] Biden in Ottawa, from the 2023 Liberal Convention to the [Brian] Mulroney eulogy—my goal was always to help the PM refine his voice and messaging," wrote Gravel.

"Anyone who has worked in politics knows that speechwriting isn't just about the craft and delivering a good show; it's also about crisis management, public policy, strategy, research, outreach, and narrative. And, paradoxically, it's about listening: listening to how people talk and what they talk about. It's a unique relationship: a politician and his writer. I learned a ton and am incredibly grateful for this life-changing experience," he continued, teasing that he has "a lot lined up for the future" that he would share "in the coming weeks and months."



Alexandre Gravel, left, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Photograph by Adam Scotti courtesy of LinkedIn

A former senior copywriter with marketing agency McCann in Montreal, Gravel originally joined the PMO as an English and French speechwriter in September 2020; he was promoted to lead speechwriter at the start of 2022.

Speechwriter **Jared Forman**, who joined the PMO at the end of the last spring sitting, remains on board.

Along with Samuel and Gravel, **Elsa Niyongabo**, who'd been a special assistant for operations and communications

in the office of PMO chief of staff **Katie Telford**, has also bade the team farewell. Niyongabo had been working in the PMO since 2023, and before then was a special assistant with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

On the flip side, **Deborah Allotey** and **Jaeda Schilke** have been added to Trudeau's team as a correspondence writer, and a special assistant for human resources, respectively.



Deborah Allotey has joined the PMO as a correspondence writer. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Allotey is a former legal services administrator with the National Police Federation, and has more recently been busy as an ecosystem mapping project co-ordinator with Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, including for its Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub. According to her LinkedIn profile, she's also been board secretary for the Restore International Foundation since March 2023.

Now part of the PMO's HR team overseen by director **Kirsten Strom**, Schilke recently completed an internship with the team through the Liberal Summer Leadership Program, after which she was hired on full time. Schilke is a former constituency assistant to Sport and Physical Activity Minister **Carla Qualtrough** as the MP for Delta, B.C., and holds a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Simon Fraser University. Last summer, she also interned in the federal employment minister's office, starting in May under then-minister Qualtrough, and ending under current minister **Randy Boissonnault**.



Jaeda Schilke is another new face in Trudeau's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

In other office news, correspondence writer **Chris Wallace** has been bumped up to "senior" status. He's been with the PMO since late October 2023, and is an ex-assistant to Toronto Liberal MP **Rob Oliphant** and former MP **Bill Morneau**.

Jean-Luc Marion continues as Trudeau's director of correspondence.

Minister LeBlanc bids adieu to a policy director

Public Safety, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Democratic Institutions Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** is down a policy director following **Chris Rodgers** exit earlier this month.



Chris Rodgers has left Minister LeBlanc's office. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Rodgers, who had been in charge of policy related to LeBlanc's democratic institutions file since the start of 2022, has already started in a new role as deputy director of strategic policy related to foreign interference for the RCMP. According to his LinkedIn profile, this is a part-time position.

Thanks to a 2023 reinterpretation of the federal Conflict of Interest Act indicating that former reporting public office holders—a category into which ministerial staff fall—no longer require a waiver or exemption from the conflict of interest and ethics commissioner in order to take a job with a federal department, agency, or Crown corporation with which they had dealings before the end of their post-employment cooling off period. **Hill Climbers** reached out to RCMP media relations to confirm the details of Rodgers' new job as described on his LinkedIn profile, but did not receive a response by filing deadline.

Rodgers previously worked as a policy adviser with Natural Resources Canada, Elections Canada, and Public Safety Canada, and spent roughly four-and-a-half years as a teacher with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. A two-time former candidate who ran against Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** in Carleton, Ont., Rodgers was first hired to work for LeBlanc at the start of 2020, beginning as a policy director in LeBlanc's office as then-minister for intergovernmental affairs and the Queen's Privy Council.

Maja Kostic remains in LeBlanc's office as director of policy for public safety, supported by deputy director **Mary-Liz Power**, while **Rebecca Parkinson** is the minister's policy head for intergovernmental affairs.

With Rodgers' absence, senior adviser **Rob Jamieson** has assumed his former responsibilities—though not his official title. **Kristina Slodki** continues as a senior policy adviser for democratic institutions.

Brandan Rowe is chief of staff to LeBlanc for the democratic institutions and intergovernmental affairs files, and **Cory Pike** is chief of staff for public safety.

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National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Monday, Sept. 30



Gov. Gen. Mary Simon, left, and Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, pictured Sept. 30, 2023, marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on the Hill. The day honours the Indigenous children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

MONDAY, SEPT. 30

House Sitting—The House 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.

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

Unveiling of Indian Residential School Memorial Monument—The Canadian Museum of History hosts a ceremony marking the installation and unveiling of the Indian Residential School Memorial Monument. Monday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m. ET at the Canadian Museum of History, 100 Laurier St., Gatineau. Details: historymuseum.ca.

Lecture: 'Objectivity, Press Freedom, and the Palestine Exception'—Carleton University hosts a lecture on "Objectivity, Press Freedom, and the Palestine Exception" featuring journalist Pacinthe Mattar who will share her experiences covering and talking about Palestine, and why it's one of the most critical press freedom issues of our time. Monday, Sept. 30, at 7 p.m. ET at 2228 Richcraft Building, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30—THURSDAY, OCT. 3

World Trails Conference—Trans Canada Trail is hosting the four-day 2024 World Trails Conference, a bi-annual global forum where representatives from trails around the world gather to learn from trail experts, to network, and to shape the future of trail experiences around the world. Monday, Sept. 30 to Thursday, Oct. 3 in downtown Ottawa. Details: worldtrailsconference.org.

MONDAY, SEPT. 30—FRIDAY, OCT. 4

RNA Canada ARN Conference—The inaugural RNA Canada ARN conference is a groundbreaking event in the field of RNA research bringing together more than 450 researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders to discuss the future of RNA and its far-reaching im-

pact on health, biotechnology, and agriculture. Speakers include Derrick Rossi, co-founder of Moderna; and Nobel Prize laureates Phillip Sharp and Thomas Cech. Monday, Sept. 30 to Friday, Oct. 4, at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre. Details: home.riboclub.org.

TUESDAY, OCT. 1

Canadian Cannabis Leadership Summit—The Cannabis Council of Canada hosts a conference. Thought leaders, policymakers, and experts in the field will discuss key industry issues including excise duty, excise stamp, and regulatory burden. Tuesday, Oct. 1, at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details: cannabis-council.ca.

Lunch: 'Toronto to Quebec City Rapid Rail Network'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts its season opener event, "Toronto to Quebec City Rapid Rail Network: Building Infrastructure for Tomorrow" with Martin Imbleau, president, and CEO of Via HFR. Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 12 p.m. at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Taiwan-Canada Dialogue on Indigenous Engagement—The Canadian International Council's National Capital Branch, the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Canada, and the University of Ottawa host "The Other 'I' in Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: A Taiwan-Canada Dialogue on Indigenous Engagement" featuring former Liberal MP Robert-Falcon Ouellette, now associate professor at uOttawa; Harry Ho-jen Tseng, representative with the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in Canada; and uOttawa professor Scott Simon. Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 5 p.m. in in Room FSS4007, Faculty of Social Sciences Building, University of Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

Fundraiser for Nelson House—Annual fundraiser for Nelson House's Susan Sherring Legacy Fund, continuing the late Ottawa journalist's legacy of support for women and their children experiencing intimate partner/domestic violence. Ottawa Police Chief Eric Stubbs and other community leaders are expected to deliver remarks. A \$75 donation is appreciated. Tax receipts available. Tuesday, Oct. 1, at 5:30 p.m. ET at 177 Powell Ave. Details via Eventbrite. Contact im@isabelmetcalfe.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2

ICO Meet and Greet—The International Club of Ottawa invites members

of the international diplomatic community, academia, and business to a meet-and-greet gathering on Wednesday, Oct. 2, at 10 a.m. ET, Britannia Yacht Club, 2777 Cassels St., Ottawa. Contact Isabella Abols: 613-248-8253.

Panel and Book Launch: *The Twelfth of February*—The University of Ottawa hosts the launch of Rhonda Gossen's new book, *The Twelfth of February: Canadian Aid for Gender Equality during the Rise of Violent Extremism in Pakistan*. Gossen will take part in a panel discussion featuring Lilly Nicholls, Canada's outgoing high commissioner to Bangladesh; Ian Smillie, founder of NGO Inter Pares; and development practitioner and author Fayyaz Baqir. Wednesday, Oct. 2, at 4 p.m. ET, at FSS 4007, 120 University Priv., University of Ottawa. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

Panel: 'Democratic Innovation'—The Samara Centre for Democracy hosts a conversation on civic engagement in Canada, "Democratic Innovation: What's Needed, What's Not, What's Next." Thursday, Oct. 2, at 5 p.m. ET at the Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1470 Peel St., #200, Montreal. Details: irpp.org.

Agnico Eagle Mines and Kitikmeot Inuit Host Reception—Agnico Eagle Mines Limited and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association invite parliamentarians to join them for an evening reception. Wednesday, Oct. 2, from 5:30-8 p.m. in Room 200, Sir John A. MacDonald building, 144 Wellington St. RSVP by Sept. 30: rsvp@blueskystrategygroup.com.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2—THURSDAY, OCT. 3

Fisheries Council of Canada Conference—The FCC will hold its annual conference beginning with their ever-popular Celebrating Canadian Seafood reception. The keynote speakers include David Coletto of Abacus Data. Wednesday, Oct. 2, to Thursday, Oct. 3, at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details online: fisheriescouncil.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 2—FRIDAY, OCT. 4

IPAC Annual Conference—The Institute of Public Administration of Canada will hold its annual conference on the themes of climate change, AI, housing, and Indigenous topics, addressing the essential role of public administration amid changing realities.

Wednesday, Oct. 2, to Friday, Oct. 4, in Winnipeg. Details: ipac.ca.

THURSDAY, OCT. 3

Ottawa Energy Security Forum Conference—The Canadian Global Affairs Institute hosts the "Ottawa Energy Security Forum Conference: The Future of the Canada-U.S. Energy Relationship," a half-day conference on how trends such as friendshoring, protectionism, geopolitics, and climate change are shaping this crucial energy security relationship, and what we can expect in the future. Thursday, Oct. 3, at 7:30 a.m. ET at KPMG Canada, 150 Elgin St. Details: cgai.ca.

Lecture: 'Meme War 2024'—Carleton University hosts a lecture by Dr. Joan Donovan entitled "Meme War 2024: Networked Incitement in the Static Age," offering an analysis of the political communication strategies that leverage the ambiguity of memes to carry out media manipulation and disinformation campaigns. Thursday, Sept. 3, at 6 p.m. at 2228 Richcraft Building, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 4

Soirée Quiz Night—Muséoparc Vanier will host a bilingual politics trivia night featuring Liberal MP Mona Fortier and Ontario Liberal MPP Lucille Collard. Friday, Oct. 4, at 5 p.m. ET at the Vanier Sugar Shack, 320 Péres-Blancs Ave. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, OCT. 4—SATURDAY, OCT. 5

The Francophonie Summit—The Francophonie Summit will take place on Friday, Oct. 4, to Saturday, Oct. 5, in Villers-Cotterêts and Paris, France. Details: francophonie.org.

SATURDAY, OCT. 5

Camp Parliament for Girls—It's all fun and civics at Camp Parliament for Girls Ottawa 2024. Girls aged 8-17 years will study Canada's parliamentary system of government, form political parties, create a campaign platform to stand for office, vote in an election, and form a government to pass a law. Each student will serve as an MP. Saturday, Oct. 5, at 8 a.m. at 350 Dalhousie St. Details via Eventbrite.

Conference: 'Canadian African Diaspora in Trade and Foreign Policy'—Parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs Robert Oliphant will take part in "The Importance and Role of the Canadian African Diaspora in Trade and Foreign Policy," a hybrid conference hosted by the Canadian International Council. Other participants include Cheryl Urban, assistant deputy minister for Sub-Saharan Africa at Global Affairs Canada; and Prof. Wisdom Tetley, Carleton University's incoming president, among others. Saturday, Oct. 5, at 12:15 p.m. ET at Saint Paul University, 223 Main St. Details: thecic.org.

Nationbuilder Awards Gala—PSG Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard, House Speaker Greg Fergus, retired senator Murray Sinclair, former governor general Michaëlle Jean are among the 12 honourees at this year's Nation Builder Awards Gala hosted by the Canada Leadership Summit. Saturday, Oct. 5, at 5 p.m. ET at the Hilton Toronto Airport Hotel, Mississauga, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

SUNDAY, OCT. 6—FRIDAY, OCT. 11

ASEAN Summit—The ASEAN Summit will take place in Vientiane, Laos, from Sunday, Oct. 6, to Friday, Oct. 11.

TUESDAY, OCT. 8

Bike Day on the Hill—Vélo Canada Bikes hosts Bike Day on the Hill. Join parliamentarians, local and national leaders, and fellow cyclists in a non-partisan celebration of everyday cycling in Canada. A reception will follow in Room 200, 144 Wellington St. Thursday, Oct. 8 at 5 p.m. ET on Parliament Hill. Details via Eventbrite.

Virtual Fireside Chat with Minister MacKinnon—Minister of Labour and Seniors Steven MacKinnon will take part in a virtual fireside chat hosted by the Senior Liberals' Commission. Hear more about the Liberal team's work on behalf of older Canadians. Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. ET happening online. Details: liberal.ca.

Lisa Moore to Discuss New Book—Library and Archives Canada, and the Ottawa International Writers Festival host award-winning author Lisa Moore who will discuss her latest book *Invisible Prisons: Jack Whalen's Tireless Fight for Justice*, the true story of a teenaged boy who endured abuse and solitary confinement at a reform school in Newfoundland. Tuesday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details: writersfestival.org.

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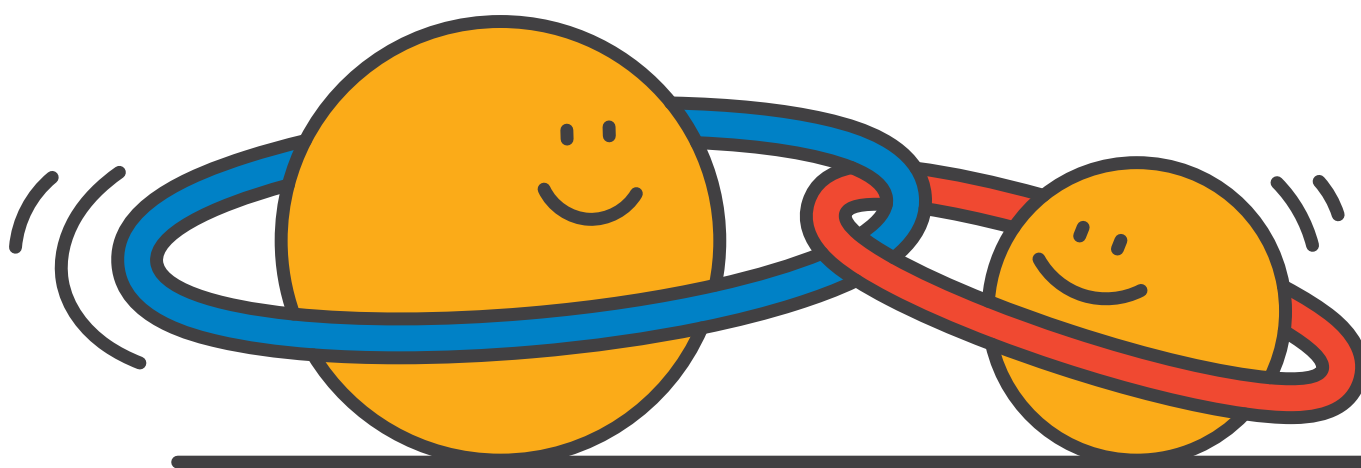


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