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THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2168

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024 \$5.00

NEWS

NDP and Bloc need to overcome 'fear' of Conservatives to break Commons paralysis, says Liberal House Leader Gould

As some look for a way forward in Parliament, it's 'preposterous' to say the NDP aren't standing up to the Tories, says NDP House Leader Peter Julian.

BY STUART BENSON

Government House Leader Karina Gould says the Bloc Québécois and NDP are "scared of the Conservatives" due to their refusal to help bring an end to the privilege debate that has paralyzed the House of Commons for the past 10 sitting days.

However, with a second privilege question waiting in the wings to potentially muck up the government's plans as soon as the current debate is dispensed with—and only eight sitting days left to meet the Bloc's Oct. 29 ultimatum—the governing Liberals are running out of time and options to get back to their own priorities, say observers. Still, Gould said she isn't ruling out some Liberal hardball of their own.

In an Oct. 11 interview with *The Hill Times*, Gould (Burlington, Ont.) said she remains confident her government will be able to navigate the current logjam and move forward with its own

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Despite the privilege-debate hurdle, the current dysfunction still hasn't reached the levels of toxicity that spurred the 2021 election call, says Government House Leader Karina Gould. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade, and photo illustration by Naomi Wildeboer.

NEWS

'Enough is enough': nervous Liberal MPs push for Trudeau's exit before the next election

BY ABBAS RANA

Liberal MPs have been holding discreet meetings in small groups over the past few weeks to come up with plans to urge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to

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NEWS

'Complete apathy' clouds feds' pursuit of family reunification plan, say Sudanese Canadians

BY NEIL MOSS

Members of the Sudanese Canadian community who are imploring the federal government to move faster to process

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

‘An important oral history of political life’: Samara Centre marks 10 years of MP exit interviews



Samara Centre for Democracy's CEO Sabreena Delhon, left, with the centre's co-founders Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan during a special podcast episode on Oct. 7. Screenshot courtesy of the Samara Centre for Democracy

Last week the Samara Centre for Democracy celebrated the 10th anniversary of *Tragedy in the Commons*, a book highlighting what's become an evergreen struggle.

“They were certainly ahead of the curve in terms of knowing something was amiss with our democracy,” Samara's CEO Sabreena Delhon told *Heard on the Hill* last week.

“They” are Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan, Samara Centre's co-founders and the authors of the book *Tragedy in the Commons*, first published in 2014 as a result of a project Samara started six years prior in 2008 by interviewing exiting MPs—something which had never before been done, and continues today.

Loat and MacMillan joined Delhon for a special episode of Samara's *Humans of the House* podcast on Oct. 7 to mark the book's anniversary.

In the past 16 years, the Samara Centre has spoken with more than 160 former MPs about their experiences in the House of Commons, and is currently working on an analysis of these interviews to better understand trends and patterns in the data.

“Before this interview study began, Members of Parliament had limited opportunities to share reflections on their role and provide insight about the practice of politics in Canada,” explained Delhon. “By capturing this valuable data, we can use it to monitor the health of our democracy, educate the Canadian public on the functioning of our democracy, and provide experienced-based recommendations to strengthen Canada's civic culture.”

Delhon notes that two themes persisted across the interviews:

that MPs often feel like outsiders, and that political parties have been centralizing their power.

“One constant, however, is that there are no regrets [from departing MPs] about devoting years to public service, and that these individuals share their stories to help evolve life in Parliament for the better,” she explained.

“We see politicians routinely dehumanized, especially online, and there can be a sense that there aren't good people in politics. Which then sends a signal that our democracy isn't great either. Our efforts with the project entail bringing more depth and a nuanced perspective to how we understand Canada's democratic culture,” said Delhon, who called the project “an important oral history about political life in Canada.”

Visit samaracentre.ca for links to the podcast and the book *Tragedy in the Commons*, as well as its 2020 sequel: *Real House Lives*.

East Block caf officially to live on

Survey results are in, and the Senate's East Block cafeteria



The East Block cafeteria is pictured in 2016. *The Hill Times* file photograph

is set to live on after the Upper Chamber's Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee agreed last week to extend its memorandum of understanding for food services for another year, with the option to add another three years to extend the agreement into 2029.

Last spring, CIBA had mulled shuttering the cafeteria as of July, and launching a one-year pilot to test using a “specialized” vending machine instead, but tabled the idea after concerns were raised over a lack of consultation with Senators and staff.

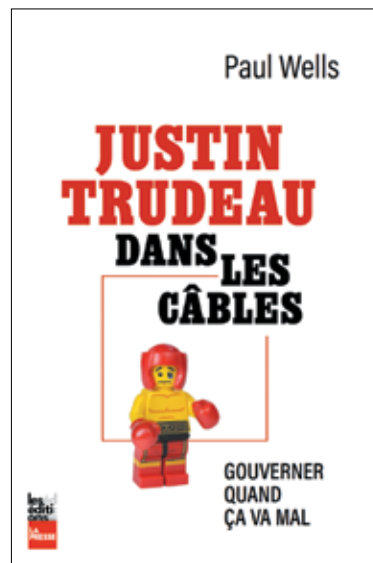
A survey subsequently launched by the administration saw 369 individuals respond, including 32 Senators, with feedback pointing to clear support for maintaining current food services offerings and keeping the East Block building's cafeteria in operation, said ISG Senator **Éric Forest** (Gulf, Que.), chair of CIBA's subcommittee on Senate estimates and committee budgets, in presenting a report on the findings.

The MOU's extension will cost roughly \$1.675-million over four years, of which \$710,000 is tied to the East Block cafeteria, while the other \$965,000 is for the Senate of Canada Building's cafeteria,

said Forest. The report adopted by CIBA also called for the Senate's goods and services directorate's budget to be permanently increased by \$95,000, and by an additional \$10,000 in subsequent fiscal years up to 2028-29.

—by Laura Ryckewaert

À venir: Paul Wells' essay on Trudeau



Justin Trudeau dans les câbles: gouverner quand ça va mal will be available Oct. 31. Book cover courtesy Paul Wells's Substack

Award-winning columnist and writer **Paul Wells** announced that a French version of his latest book will debut on Oct. 31.

And it's all thanks to renowned political commentator **Chantal Hébert**, who lamented on the Radio-Canada program *ICI Première* that Wells' recently published essay *Justin Trudeau on the Ropes: Governing in Troubled Times* was not available in her mother tongue.

Wells took her comment as a challenge, he wrote in French in an Oct. 8 letter to his Substack readers. And the result is *Justin Trudeau dans les câbles: gouverner quand ça va mal*, which will be available at the end of the month from Les Éditions La Presse.

Wells notes that books on politics in Canada are rarely available in both official languages for various reasons: cost and delays in translation, the limited market, and mainly that anglophones and francophones don't always share overlapping tastes in subject matter.

The professional translation is thanks to **Daniel Poliquin**, whom Wells says he's known since the former was an interpreter at the House of Commons. “I am proud of my written French,” Wells wrote *en français*, “but I am just a simple guy from Sarnia,” calling Poliquin's translation “bonbon.”

LEAF to launch report on gender-based violence

On Oct. 22, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund will

host the launch of a new report in Ottawa.

Titled *What it takes: Establishing a gender-based violence accountability mechanism in Canada*, the paper will call for the creation of a Gender-Based Violence commissioner in Canada.

Scheduled to take place at Norton Rose Fulbright's office at 99 Bank St., this event will also feature a panel discussion featuring **Amanda Arella**, YWCA Canada's director of public policy, advocacy, and strategic communications; human rights activist Dr. **Amanda Dale**, who is with the Women's Human Rights Institute at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law; and **Doris Rajan**, managing director of the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society.

The event schedule says there will be remarks by MPs, but hasn't listed which ones. Visit Eventbrite to register.

Susan Sherring Fund raises \$12,000 for Nelson House



Police Chief Eric Stubbs, longtime Nelson House supporter Lee Farnworth, and Deputy Chief Patricia Ferguson. Photograph courtesy of Lee Farnworth

More than 100 generous guests came out to support the **Susan Sherring Legacy Fund**, raising more than \$12,000 to help Nelson House, an Ottawa-based emergency shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence, in the name of the late journalist.

Hosted by Sherring's friend **Isabel Metcalfe** at her home in the Glebe on Oct. 1, the annual fundraiser featured speeches by Nelson House executive director **Christy Savage**, Ottawa Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe**, and Police Chief **Eric Stubbs**.

Sherring's sons **Peter** and **James**, her sisters, and their families were in attendance; alongside PSG Senator **Andrew Cardozo**; Ottawa-Centre MPP **Joel Harden**; Ottawa City Councillors **Shawn Menard**, **Theresa Kavanagh**, and **Jessica Bradley**; and **Daria Ivanochko**, chair of Nelson House Board of Directors.

Sherring—a former *Ottawa Sun* journalist and columnist who died in July 2022 at the age of 63—was a keen supporter of Nelson House and its work for women and their children experiencing intimate partner violence. Nelson House set up the eponymous legacy fund in her memory.

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News

Taking a stand: Bellemare talks modernization, and her ‘challenging’ road in the Senate

Canadians would see efforts to undo modernization efforts ‘as a willingness to control the Senate,’ says recently retired senator Diane Bellemare.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

From Conservative Senator to unaligned independent to deputy government representative and beyond, Quebec’s Diane Bellemare has held a number of affiliations through her 14 years in the Red Chamber. But one thing has remained constant: staying true to her own conscience, even if it meant ruffling some feathers.

“I am proud to have changed groups, I’m probably the only one who changed so many times, but ... I think I have followed my integrity, my conscience, so this is what I’m proud of,” Bellemare (Alma, Que.) told *The Hill Times* in an interview in her seventh-floor Chambers Building office on Oct. 9—her second-last sitting day ahead of her mandatory retirement on Oct. 13.

At times, doing so required “courage” to stand against colleagues, “but I did it,” said Bellemare, who is retiring as a member of the Progressive Senate Group.

With a background in economics—including as a longtime professor, and a past member of both the Economic Council of Canada and the National Statistics Council—she also pointed to her work on monetary policy as a member of the Banking Committee as a top accomplishment of her Senate career.

Bellemare was appointed to the Upper Chamber in 2012 on the recommendation of then-Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper—a nomination that she said came “out of the blue.” It was then-Conservative Senate leader Claude Carignan (Milles Isles, Que.) who first let Bellemare know she’d made the short list.

“I was surprised, and I was not sure that I wanted to be a Senator at first. I’d never really thought about it, but he told me, ‘don’t take too much time,’” she recalled.

Drawn to the idea of helping design public policy, Bellemare had years earlier dipped her toe into the world of partisan politics, and found it wanting. She first ran provincially as an Action démocratique du Québec candidate in 2003, and in 2008, she was tapped to serve as special economic adviser to the party’s leader, which led to another run in a provincial byelection the same year.

“It didn’t work out for me very well, and I did not really enjoy partisan politics. It’s not me,” she said, describing herself as someone who prefers to “tackle issues from an intellectual point of view.”

But by the time Harper called a few days after Carignan, Bellemare had decided to accept.

Taking her seat as a member of the Conservative caucus, Bellemare described her early years in the Senate as challenging. “It was new, so it was difficult, and the Senate was so different than it is today.”

Bellemare said she “felt a bit alone” as an “independent thinker” trying to navigate her way through the big, “complex institution” that is the Senate. While she said people were “nice individually,” she described the experience as embarking on a “train that’s already rolling, so you have to be careful.”

Then a two-party Chamber, Bellemare said it was made “clear” she was expected to be “with the Conservatives.” Nonetheless, she didn’t hesitate to speak against bills she didn’t agree with, regardless of whether they came from within her own caucus, including—notably—Bill C-377, a Conservative private member’s bill that sought to force labour unions to publicly disclose financial information.

“I became louder about my opposition,” said Bellemare. “After that, it was difficult for me to pursue my affiliation with the caucus.”

Adding to Bellemare’s challenging start was the Senate expenses scandal that surfaced in late 2012. Though she “had no issues” of her own—having only newly arrived—she said the “overwhelming”

media coverage and treatment of the Senate, the “accountant firms everywhere,” and the general “turmoil” was “traumatizing,” but also underlined for her how easily the Prime Minister’s Office could reach into the affairs of the Senate and “govern both Houses.”

The more she became acquainted with the Senate, the more “evident” it became to her “that the Senate of Canada could play its constitutional role much better if it was composed of many groups,” she said.

Jumping the Tory ship

Already beginning to promote the idea of a more independent Chamber herself, Bellemare said she was “impressed” when then-third party leader Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) kicked Senators out of the Liberal caucus in 2014.

Still, Bellemare said it didn’t feel “legitimate” for her to quit the Conservative caucus while Harper was prime minister, and so she stayed put.

But then came the 2015 election, and after the Trudeau Liberals formed government, Bellemare said she saw a “true willingness to make the Senate more independent,” leading her to finally sever ties with the Conservative caucus in March 2016 to sit as an unaffiliated Senator.

Around the same time, now-PSG Senator Peter Harder (Ontario)—then-newly appointed as the first-ever government representative in the Senate—was on the hunt for a deputy.

Aware of Bellemare’s views—including her disinclination toward partisan politics—Harder approached her for the job. Knowing the tough road ahead, she said she took two weeks to decide before accepting.

“It was difficult because we were inexperienced, and that was an experiment,” she said.

“That was the true challenge: how do you pass government legislation in a Senate where there’s no government caucus?” The answer essentially came down to lots of phone calls, and foot work—work Bellemare attributed largely to then-government liaison Grant Mitchell. She also credited Conservative



Outgoing Quebec PSG Senator Diane Bellemare sat down with *The Hill Times* on her second-last day in the Red Chamber to reflect on her 14-year Senate career. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Senators for understanding that while they then formed the largest group in the Chamber, “they could not oppose just for the sake of opposition” and trump the will of the elected government.

Come 2019, Bellemare said she felt she’d accomplished what she wanted with the government representative team in getting the “experiment” of the new Senate going, and was eager to dig into work to modernize its rules. And so, after that year’s federal election, she left to join the Independent Senators Group.

But while her belief in the need for a more independent Senate served as common ground within the ISG, she said she clashed with the group on two main points. For one, she disagreed with the view that the Senate should be a Chamber of independent individuals, rather than a Chamber of groups independent from political parties. And, for another, she opposed the ISG’s—ultimately successful—push to suspend a long-standing Senate rule that enabled Senators to keep their committee roles through the end of a session, regardless of whether they change groups.

Bellemare left the ISG to join the Progressive Senate Group in 2021. Soon after, she became chair of the Senate Rules, Procedure, and the Rights of Parliament Committee.

‘It would be an error to try to go back’ to Senate’s old ways

Much of the Rules Committee’s work this Parliament has been spent undertaking reviews amid a push to cement modernization, and reflect the Chamber’s shift from a bipartisan body to a multi-group institution. Sparked by what’s been dubbed the Woo-Tannas motion, which identified Senate rules that failed to give “equity” to the new groups on matters like speaking times during debate, such changes have faced consistent opposition from Conservative Senators, who have pushed back on what they see as attempts to dilute their power as the official opposition.

Describing herself as a “person of consensus,” Bellemare said she made clear from the outset that the committee would leave the final say on any changes that couldn’t be agreed to unanimously to the Chamber. The Rules Committee has since produced six reports on the matter, with another on the way.

Last spring, a package of such changes were tabled by government representative Marc Gold (Stadacona, Que.), who used time allocation to force a vote. On May 8, a majority of Senators voted to pass Motion 165, despite Conservative opposition.

Reflecting on the lack of unanimous consent, Bellemare said, “If we had been truly rational, I think we could have had a common position, but it was impossible to do it for political reasons.”

With rising expectations that the Conservatives will form government after the next election, Bellemare is one of a number of Senators worried for the future of modernization efforts.

During the Harper years, Bellemare said Conservative Senators weighed in “behind the scenes” on the drafting of legislation, but once a bill reached the Chamber, the expectation was it would be voted through without amendment.

“I think there’s more debate with the new Senate,” she said, along with a different approach to “programming” the timeline by which bills are scrutinized by the Chamber that involves negotiations between group leaders, rather than time allocation pushed by the government.

“I think it would be an error to try to go back ... and Canadians would see it as a willingness to control the Senate,” said Bellemare.

As she prepared to bid the Senate a final farewell, Bellemare said that while she won’t miss the late hours, she will miss the cut and thrust of the Chamber: the “adrenaline,” the politics, and the “great people here in the Senate.”

“It was hard to embark on that train, but ... I’m gonna miss the train,” she said. “It’s a privilege to be a Senator; I enjoyed it.”

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News

Feds' plan for fish-farm transition no catch, say wild salmon, industry advocates

Despite opposing views on the ban, advocates for the industry and the First Nations who operate salmon farms agree the government's draft transition plan is lacking.

BY STUART BENSON

Neither wild salmon advocates nor those for British Columbia's aquaculture industry are happy with the feds' nearly two-months-late "plan to make a plan" for the industry's transition to entirely land-based operations by 2029. However, with the fate of the industry and the wild salmon population at stake, all sides say they are committed to helping the new cross-department task force make the best of the "dog's breakfast" they've been served.

On Sept. 20—seven weeks after the federal government's self-imposed deadline at the end of July—Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) published the federal government's draft transition plan for salmon aquaculture in B.C., which details a "basis for engagement" with coastal communities, stakeholders, and First Nations on the transition, and how it will "collaboratively [foster] development" of the sector through four "key themes." These include support for First Nations, workers, and communities; identifying economic supports for the adoption of innovative and clean aquaculture technology; milestones, principles, and criteria for the phase-down of open net-pen aquaculture; and management of open net-pens until the ban is fully implemented.

The government also announced that these consultations will be done by a new interdepartmental task force led by Liberal MP Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Ont.), the parliamentary secretary to the innovation minister.

The task force, which will act as the federal government's secretariat, will contribute "expertise from across the government in reconciliation, economic and community development, green technology, and aquaculture management." It will consist of representatives from the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), ISED, Indigenous Ser-



B.C. salmon farmers, suppliers, and the United Steelworkers Union rally against the federal government's decision to ban open-net salmon farms on the West Coast by 2029 in Nanaimo, B.C., on Sept. 11. Photograph courtesy of Mowi Canada West

vices, Pacific Economic Development, Employment and Social Development, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Natural Resources, Finance, the Privy Council, the Treasury Board, and the National Research Council.

The draft transition plan and task force announcements landed just shy of three months after the initial announcement of the ban on June 19, which said that when federal salmon aquaculture licences for producers in B.C. expired at the end of the month, only land-based or closed-containment marine systems would be considered for licences, and the existing 63 licensed open-net farms would be given five years to transition.

When the June announcement was made, it was divided into two nearly simultaneous press conferences in Ottawa—led by Fisheries Minister Diane Lebovillier (Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Que.)—and another in Vancouver helmed by Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.), who was fisheries minister when the policy was initially announced in 2019.

While Lebovillier's press conference stressed the need for a "path forward for salmon aquaculture" in the province, Wilkinson's focused on protecting "wild Pacific salmon."

Speaking with *The Hill Times* on Oct. 10, Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis Chief Bob Chamberlin, chair of the First Nation Wild Salmon Alliance, said that while he first celebrated the announcement in June as "good for the environment and economy," as well as a step toward the rehabilitation of wild salmon and reconciliation for First Nations in B.C., he had "reserved the right to attack it later."

Now that the draft plan has been released, Chamberlin said it increasingly seems the gov-

ernment is attempting to "punt it down the road" until the next election.

"I'm just waiting for the next election to roll out with all of the promises that they really mean it this time," Chamberlin said. "They're just ragging the puck to run out the clock until then."

Chamberlin said the Liberals seem to be employing a tactic familiar to B.C.'s provincial government on the issue: "deny, delay, and distract."

Initially, the Liberals had denied there was an issue until they finally announced the ban in 2019, he said. The ban was then delayed until the most recent implementation announcement this past summer, and finally, "distracting with endless processes."

Despite that criticism, Chamberlin said he was pleased with the new cross-departmental task force that will now lead the transition process, noting that DFO's attempt to address the issue solo had "failed horribly."

"Hopefully, they will be able to bring together all of their expertise and available resources to meet the needs of the communities and workers who will be hardest hit," Chamberlin said, noting that he has friends and family employed by the industry, and knows the ban hasn't been "welcome news."

While he said he recognizes the impacts the ban will have on the nations that operate them, he is also aware of the effect the farms currently have on the availability of wild salmon as a food source for most nations in the province.

"I understand it's not going to be welcomed in those communities," Chamberlin said. "But, the operations are causing grief all along the coast."

Chamberlin said that will mean the final two themes of the draft plan—supporting communities, and managing the socio-eco-

omic impacts of the transition—will be of the utmost importance.

"Those are opportunities to revisit and improve the conditions of licence and [First Nations] oversight," Chamberlin explained, adding that he would be meeting with Turnbull's office on Oct. 12, and with other officials in involved departments over the coming weeks to ensure they understand "the importance of getting this right."

Dallas Smith, a spokesperson for the First Nations for Finfish Stewardship and a member of the Tlowitsis First Nation in Campbell River, B.C., said the draft plan may have been an attempt "to kick it down the road, but they kind of missed the kick."

Smith said it had been frustrating for the final decision to be changed by what he called "political oversight" by activists and the Liberals' B.C. caucus after working with DFO for nearly two years to identify the challenges with a 2029 timeline, and present a more achievable path forward.

"The fact that [Wilkinson] was allowed to have a press conference minutes after [Lebovillier's] just shows how much disarray Ottawa has been managing this with," Smith said, adding that the federal government has now made a policy commitment to which no one had agreed.

Additionally, while the aquaculture industry has been working with DFO on its Marine Protected Areas Protection Standards and its United Nations commitment to preserve 30 per cent of its land and water by 2030, the industry has been unable to provide any detailed economic analysis since 2019 due to the constantly changing goal posts.

"The government's attempt to handle this issue has only exasperated the problem because they're unable to sit down and have a real, grown-up, well-thought-out discussion," Smith said.

Smith said that without those "government-to-government-to-government" discussions, many nations that operate farms are beginning to believe their ability to work collaboratively with the federal government is starting to "run out its lifespan." Those nations have begun considering alternate means to secure their own "economic and ecological needs," including ways to issue their aquaculture licences, he said.

Like Chamberlin, Smith said that while the nations he represents will keep a "long-term view" in mind and continue to weigh their options, they will continue working within the process before them for now.

"Mr. Turnbull has been handed a dog's breakfast, and he's got to try to sort it out," Smith said. "We'll wait to see how this plays out over the next few months."

However, Brian Kingzett, executive director of the BC Salmon Farmers Association, told *The Hill Times* that the government's June announcement has already devastated the industry.

Kingzett described the draft plan as a "plan to make a plan," and the latest indication that the federal government is making "decisions on the fly" about a policy it doesn't fully understand.

Beyond his criticism that the government is ignoring both the industry and science in making the decision, he said it has also ignored the economic commitment the needed support will require.

"Even if investors were interested in the transition, the minimum capital costs would be around \$2-billion," Kingzett said.

Linda Sams, Cermaq Canada's director of sustainable development, told *The Hill Times* that investment has "ground to a halt" since the ban was announced, which has caused "grave concern" around the international aquaculture industry.

Sams added that concern isn't limited to salmon aquaculture, either.

"Salmon is where the [intellectual property] is, it's where the capacity is, and it's what supports the entire [aquaculture] supply chain," Sams explained. "All the other aquaculture is often built off the back of salmon."

Kingzett estimated that the total loss in foreign investment dollars across the industry since the announcement is in the "hundreds of millions," and has been "hemorrhaging employees" through layoffs or workers leaving for the East Coast or the United States for more-stable employment.

Sams explained that if the transition isn't handled correctly, it could destroy the industry in Canada—not just on the West Coast—which would take decades to rebuild.

"The Liberal government has put us as farmers in a terrible position, but we're committed to our profession, and we're going to do everything we can to work through this," Sams added. "We're honest, hard-working people, and we're going to do our best, but we've been given impossible odds."

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Message targeting is the name of the game before the next federal election

In 2024, the strategy to reach undecided voters looks fundamentally different than it did just four or five years ago.

Josie Sabatino

Opinion



OTTAWA—Political parties face two critical tasks going into an election. One is ensuring that your base maintains sufficient enthusiasm to show up on election day. The other is expanding your voter coalition enough to grow your seat count. Even if all of the precursors to success are in place—like a

war chest brimming with cash, and a cross-country team of volunteers energized to get out the vote—it can solve the first challenge, but not necessarily the second.

That's where political communications come into play. In 2024, the strategy to reach undecided voters looks fundamentally different than it did just four or five years ago.

Take, for example, the 2021 election campaign. At the time, then-Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole did more than 50 interviews in four weeks across traditional platforms like talk radio, print, web, and broadcast. While some of the interviews were considered "new media"—like newsletters, podcasts, and blogs—most of the focus was on reaching Canadians through established media outlets based outside of the Parliamentary Precinct.

The earned-media strategy was paired with ad buys on broadcast and social media, but spending by the Conservatives was a drop in the bucket com-

pared to the Liberal Party. By the third week of the election, the Liberals had spent more on the social media than the Conservatives, NDP, and Bloc Québécois combined. This was a trend that carried over the course of the election.

Fast-forward to the present day. The Conservatives led by Pierre Poilievre have put into force a strong digital strategy well in advance of the election that comprises targeted buys on Facebook and Instagram, as well as traditional ad placements on television and radio.

Coupled with earned media opportunities like sending out frequent news releases, holding press conferences on Parliament Hill, and conducting local and ethnic media interview blitzes, the Conservatives are hitting Canadians on multiple channels, and at a high frequency.

Poilievre has also spent years building up his organic social media channels, which gives him the enviable opportunity to disperse his message

to a base eager and primed to engage with his content. Not only can he get his message out quickly, it allows him to move away from the editorial constraints of distributing a news release or waiting for an interview opportunity.

Another factor to consider is that Canadian politicians of all stripes will lean more aggressively into new media opportunities to reach voters who don't consume traditional media in the same ways as older generations of voters.

An example of this strategy is playing out in real time in the United States presidential election. Vice-President Kamala Harris made waves last week when she appeared on the infamous and raunchy podcast *Call Her Daddy*.

On its face, the podcast content doesn't provide a natural alignment for a presidential candidate. But in today's media environment, a targeted message is worth its weight in gold. The *Call Her Daddy* demographic is made up of primarily

women, most of them under the age of 45.

Harris was afforded the opportunity to talk unfettered about her childhood, and to define the choice that women have in the upcoming election. The podcast has since come under fire from conservative-leaning listeners, but its audience are voters who the Democrats need to shore up if they are to be successful at the ballot box next month.

If 2015 was the "selfie election," this next go-round at the polls will be the "targeted election." There are more ways than ever for politicians to get their message out, and more mediums that link directly to voters.

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

The Hill Times

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Editorial

Ultimatum or not, let the Senate do its work

There was a rare sight to behold on Parliament Hill last week before politicians returned to their communities for the Thanksgiving break.

On Oct. 10, parliamentarians of all stripes converged for a rally on the lawn in support of a Bloc Québécois private member's bill, C-282, that aims to solidify Canada's supply-management regime.

The Hill Times' Peter Mazereeuw was on the scene. As he chronicled in *Politics This Morning* the next day: "You don't see many Liberal ministers turning up for Bloc rallies, but they did yesterday: Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos, Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, and Revenue Minister (former ag minister) Marie-Claude Bibeau were front and centre. So was Green MP Mike Morrice, and Alistair MacGregor, the NDP's critic of agriculture and (ironically) food price inflation."

This particular Bloc bill has been tied to the ultimatum the party issued the government shortly after the fall sitting began in the wake of the dissolution of the Liberal-NDP supply-and-confidence agreement, and the Conservatives' consecutive non-confidence motions: back the passage of both C-282 and another Bloc bill seeking to top up Old Age Security for seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 by Oct. 29, and the Bloc will help keep the government from falling—at least until Christmas.

As *The Hill Times'* Neil Moss has reported, Senators on the Foreign Affairs

Committee say they won't be moved, rushed, or pushed around.

It's not remotely uncommon for private members' bills to take a more meandering path once they hit the Upper Chamber—by virtue of them not being government legislation—regardless of how much support they had in the House.

But in the age of Senate modernization, in which freedom of thought and vote is far more common, all the rallies and ultimatums in the world won't necessarily sway the people tasked with taking a sober second look at legislation from doing their jobs—and that's a good thing. Sure, the bills duly passed by the elected House may end up becoming law, as many believe they should. But the Senate isn't there to be a rubber stamp. That's something recently retired senator Diane Bellemare highlighted in her exit interview with *HT* reporter Laura Ryckewaert.

"I think it would be an error to try to go back ... and Canadians would see it as a willingness to control the Senate," said Bellemare of the future of modernization.

Some Canadians may believe that controlling the unelected Senate is the right way to go, but if we want the best possible legislation to become law, Senators should be allowed to do that work without being bullied by their elected counterparts.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Rethinking childcare solutions in Ontario

Re: "The Trudeau government is crushing private-sector childcare in Ontario," (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 25.)

While Matthew Lau's opinion piece raises important points about childcare shortages, it overlooks the potential drawbacks of expanding for-profit childcare in Ontario.

The \$10-per-day program initiated by the Trudeau government aims to make childcare more affordable and accessible for families. This initiative is vital for supporting working parents, and ensuring that children receive quality early education. The limitations on private for-profit participation in this program are not merely bureaucratic hurdles, but reflect a commitment to prioritizing community needs and quality childcare over profit motives.

For-profit childcare can lead to prioritizing financial gain at the expense of quality. Many studies suggest that

non-profit providers often focus more on child development and community impact than their for-profit counterparts who may be driven to cut corners to maximize profit. This is particularly concerning in a sector that directly affects the well-being of our children.

Instead of advocating for greater inclusion of for-profit providers, we should be calling for enhanced investment in non-profit and public childcare options. The government must work collaboratively with municipalities to expand capacity, and ensure that all families have access to safe, high-quality childcare.

The solution lies not in loosening regulations for private operators, but in strengthening our commitment to a publicly funded system that serves the best interests of children and families.

Keerthana Ratnarajah
 Waterloo, Ont.

Embracing uncomfortable conversations for growth and change, says B.C. letter writer

We live in an increasingly interconnected world. Our ability to communicate and engage in meaningful dialogue is crucial. Cultural divides and differing political ideologies should give us opportunities to engage in conversations that push us beyond our comfort zones—not incentivize anger and hate.

Increasingly, I am witnessing more visceral and dangerous examples of discrimination. As a visible minority, I've lived through the challenges of navigating identity, bias, and inclusion—including being publicly racially accosted while running in a British Columbia provincial election. But biases are found among all cultural divides.

Whether it's confronting issues of race, bias, or personal beliefs, I've learned that there is a way forward through open and honest dialogue. Unfortunately, these uncomfortable conversations are ones that many of us tend to shy away from.

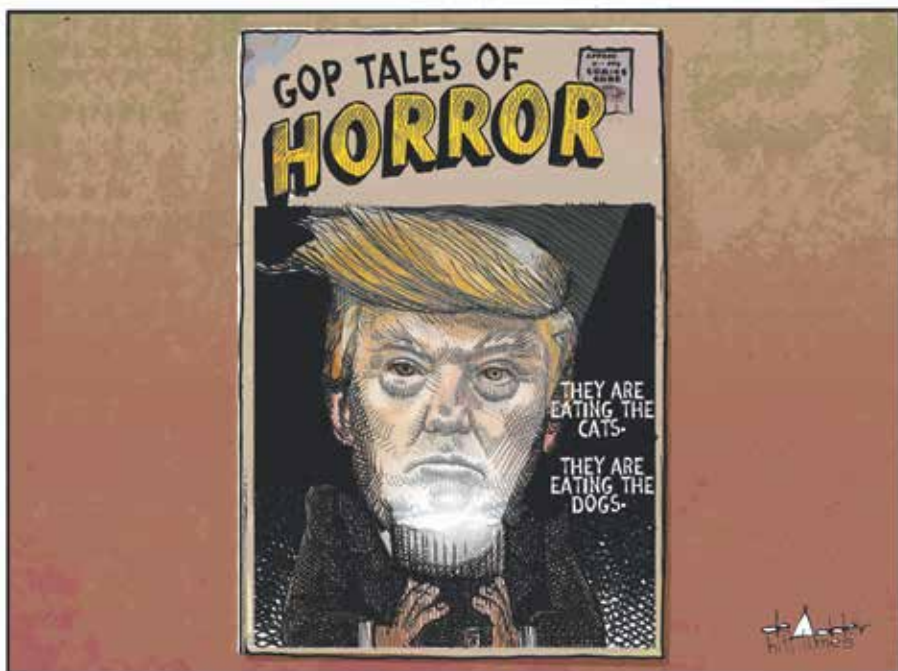
Uncomfortable conversations are about fostering understanding, building trust, and learning from one another. But

before we can truly engage with others, we must also be willing to uncomfortably confront our own biases and assumptions. It's about approaching these moments with an appreciative lens where the goal is not to assign blame or prove someone wrong, but to foster understanding and find common ground.

This is particularly important for those in leadership positions. If we want leaders to lead authentically and inclusively, they must be willing to engage in the conversations that make them—and those around them—uncomfortable. As I reflect on the increasing diversity in Canada—where 500,000 new immigrants join our society each year—the need for this shift becomes even more urgent.

As we navigate the complexities of an ever-changing world, these conversations will be our path forward—toward understanding, toward empathy, and toward meaningful change. Let us embrace the discomfort. Only then can we truly grow.

Rishi Sharma
 Victoria, B.C.



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circulation@hilltimes.com
 613-688-8821

THE HILL TIMES

Published every Monday and Wednesday by Hill Times Publishing Inc.

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

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

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Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan. No matter which way you count it, the CAF's numbers do not add up to an effective fighting force, writes Scott Taylor. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



No matter how you slice it, the military's numbers don't add up

Without an immediate course change, the Canadian Armed Forces is hurtling towards an existential, tragic end.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—On Sept. 26, Chief of Defence Staff General Jennie Carignan appeared before the House National Defence Committee. The primary focus of the meeting was the status of the Canadian Armed Forces with regard to the ongoing recruiting and retention crisis, which has led to a crippling shortage of personnel in the Canadian military.

Prior to his retirement, outgoing defence chief General Wayne Eyre had publicly acknowledged that the CAF was

short 16,500 personnel of an authorized combined regular and reserve strength of 101,500. Carignan stated that, as of the end of August, there was a total of 92,798 Canadians in uniform. This would appear to suggest that Eyre's shortfall has been reduced down to 8,802 personnel. However, Carignan herself cautioned the committee by admitting that these numbers fluctuate on an almost-daily basis.

Those familiar with the CAF will realize that the "on strength" numbers include what old-school sergeant-majors used to derisively refer to as the "sick, lame, and lazy." In the current vernacular, this would include those personnel who are on extended sick, stress, parental, and retirement leave. Add to that number the 10,000 or so personnel who have been recruited but have only received basic training, and remain awaiting their trades training. The CAF defines this category as "non-deployable."

In other words, no matter which way you count it, the CAF numbers do not add up to an effective fighting force.

Carignan explained that attracting civilians into recruiting

centres is not the problem. Last year, more than 70,000 Canadians signed applications to join the CAF. However, due to bureaucratic red tape and lengthy security clearances, fewer than 5,000 applicants were actually recruited.

As the personnel shortfall crisis deepens, the CAF has made changes to that system. Carignan said that in this fiscal year, the military is on target to recruit and train 6,400 personnel. This, she explained, will keep pace with the number of personnel expected to retire or release within that same timeframe.

In other words, the current projection is to simply stop the hemorrhaging without actually pumping in any fresh blood to flesh out the ranks to full strength. According to Carignan, the reason for this half measure is the bottleneck in the training system. They simply do not have the people to train the necessary personnel to make up the existing deficit.

The Liberal government—with its focus on the imminent upcoming federal election—seems content to carry forward the military shortfall well into the next decade. Eyre had cautioned

that in that timeframe, the CAF would need to increase by 14,000 personnel in order to operate and maintain all the new weapon systems which are presently on the order books. Without an immediate course change, the CAF is hurtling towards an existential, tragic end.

It does not have to be the case. It is not enough at this stage to merely tread water—or be drown-proof, to be more accurate. The training bottleneck needs to be immediately overcome, and the answer to this would be to re-enlist recently released military personnel as trainers.

I believe that if the government were to make an appeal to the patriotism of these veterans—and to sweeten the pot by also offering significant cash incentives and bonuses—you would easily create a professional training cadre.

It would not be a permanent solution, but rather a surge call-up of veterans and reservists to address the immediate shortfall. Once the CAF is returned to full strength, and the "non-deployables" are made deployable, things could return to a balance of recruiting to match releases.

Given that Canada has let the Strategic Reserve list lapse, such a re-enlistment of trades-qualified veterans would require a partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada. Again, given the threat to the institution in which so many once served with pride, I have no doubt that there would be no shortage of volunteers for the cause.

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

The Hill Times

Want to find the real boogeymen? Look to the banks

While real wages stagnate, bankers and shareholders are getting rich by doing worse things than would land the average person in prison for life.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



OTTAWA—It seems like capitalism is capitalizing.

The world is getting more and more dystopian, so much so that people are referring to this space and time as "peak capitalism." As Wikipedia explains, "Peak capitalism is a term used in recent academic literature to describe a situation in which capitalism can no longer survive." It has turned into the oligarchic financial dominance of big corporations. There are so many tentacles of corporate entities that strangle us and our wallets like a hydra.

Capitalism is starting to look like a scam, and so are our financial institutions. Never mind that these same institutions brought the world economy to a grinding halt because of their avarice, and the world has yet to fully recover. Dutch economist Servaas Storm's paper "Lost in Deflation: Why Italy's Woes Are a Warning to the Whole Eurozone" in the *International Journal of Political Economy* notes that we live in an age of angst and anger. The reasons for this are a culmination of "three decades of a market-driven political and economic system culminated in crisis, toxic inequalities, real wage stagnation, and heightened job insecurity." These are the roots of populism. (John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* also exposes this conclusion.)

While real wages stagnate, bankers and shareholders are getting rich by doing worse things than would land the average person in prison for life.

As the *Financial Times* reported, "TD Bank has agreed to pay the U.S. government just over \$3bn to settle charges that it failed to block criminal organizations from using the Canadian lender to launder hundreds of millions of dollars through its accounts."

Continued on page 10

Comment

The Bloc, Ballantyne, and the new Official Languages Act

The new legislation deliberately avoids providing the same boost for English speakers in Quebec as it does for francophones in the rest of Canada.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Official Languages Commissioner Raymond Th  berge released his latest report on official language minority communities on Oct. 9. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Th  berge recognizes that due to discriminatory legislation like Bill 96—the changes to Quebec’s Charter of the French Language—“[f]or several years now, the English-speaking minority in Quebec has been facing challenges that are threatening its vitality.” Then comes the kicker about its legitimacy: “There seems to be confusion between the majority status of the English language in Canada and the minority status of the English-speaking communities in Quebec.”

This “confusion” can be linked to the new Official Languages Act, Bill C-13, which incorporates Bill 96 and serves to strengthen French-language communities in the rest of the country through incentives, including greater francophone immigration outside Quebec.

While I support this as a long-time advocate for francophone minorities, the new legislation

deliberately avoids providing the same boost for English speakers in Quebec. The fundamental reason for this was the barrage of bigotry at the House Official Languages Committee from MPs from the Bloc Qu  b  cois and the Conservative Party. They refused to recognize English-speaking Quebecers as a minority, repeatedly citing the “Ballantyne” case at the United Nations back in 1993.

Ballantyne involved three merchants in rural Sutton and Huntingdon, Que.: John Ballantyne, Elizabeth Davidson, and Gordon McIntyre. They challenged Bill 178, the 1988 law prohibiting the use of English on signs using the Constitution’s notwithstanding clause. As the Supreme Court had already ruled on the signs law, their last recourse was to go to the UN Human Rights Committee. In 1993, the case was declared a violation

of the International Covenant on Human Rights, focusing on the law’s absolute ban on the use of English in signage.

The embarrassment of losing at the UN prompted the government of then-premier Robert Bourassa to forego renewing the notwithstanding clause, and allow English on signage, albeit in smaller lettering.

There were two other questions that didn’t attract as much attention at the time, including whether the anglophone community was a minority, according to the UN. The committee ruled French-speaking Canadians are a minority within Canada, as it is the UN member-state. Quebec is a “subnational state,” so Anglos don’t qualify. However, five members of the body dissented, saying this should not be the sole criteria for discrimination.

Since 1993, we have seen discrimination turn to violence against minorities in Rwanda, Burundi, the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Indonesia, East Timor, and Fiji. At the World Conference Against Racism in 2001, the organizers wrote of these conflicts: “It is tragedies like these that compel the international community to encourage a dialogue between minorities and governments within all societies.” That means all minorities.

Last year, Fernand de Varrennes, the UN special rapporteur on minority issues, reported the international community has not focused on “ensuring equal

protection of the human rights of marginalized minorities,” adding “most of these are internal conflicts, and involve ethnic, religious or linguistic grievances.”

The Bloc Qu  b  cois’ official languages critic Mario Beaulieu failed to mention the evolution of international policy since *Ballantyne*, and no one on the committee contradicted him. This was the rationale for rejecting the symmetry of linguistic minorities, the hallmark of Canadian language policy since 1969.

The Conservative Party—whose committee members include my Montmagny-L’Islet-Kamouraska-Rivi  re-du-Loup, Que., MP Bernard G  n  reux—echoed the Bloc. He told me it was in his party’s interest to support them. That aggravates anglophones who are currently questioning their loyalty to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Given the opportunity to steal some of the 20 anglophone ridings from the Liberals, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre is foolhardy to side with the Bloc.

Meanwhile, in his report, Th  berge wrote: “I am aware of the [English-speaking] communities’ concerns about certain elements of the modernized Act, and I will continue to closely monitor its implementation.”

The chickens have now come home to roost. It is time the fabrications of the Bloc and the Conservatives were revealed, and made part of the broader debate on linguistic minorities.

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

The Hill Times

Want to find the real boogeymen? Look to the banks

Continued from page 9

Please note that “settle charges” means they pleaded guilty “and agreed to pay over \$1.8 billion in penalties to resolve the Justice Department’s (DOJ) investigation into violations of the Bank Secrecy Act and money laundering.”

I wonder how many people they were harassing for a missed loan or credit card payment in the middle of an affordability crisis? Moreover, these cretins of capitalism made Toronto-Dominion “the bank of choice for multiple money laundering organizations and criminal actors and processed hundreds of millions of dollars in money laundering transactions.” We’re talking drug traffickers, international jewel schemers, and people in New Jersey dumping piles of cash into their bank accounts without the bank report-



Toronto-Dominion Bank has been ordered to pay a US\$3.09-billion fine for violating the United States’ Bank Secrecy Act, and money laundering. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

ing it (the limit is \$10,000, after which the cash deposits must be reported to authorities as part of the Federal Bank Secrecy Act).

Jersey? Cash? Crooked bank? We’re watching *Narcos: Canada* play out before our very eyes.

(Also, has no one seen *The Sopranos*?). Please note that TD Bank made its earnings look larger—as

well as it deposits—than they actually were, reflected in the share price. And just as with the Great Recession, these bankers get away with having to pay a fine, and walking away from any criminal charges.

In 2012, the *New York Times* reported that HSBC “had agreed to a record \$1.92-billion settle-

ment with authorities. The bank, which is based in Britain, faces accusations that it transferred billions of dollars for nations like Iran, and enabled Mexican drug cartels to move money illegally through its American subsidiaries.” Prosecutors declined to charge bank executives with money laundering because it “would essentially be a death sentence for the bank. Such actions could cut off the bank from certain investors like pension funds and ultimately cost it its charter to operate in the United States.”

This corruption was systematic; the DOJ asserts that TD “starved its compliance program of the resources needed to obey the law.” The DOJ filing only captures from 2014 to 2022.

Here’s what I fail to understand: how did the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Insti-

tutions, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, and the Department of Finance miss this? Why is it the Americans who had to show us that corruption exists in this Canadian banking behemoth?

What will the Liberal government do? Will they demand a parliamentary investigation of TD and its practices?

Before you say that treating the banks harshly by prosecuting them would bring about devastating consequences for the global economy, know that what you’re really saying is that we have to accept money laundering—and the underwriting of criminal enterprises—as par for the course in global banking. It also means that the law will continue to disproportionately imprison people of colour for drug trafficking, while the banks that make drug trafficking blossom go scot-free. How’s that for the war on drugs?

The boogeyman in the closet is not the guy who attempts to sell your kids drugs, the boogeyman is the bank that provides you with your home loan.

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the Bad+Bitchy podcast.

The Hill Times

Real estate nation: Canada's biggest business sector scores low in the all-important area of economic productivity

Investment in housing takes away from money in other sectors, undercutting the country's ability to devote funds to the kinds of spending crucial to Canada's future prosperity.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—Most people are surprised to learn that this country's biggest economic sector is not oil and gas or manufacturing, but real estate.

Real estate contributes more than 20 per cent of Canada's GDP, leaving manufacturing, oil and gas, and finance and insurance far behind. In addition, in the five years before 2022, Canadians' investment in dwellings as a percentage of total gross fixed capital formation was more than 40 per cent higher than in other G7 countries.

But the economic importance of real estate is not all that surprising. To begin with, Canadians value owning a home as a highly important measure of success. Having a deed is a mark of accomplishment, economic security, and family well-being, as well as protection against getting evicted. There is also the huge government incentive for home-owning in the form of the 100 per cent capital gains exemption on the sale of a primary residence, which generally makes buying a residence the most attractive investment available to most people. Since 2010, homeowners' real estate assets—excluding the value of mortgages—have grown four times faster than life insurance and pension savings, according to RBC.

Home prices have been rising for the past half century. But they have accelerated dramatically since 2005. Over the past two decades, home prices have risen 375 per cent across Canada, and by more in sizzling markets such as Toronto (450 per cent), and Vancouver (490 per cent). The causes include population increases from immigration, lack of other reliable investment opportunities, over-exuberant homebuyers, historically low interest rates, and urbanization, with about 60 per cent of the country's population residing within a 200-kilometre radius of five metropolitan areas.

Added to that is the failure of the building industry to keep up with rising demand. Construction has been systematically slowed at the provincial and city level by building codes, permitting and licensing requirements, and zoning preferences.

The resulting supply shortage has put buying a house beyond the reach of mil-



The overemphasis on housing is an important factor in what is perhaps Canada's most pressing economic problem: declining economic productivity, writes Les Whittington. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

lions of Canadians. In terms of affordability, in the past 20 years, average earnings have climbed 74 per cent, while average home prices have shot up by 227 per cent. In 2003, the average home price was about 5.8 times the average Canadian's earnings, according to research by NerdWallet. By 2023, it was 10.8 times.

As a result, approximately one in six homes owned by their occupants in Canada were found to be unaffordable in the most recent census, meaning they eat up

more than 30 per cent of pre-tax household income, Statistics Canada said.

This overemphasis on housing is an important factor in what is perhaps Canada's most pressing economic problem: declining economic productivity, a prosperity-sapping trend the Bank of Canada has called "an emergency."

Part of the problem is the construction industry itself. Composed overwhelmingly of small companies, it has been hampered—among other things—by rising

costs, supply chain issues, and labour shortages, and is unusually inefficient. In the wider scope, investment in housing takes away from money in other sectors, undercutting the country's ability to devote funds to the kinds of spending crucial to Canada's economic productivity and future prosperity. Since 2000, investment in residential housing has nearly doubled as a percentage of total domestic investment, while funds devoted to crucial productivity-improving areas such as IT equipment and software, for instance, have dropped by nearly a one-third.

"Canada clearly does need more investment in residential housing, but policies need to be put in place to encourage more domestic savings to finance increased business investment as well," economist Steven Globerman, author of a Fraser Institute report, told the *Financial Post*. The worry is "that the increased demand for financial capital to finance new residential housing will crowd out business borrowing for investments in things like R&D, AI, software, data centres, etc.," he said.

Not only is Canadians' fixation with housing hurting productivity, it is a significant contributor to opportunity imbalances in society. "Wealth inequality is a story of housing inequality," TD Bank economists state in a 2022 study. They say that, even up to the mid-2010s, the benefits of rising home costs were as a result of better affordability accruing to a much broader range of households on the wealth spectrum than today.

"That thread of the narrative is now fraying, as rapid home price gains have limited accessibility to either high-income households, investors, repeat buyers, or those who benefit from pre-existing family wealth," the report notes. Focusing on homeowners born between 1955 and 1964, TD calculates that the average net worth of homeowners by 2019 was \$1.4-million, which was \$1.2-million more than the average non-homeowner. Back in 2005, this gap was just \$498,600, highlighting the wealth-generating advantage for Canadians posed by real estate.

"It's too simplistic to define Canada's wealth inequality as one of rich versus poor," the bank's economists conclude. "Over time, it has proven to be one of homeowner versus non-homeowner."

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times

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ROSALIE SILBERMAN ABELLA
retired justice of the Supreme Court of Canada

News

‘Complete apathy’ clouds feds’ pursuit of family reunification plan, say Sudanese Canadians

As Sudanese Canadians wait for family members to be approved to come to Canada, concern mounts that delays will be fatal for those stuck in a war zone.

This article is the second in a series exploring delays in Canada’s family reunification regime put in place after the onset of the Sudan civil war.

Continued from page 1

applications for family members to come to Canada say they have been met with “apathy” and a lack of urgency.

Eight months after the launch of the program to bring family members affected by the Sudanese civil war to Canada, initial hope has been replaced with frustration and anger as no applications have yet been approved.

Applications for the program have been shuttered since this past spring when it reached its cap of 3,250 applications, which a spokesperson for the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada said accounts for 7,300 people who were living in Sudan at the onset of the civil war.

Those seeking approval must be sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. After being processed—which includes going through medical and security screening—the federal government will grant a visa or a single-use travel document if the applicant doesn’t have a passport. Approved applicants will also be given confirmation of being a permanent resident.

“The main thing I can deduce is complete apathy towards Sudanese refugees who are dying while awaiting this program,” said a source involved in the Sudanese Canadian community who is familiar with engagement efforts with the federal government, speaking on a not-for-attribution basis.

“There is no sense of urgency and there is just apathy to it,” the source said.

They recounted one meeting that included Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie–Le Sud-Ouest–Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) where a family member broke down in tears as Miller said that it may take into 2026 for applications to be processed.

“That person told him that was going to mean her father would

inevitably pass away in the war,” the source said. “Despite that, the minister still couldn’t promise to expedite the processing of applications.”

Miller said publicly in March that arrival of family members from Sudan would occur in late 2024 and into 2025, but information shared by MPs with applicants show a much longer timeline, with processing not completed until 2027 and 2028.

While the global collective attention is focused on conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, the civil war in Sudan—which first broke out in April 2023—has produced the worst ongoing refugee crisis in the world, with more than 10 million people displaced, and 20,000 killed.

A report from a United Nations fact-finding mission released in September found that both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the rebel Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were behind “large-scale violations, including indiscriminate and direct attacks carried out through airstrikes and shelling against civilians, schools, hospitals, communication networks and vital water and electricity supplies.”

As Canada’s family reunification program for Sudan was being developed in the months after the outbreak of war, the Sudanese community was told that the delay in announcing a program was due to the government’s wish to add more slots to the program. But when it was announced in November 2023, those extra spaces didn’t materialize.

“We repeatedly mentioned to the government the urgency of this program and how we desperately need this program launched and expedited, and that we have not seen at all,” the source said.

“There’s a lack of pressure on [the government] as this is a forgotten conflict,” the source remarked. “Due to their own implicit biases, they might not empathize as much. These are Black Muslim refugees. They are not people that look like the minister, and most of the people who work with him.”



The family of Hala Sharaf’s brother-in-law, Ashraf Fageeri, second from left, has faced a daunting journey to escape the Sudanese civil war. Photograph courtesy of Hala Sharaf

Conservative MP Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, Alta.), who has been forwarding case files from people in his riding, said the program hasn’t been moving fast enough.

He said security checks have been taking a long time as there is a backlog in processing in Canada’s African high commissions in Kenya, Ghana, and Tanzania.

McLean said the current wait is a long one, especially for those in refugee camps.

“So, we’d like to see that expedited,” he said. “It seems like it is taking a lot longer than it should.”

“So many international watch groups declare this to be the No. 1 humanitarian issue in the world right now. Trying to find a solution to the war is tantamount to getting this solved as well. But in the meantime, it is a horrific situation for Sudanese people who are looking to live in some kind of stability,” McLean said.

In May 2023, McLean sponsored a petition that called to “fast track” immigration for Sudanese people who wish to come to Canada, especially those who are related to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

McLean said the government’s shifting rhetoric on immigration has led to a decrease in flexibility to bring in refugees from Sudan.

“[That] is unfortunate because they are in the middle of a civil war,” he said. “This is a dire human catastrophe happening in the heart of Africa that we’re trying to

be more involved in, yet other things are obviously occupying a lot of space right now.”

An IRCC spokesperson told *The Hill Times* last month that Canada continues to “prioritize” applications.

‘They just don’t care about Sudanese’

For those fleeing the violence and despair brought by the war, the trip out of the war-torn Northeast African nation has been fraught with danger.

Back in Canada, the wait for applications to be processed by IRCC is a labo-

rious endeavour for those with family members in the queue.

Hala Sharaf has been trying to bring 22 of her and her husband’s family members to Canada. All applications for their relatives were submitted before the resettlement program reached its cap.

Ashraf Fageeri, Sharaf’s brother-in-law, was well-established in Sudan’s financial sector before the onset of the war, but after relocating to different cities in Sudan, he and his family had to flee the country in January as the RSF was increasingly gaining more ground.

Fageeri and his family crossed the border to relocate to Egypt as they tried to connect with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) to gain legal status to stay. The Egyptian government had announced that it would deport anyone who was without legal status to remain.

Earlier this year, the family secured an August appointment with the UNCHR. But in July, Fageeri went to pick up food, and never returned.

“For seven days, his kids, wife, and other family members didn’t know where he was [and] what happened to him,” Sharaf said. “What happened was he was detained by the Egyptian forces, then he was deported to the Sudanese border.”

Back in Sudan, Fageeri was desperate to return to Egypt in time to make his family’s appointment with the UNCHR.

According to Sharaf, Fageeri was able to find a truck driver who would take him across the border. As the truck quickly travelled quickly north on a sandy road, he fell off, but tried to keep hold of the vehicle. In doing so, four of his fingers were torn from his right hand.

Fageeri was taken back to Port Sudan where he was admitted to the hospital.

Sharaf said Sudanese are suffering more than anyone is acknowledging. She said the Canadian government needs to keep its promise and process applications for Sudanese refugees to join their families in Canada.

“You have asked some people to meet difficult timelines in a difficult time, and they have made it. So keep your promise,” she said. “Let us feel valued as Canadians. Let us feel that you are treating us equally as other people—this is what I’m expecting from the Canadian government.”

Sharaf said there is no rationale for how long it has taken to process applications.

“I couldn’t find [any reason] other than they just don’t care about Sudanese. They are just ignoring them,” she said. “I couldn’t find any other reason than being discriminated [against], being from Africa, having Black skin. I couldn’t find anything—nothing.”

Sharaf said the process has become an extreme financial and mental strain on her family.

“It’s too much. I’ve been using my line of credit, my credit cards, my incomes. I’ve had to list my house that I recently purchased like two years ago,” she said, as the cost of living in Canada coupled with supporting families fleeing the civil war abroad has contributed to immense stress.

“I wasn’t in Sudan when the war started. I haven’t heard any shooting or anything like that. But still every night I am having nightmares,” she said.

Other members of Sharaf’s family have faced daunting and expensive journeys to escape Sudan. Sharaf’s father, Sharafeldin Mohammed, was kicked out of his apartment in Khartoum by RSF militants who took his phone and car.

He was stuck in Khartoum for two months with very little food and medication, and developed malaria and dengue fever.

Sharaf said it cost thousands of dollars to convince someone to drive her father less than 150 kilometres to Al-Hasaheisa, passing through RSF checkpoints along the way, which required payment. Mohammed was eventually admitted to hospital, and later was able to get a visa for travel to the United Arab Emirates.

But while there under the emergency visa, Sharaf’s family members are unable to work or study, and do not have medical insurance.

“If anything happens, we have to support them financially, and it’s extremely expensive,” Sharaf said. “The UAE government could make any kind of decision not to renew that kind of visa, so it’s something temporary.”

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NDP and Bloc need to overcome 'fear' of Conservatives to break Commons paralysis, says Liberal House Leader Gould

As some look for a way forward in Parliament, it's 'preposterous' to say the NDP aren't standing up to the Tories, says NDP House Leader Peter Julian.

Continued from page 1

priorities in what time the current Parliament has left.

However, while some have suggested that the remedy for a dysfunctional Parliament is either prorogation or dissolution and a new election, cabinet members like Gould and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) have been emphatic that neither option is currently being considered.

This was prior to reports a few days later of Liberal MPs organizing in a new effort to push Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) to step down.

In 2021, Trudeau cited the toxicity of the minority 43rd Parliament as a reason to call an election, but Gould argued that the current dysfunction hasn't reached the same levels as it had that spring.

"Things were pretty bad in 2021 ... there weren't even conversations happening," Gould explained, adding that "conversations are still ongoing" with the opposition parties despite the current roadblock.

As for the current privilege debate over the Conservatives' demand that government documents related to the now-defunct Sustainable Development Technologies Canada (SDTC) be handed over to the RCMP, Gould lays the lion's share of the blame at the feet of the official opposition.

Earlier this year, the auditor general found that SDTC leadership had broken conflict of interest rules, and made "significant lapses" in managing its government funding.

The Speaker's September ruling on the question of privilege found that all requested documents have yet to be handed over, but highlighted that the RCMP and the auditor general have expressed concerns about them being provided to the Mounties through Parliament. Instead, the ruling suggests the matter should be referred to the Procedure and House Affairs



Government House Leader Karina Gould, right, says the NDP and Bloc should take the opportunity to 'act like adults' to stop the 'terrible precedent' she says the Conservatives are hoping to set. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Committee before the House determines how to proceed.

Speaking with reporters following his testimony at the Foreign Interference Inquiry on Oct. 4, RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme said the Mounties received some of the documents in question in August.

During Question Period on Oct. 7, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) said the Liberals' refusal to hand over the documents to the RCMP had "paralyzed Parliament." But Gould said the Conservatives "are the only party mucking things up" by introducing amendments and sub-amendments to their motion to further prolong the debate.

When asked why his party won't agree to refer the issue to the committee and allow the House to proceed with other business, including the next opposition day and resulting non-confidence motion, Poilievre said he isn't going to allow Liberal "corruption" to be "swept under the rug so [Trudeau] can get on with his day."

"It's been months now since the auditor general revealed a \$400-million spending scandal involving 186 instances of conflict of interest," Poilievre told reporters on Oct. 8. "We say: let's end this now, let's get Parliament back to work by handing over the documents to the police."

However, Gould said she believes the Bloc and NDP "have an opportunity to act as adults."

"This is about one political party trying to abuse the parliamentary privilege that they have to compromise police independence, and use their extraordinary power to pursue their partisan political vendetta," Gould said, adding that it seems the Bloc and NDP "are more afraid of the Conservatives than they are willing to stand up for the rights of Canadians and the protection of our democracy."

NDP House Leader Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) countered that it is the Liberals who are failing to "act like adults," and that their current behaviour is far more similar to the Conservatives.

"Parliament has the right to request documents, and Parliament should be obeyed," Julian told *The Hill Times*. "[Former prime minister Stephen] Harper tried to get around that, and now the Liberals seem to be doing the same thing; that's not the action of an adult, it just shows disrespect for democracy."

Julian said he finds the accusation that the NDP is "scared" of the Conservatives "intriguing" given their comparable track record against the Tories in recent provincial elections and federal byelections.

"Toronto-St. Paul's is a good example that the Liberals are the ones scared of the Conservatives," Julian said, referring to the June 24 byelection that saw the Grits lose a seat they'd held for 30 years to the Tories. "The NDP has been the party standing up to them last year in Manitoba, in Elmwood-Transcona, and we're doing it now in British Columbia."

Gould told *The Hill Times* that the Bloc and NDP should have a "bigger stake" in supporting the Speaker's ruling rather than attempting to "wash their hands" of their responsibility.

"By effectively washing their hands of it, they are complicit in the Conservatives' political vendetta, [which] should be alarming to all Canadians," Gould added. "I would hope that the NDP and the Bloc have the courage of their convictions to do the right thing, as opposed to the fear that they so clearly have for the Conservative Party."

"I have enormous respect for [Gould], but it's a bit preposterous to say the NDP is not standing up to Conservatives when we've done it successfully for the past

two years while Liberals have been too weak to stand on their own," Julian said.

As for whether she is confident at least one of those parties will be able to overcome their "fear" to help dispense with the current privilege debate—and the next one Conservative MP Michael Barrett (Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ont.) has waiting in the wings—as well as achieve any of the government's remaining priorities like the capital gains tax reform, the online harms legislation, or the fall economic statement, Gould said it's all simply par for the course in the "rough-and-tumble" reality of a minority Parliament.

When asked whether her government may need to begin playing a little rougher—by relying more on the sticks at its disposal than the carrots the Bloc and NDP are likely to continue demanding—to strike some fear of its own into the opposition and get the House back to work, Gould simply said, "wait and see."

Fallout from the 'nuclear option' of prorogation may be less than expected: Andrew Perez

Liberal strategist Andrew Perez said he believes that while the government has said it isn't considering prorogation, it can't afford to discount anything in its current toolkit given that it seems to have only "bad options" at its disposal.

On Sept. 6, Perez suggested that the Liberals should consider prorogation following the dissolution of the Liberal-NDP confidence-and-supply agreement. At the time, he argued that the Liberals could use the time to hold a leadership contest in the hypothetical scenario in which Trudeau does decide to step down before the election. Absent that departure, Perez said he believes prorogation should remain the "nuclear option," but that it may not be as risky as many people believed when he first broached the subject.

The move would undoubtedly reaffirm Conservatives' belief in the need to defeat the current government, but for the remaining voters, Perez said he isn't sure it would backfire as severely as many suggest.

While prorogation could simply start the countdown to the next election, with the government potentially being defeated in the first confidence vote following the

required Throne Speech upon Parliament's return, it's not a certainty.

"That assumes the Liberals can't find one party to support them," Perez said.

While there is "virtually no political upside" for the NDP to continue supporting the government, the Liberals' downfall could be even more politically costly for the NDP, Perez explained.

"This government's existence will be in the NDP's hands, but [the NDP] could lose half its caucus in the next election," he said. "Is that really a decision they want to make?"

Despite being between a "rock and a hard place" on that decision, it isn't dissimilar to the one then-NDP leader Jack Layton made in 2005 during the tenure of then-Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, Perez added.

Perez said some of his fellow Liberals still haven't forgiven Layton for the slight of walking away from similar big-ticket progressive items like national childcare and the Kelowna Accord, and it will be interesting to see how much further the Liberals are willing to go with any of the NDP or Bloc's current or future demands.

NDP political strategist Jordan Lechnitz, former deputy chief of staff to then-NDP leader Tom Mulcair, said that "the ball is in the [Liberals'] court" when it comes to whether or not the NDP will continue to support the government in the next confidence vote.

"The NDP's calculus will depend on whether they think they can get more wins on tangible issues," Lechnitz said, explaining that the NDP may want to accelerate or expand the wins already secured on things like dental care and pharmacare.

Lechnitz said the NDP's willingness to support the Liberals through any future confidence measures would be directly tied to the Liberal's willingness to negotiate.

As for whether the NDP should be doing more to help the Liberals end the current deadlock in Parliament in order to better focus on those issues, Lechnitz noted that the party had already been shielding the government for the past two years through the supply-and-confidence agreement.

"This is just the most significant example of what has changed with the end of the agreement," Lechnitz said, noting that the deal had contained specific provisions for the NDP to help maintain the regular functioning of the House and committees.

"The result is a weakened government with its attention more divided than ever," she said, adding that while the Liberals may try to blame everyone else, the longer the impasse holds, the less effective and less competent Canadians view the government.

"They're not talking about things they want to be talking about, and the more they're sucked into this whole morass, the less they can focus on representing themselves, their leader, [and] their message to Canadians," Lechnitz said. "These day-to-day fights in the House may be low stakes for the moment, but the longer they get pulled into them, the more catastrophic any error can become."

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News

‘Enough is enough’: nervous Liberal MPs push for Trudeau’s exit before the next election

As some in the Liberal caucus organize a call for the prime minister’s resignation, a number of former Liberal MPs, cabinet ministers, and prominent party members are also expected to ask Justin Trudeau to step down in the coming weeks, say Liberal sources.



A significant number of Liberal MPs have been holding private meetings and strategizing on calling for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s resignation as Liberal Party leader. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

step down, according to multiple Liberal MPs sources.

Those quiet efforts spilled into public following reports of a pledge some have signed to solidify their resolve to stand united should Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) resist that call. More than 20 MPs have put their name to the agreement, sources told *The Hill Times*.

“At the end of the day, this is out already, and this is extremely damaging,” said one Liberal MP who is directly involved in behind-the-scenes conversations calling on Trudeau to resign.

In the wake of two byelection losses in historically-safe Liberal seats—Toronto–St. Paul’s, Ont., in June, and LaSalle–Émard–Verdun, Que., in September—and continued polls projecting Conserva-

tives in a double-digit lead, the MP said more in the caucus are willing to stand against Trudeau, or speak about the prospect of a new leader.

“That’s really the PM’s call now, and [the PMO] better be processing that because this is not a good situation for them.”

The Prime Minister’s Office declined a comment for this article.

Liberal sources told *The Hill Times* that the pledge is a commitment to stand united if, and likely when, the PMO pushes back against those calling for Trudeau’s resignation. According to the sources, more are expected to sign the agreement by Tuesday as more MPs have shown interest in being part of this group, an effort that was first reported by the CBC and the *Toronto Star*. All the sources spoke to *The Hill Times* on a not-for-attribution basis due to the sensitive nature of caucus discussions.

No MP who signed the document was given a copy or allowed to take a picture of it. According to Liberal sources, the MPs who signed the document have also considered the possibility that Trudeau may ignore their demand, potentially leading to internal party conflict—a scenario for which they are prepared.

“Is that [MPs speaking up] good for [Trudeau] or the party? No. The best thing for him is to make his transition immediately,” said the MP. “If he doesn’t, it’s going to be a cold war, so to speak, and he will not end up in a good situation even if he survives it.”

Tensions have escalated in regional caucus meetings since the June byelection loss, and a failed attempt by some MPs to call a national caucus meeting over the summer. During Parliament’s first week back in September, the

Quebec regional caucus was particularly heated, held days after the Montreal byelection, which was the same week then-minister and Quebec lieutenant Pablo Rodriguez’s (Honoré-Mercier, Que.) announced his resignation from cabinet and caucus.

Because Trudeau doesn’t attend the regional caucus meetings, MPs have been more willing to air their frustrations. While Trudeau’s staff are typically present, last week the Atlantic caucus asked the PMO representative to leave, said one source.

The regional meetings take place just before the national caucus meetings, held every Wednesday morning when the House is in session. During each national caucus meeting, the regional and issues-based caucus chairs provide brief reports on the key discussions and pressing issues raised by their members.

At the national caucus meeting on Oct. 2, Yukon MP Brendan Hanley, chair of the rural caucus, told colleagues that his caucus had an “honest conversation” and believed it was time to discuss party leadership and future direction “in this room,” according to a Liberal source. Hanley did not respond to interview requests from *The Hill Times*. Although Trudeau was in the room when Hanley made this remark, no further discussion occurred.

The next week, at the Oct. 9 national meeting, Kody Blois (Kings-Hants, N.S.) expressed a similar sentiment. As chair of the Atlantic caucus, Blois shared to the national group his caucus had a “difficult, frank, and open conversation” about the future of the party, as first reported by *Toronto Star*. Initially, Blois spoke in a “meek” tone, recounted one MP, but repeated his statement louder after colleagues said they

couldn’t hear him. Trudeau was not present at the caucus meeting because he was attending the ASEAN summit in Laos.

And, during last week’s women’s caucus meeting, MPs engaged in a “very animated” discussion about the party’s declining popularity and emphasized the need for a leadership conversation ahead of the next election.

Following the loss of the Toronto byelection in June, nine Liberal MPs signed and sent a letter the national caucus chair requesting a special in-person caucus meeting, but the leadership declined the request. At the time, one of the signatories—Liberal MP Wayne Long (Saint John-Rothesay, N.B.)—called on the prime minister to step down.

Following that failed effort, Trudeau personally called nearly all MPs in the caucus, one by one, to hear their concerns. Some politely suggested it might be time for him to step down. The situation worsened at the start of the current parliamentary sitting, after Trudeau’s hand-picked Montreal candidate lost the byelection for the seat held by a former Liberal cabinet minister.

Since last year, the Liberals have been trailing the Conservatives by double-digit margins in the national polls. Some polls have put them in third place behind the NDP. If these trends continue, some seat projections suggest that Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) could secure a supermajority with more than 200 seats, while the Liberals could fall to fourth place, even behind the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. Jeremy Broadhurst, the Liberal Party’s national campaign director, resigned in early September. The Liberals announced on Oct. 13 that long-time senior staffer Andrew Bevan would succeed Broadhurst, with

PMO deputy chief of staff Marjorie Michel serving as his deputy. A second MP said the party has to “return to the drawing board” given these numbers.

“Canadians are asking for a change and we have to offer that change,” said a second MP.

“The party has demonstrated quite a bit of discipline, [and] extended a lot of respect to the prime minister. That’s in public. But in private, the discussions that are taking place are very, very different,” said the MP.

“On several occasions, in smaller gatherings, MPs have told Trudeau directly that ‘prime minister, we think it’s time [to go].’”

In interviews with *The Hill Times*, dissenting Liberal MPs, as well as current and former senior Liberals, emphasized their efforts to oust Trudeau are not personal, and they have real respect for the prime minister. They said their decision to speak out is motivated by a desire to minimize electoral losses, and protect the party from a potential electoral disaster in the next election.

“Enough is enough. It’s not coming from a bad place,” said the first MP. “The vast majority of MPs are well-intentioned and thinking about the future of the party, and the well-being of the party and the country,” said the MP. “It’s not about anything else.”

A Liberal source noted most Liberal insiders and veterans are also of the view that they need a new leader.

“Every single person. That’s the problem,” said the MP. “It doesn’t matter who it is, you can bump into a Liberal on the street who’s been there for 40 years, and he’s telling you the same thing.”

One Liberal source described the gist of the document that some MPs signed.

“We love you [Trudeau] but you need to go,” the source said. “These MPs are not just signing the document, they are going all the way.”

The source said that in addition to the pledge, other backup plans are in place. These include public calls from former Liberal MPs, cabinet ministers, and other current and former prominent Liberals, urging the prime minister to step down.

Ideally, sources said, after the recent media coverage over the past two days, Trudeau would choose to step down voluntarily. However, if MPs can gather a “critical mass” of signatures, then a couple of MPs could approach the prime minister directly to convey the caucus’ collective will for him to resign.

Meanwhile, International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.) told reporters on Oct. 11 on her way back from the ASEAN summit that she was surprised that her colleagues want Trudeau to step down.

“I would say that I’m disappointed because Canadians expect us to be focusing on Canadians, and doing this work,” Ng told reporters. “I think that the conversations that we have in caucus remain in caucus.”

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Pablo Rodriguez resigned as transport minister and Quebec lieutenant on Sept. 18 to sit as an Independent as he pursues the Quebec provincial Liberal leadership. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Laura Ryckewaert
Hill Climbers

Ministers Champagne, Petitpas Taylor name new directors

Plus, Housing and Infrastructure Minister Sean Fraser has promoted a new deputy policy director in his office.

Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister **François-Philippe Champagne** recently recruited **Sean O'Neill** to take over as his new director of parliamentary affairs and issues management following **Thi Tran's** departure.

Tran left Champagne's office as of Sept. 20 after almost three years on the job, and has already started a new role as chief public affairs adviser with the National Bank of Canada in Montreal.



Thi Tran is now working for the National Bank of Canada. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

First hired to the innovation office on the heels of the 2021 federal election, Tran was previously director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to then-transport minister **Omar Alghabra**.

A former research and administrative assistant with the Indian Residential School Adjudication Secretariat in Vancouver, Tran had been working on the Hill since 2017, with her first full-time job as an assistant in Foreign Affairs Minister **Mélanie Joly's** office as the MP for Ahuntsic-Cartierville, Que. Tran's first ministerial gig came in 2018 when she briefly joined then-Crown-Indigenous relations minister **Carolyn Bennett's** office as a caucus liaison and special assistant for parliamentary affairs. She went on to work as an issues manager and communications assistant to **Jonathan Wilkinson** as then-fisheries and oceans minister, and as an issues management and parliamentary affairs adviser in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** office.

O'Neill marked his first day on the job on Oct. 1, and comes straight from International Trade Minister **Mary Ng's** office where he'd been director of parliamentary affairs since November 2023. Before then, he'd spent a little more than a year as a parliamentary affairs and issues management adviser in the PMO.



Sean O'Neill is now director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Minister Champagne. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left, has a new director of parliamentary affairs and issues management, while Veterans Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor has promoted a new director of operations. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

O'Neill brings some familiarity with the innovation portfolio, having previously worked as a special assistant for parliamentary affairs and issues manager under then-minister **Navdeep Bains** in early 2020. After Champagne took over the file following the 2021 election, O'Neill was promoted to "senior" status. On the Hill, he's also worked as an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Ali Ehsassi**, and as a special assistant with the Liberal research bureau.

Policy adviser **Shristi Radhakrishnan** bade farewell to Champagne and Co. in early September, shortly after Quebec regional affairs adviser **William Messier** likewise left the innovation team in late August.

A former assistant to Ontario Liberal MPs **Majid Jowhari** and **Chandra Arya**, Radhakrishnan had been working for the innovation minister since March 2021, beginning as executive assistant to Champagne. The next year, she was promoted to senior special assistant for operations, and took on her most recent title last year.

Messier had been working for Champagne for close to a year, starting in November 2023 after almost two years as an assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Fayçal El-Khoury**. He's now returned to El-Khoury's Hill office.

Malia Chenaoui has since been hired to replace both Radhakrishnan and Messier, taking on the title of senior policy and Quebec regional affairs adviser.

Chenaoui comes from National Defence Minister **Bill Blair's** office where she'd been a policy adviser. She first joined the defence office as a Quebec regional affairs adviser to then-minister **Anita Anand** in August 2022, and was promoted to her most recent role last year. Chenaoui is also a former assistant to Tourism Minister **Soraya Martinez Ferrada** as the MP for Hochelaga, Que., and to Quebec Liberal MP **Peter Schiefke**.

Bronwen Jervis is director of policy to Champagne, whose office is run by chief of staff **Ian Foucher**.

Veterans Affairs Minister **Ginette Petitpas Taylor** is another minister who's welcomed a new director to her team: back in July, **Danielle Boyle** took over as director of operations, filling in for **Katherine O'Halloran**, who is now on maternity leave.

A former Atlantic regional affairs adviser in the PMO, O'Halloran first began working for Petitpas Taylor after the 2021 federal election, beginning as director of operations in her office as then-minister for official languages and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA). O'Halloran went on leave in early 2023, and returned to work for Petitpas Taylor—

who had been shuffled into the veterans affairs portfolio during her absence—this past March. O'Halloran has been working in political offices on the Hill since 2012, beginning as an office manager and special assistant to then-interim Liberal leader **Bob Rae**. She's since also been a senior special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs to then-infrastructure minister **Amrjeet Sohi**, and national manager of the ministers' regional offices.



Katherine O'Halloran is on leave from her role as operations director to Minister Petitpas Taylor. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Boyle was previously manager of operations and executive assistant to Petitpas Taylor, who she's been working for since early 2022, starting as manager of economic development in Petitpas Taylor's office as then-official languages and ACOA minister. Boyle is also a past office manager and executive assistant to Blair as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister, and to Petitpas Taylor as then-health minister, and a former executive assistant to the chief of staff to then-health minister **Jane Philpott**.



Danielle Boyle has stepped in as director of operations to Minister Petitpas Taylor. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Petitpas Taylor also has two new members of her team: **Yasmin Veiga**, who started as a special assistant last month, and **Terri O'Neill**, who recently left Indigenous Services Minister **Patty Hajdu's** office to become senior executive assistant to the veterans affairs minister.

Veiga interned in Ontario Liberal MP **Iqwinder Gaheer's** office earlier this year, and is currently in her final year of working towards a bachelor's degree in public



Yasmin Veiga is a new face in Minister Petitpas Taylor's shop. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

administration and political science at the University of Ottawa.

Terri O'Neill comes fresh from Hajdu's office where she'd been working as the minister's executive assistant since July 2023. She's previously done the same for Rural Economic Development Minister **Gudie Hutchings**, and for **Bernadette Jordan** during her turns as both then-rural economic development minister and then-fisheries minister. Terri O'Neill is also a past assistant to then-Nova Scotia Liberal MP **Scott Brison**, and to then-government whip **Andrew Leslie**.

Guy Gallant is chief of staff to Petitpas Taylor.

Fraser promotes new deputy policy director

Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Minister **Sean Fraser** has named a new deputy director of policy for infrastructure in his office: **Matthew Paisley**.



Matthew Paisley, right, with Housing Minister Sean Fraser. Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn

Paisley had his first day in the deputy director's chair on Sept. 12, and was previously a senior policy adviser. He's been working for Fraser since the minister took over the immigration portfolio after the 2021 federal election; Paisley had been a policy adviser to then-immigration minister **Marco Mendicino** since early 2020, and was kept on after Fraser took charge of the file, later being promoted to "senior" status—a title he carried with him when he followed Fraser to the housing portfolio after the July 2023 cabinet shuffle. Paisley is also a former assistant to Mendicino as the MP for Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.

As reported by *Hill Climbers*, Fraser recently bade farewell to a different deputy policy director, **Micah Richardson**, who'd been focused on housing policy.

Kyle Fox is director of policy to the minister, while **Michael Kurliak** is a senior policy adviser, and **Joshua Mbandi** and **Lydia Houck** are policy advisers.

Meanwhile, **Giuliana Endrizzi** joined Fraser's team as a legislative adviser and parliamentary assistant in late August. She was most recently an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Chad Collins**, and before then was an aide to Ontario Liberal MP **Judy Sgro**.

Alexann Kropman is director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Fraser, whose office is run by chief of staff **Savannah DeWolfe**.

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Feature

Parliamentary Calendar

B.C. voters go to the polls to elect provincial government on Oct. 19



British Columbia voters will cast their ballots for provincial candidates—including those running for John Rustad's, left, BC Conservatives, David Eby's NDP, and Sonia Furstenau's Green Party—on Oct. 19. *Screenshot courtesy of CPAC*



WEDNESDAY, OCT. 16

House Not Sitting—The House 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.

Conservative Leader to Attend Fundraiser—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will attend a party fundraiser. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at 5 p.m. ET at the Québec Garrison Club, 97 rue Saint-Louis, Québec City. Details: conservative.ca/events.

An Evening with Minister Champagne—The Kitchener South—Hespeler Federal Liberal Association hosts a special evening for MP Valerie Bradford featuring special guest Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at 6:30 p.m. ET at Borealis Grille and Bar, 4336 King St. E., Kitchener, Ont. Details: liberal.ca.

Launch of Video Series Justice on Tap—Odyssey Showcase celebrates its 25th anniversary and the launch of its new video initiative: *Justice On Tap/Justice de cabaret*, a six-part anti-racism educational web series, which is part of a larger project, "Canada Speaks in Diverse Ways/Les voix du patrimoine/Aki Animitagozig." CTV News anchor Stefan Keyes will host, and Ottawa Deputy Mayor Rawlson King is the guest speaker. Wednesday, Oct. 16, at 7:30 p.m. ET at Ottawa Arts Court Theatre, 2 Daly Ave. Register via Eventbrite. Details: odysseyshowcase.org.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 16—FRIDAY, OCT. 18

Toronto Global Forum—Treasury Board President and Transport Minister Anita Anand, Business Council of Canada president Goldy Hyder, EDC president and CEO Mairead Lavery, Belgian Ambassador Patrick Van Gheel, and Ontario cabinet ministers Vic Fidele and Peter Bethlenfalvy are among the speakers on deck at this year's Toronto Global Forum. Wednesday, Oct. 16, to Friday, Oct. 18, at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: torontoglobalforum.com.

AFN Special Chiefs Assembly—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the Special Chiefs Assembly on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program. Wednesday, Oct. 16, to Friday, Oct. 18, at BMO Centre, 20 Round Up Way SE, Calgary. Details: afn.ca.

THURSDAY, OCT. 17

Fundraiser for MP Zahid—Liberal MP Salma Zahid hosts a fundraising event. Thursday, Oct. 17, at 6:30 p.m. ET at the Kennedy Convention Centre, 1199 Kennedy Rd., Scarborough, Ont. Details: liberal.ca.

Marc Garneau to Discuss His New Book—Former Liberal cabinet minister Marc Garneau will discuss his memoir, *A Most Extraordinary Ride: Space, Politics, and the Pursuit of a Canadian Dream*, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Thursday, Oct. 17, at 7 p.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details: writersfestival.org.

FRIDAY, OCT. 18

Women Leaders in Business and Security—The NATO Association of Canada hosts "Shaping Canada's Future: Women Leaders in Business and Security," a panel discussion on Canada's role in NATO, gender and leadership in defence and security, and the challenges and opportunities in the current geopolitical landscape. Participants include Lt.-Gen. Lise Bourgon, chief military personnel and commander Military Personnel Command; Kerry Buck, former Canadian ambassador to NATO; Stéphanie von Hlatky, political science professor at Queen's University; and Cara Salci, Thales' vice-president of strategy and government relations. Friday, Oct. 18, 6-9 p.m. ET, at 4 Queen Elizabeth Dr., Ottawa. Details via Eventbrite.

SATURDAY, OCT. 19

B.C. Election—Voters in British Columbia head to the polls today for the provincial general election.

MONDAY, OCT. 21

New Brunswick Election—It's general election time in New Brunswick, with the province's residents voting for their next members of the Legislative Assembly.

Panel: 'Innovative Pathways to Future-Ready Housing'—The Institute for Research in Public Policy hosts a panel discussion on "Innovative Pathways to Future-Ready Housing: Affordable, Energy-Efficient and Climate-Resilient." Among the participants are Cherise Burda, policy analyst and member of the national Affordability Action Council and the Task Force for Housing and Climate; and Ray Williams, member of CMHC's board of directors. Monday,

Oct. 21 at 5 p.m. ET at the Centre for Social Innovation Spadina, 192 Spadina Ave., Toronto. Details: irpp.org.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—SATURDAY, OCT. 26

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting—The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting will take place in Apia, Samoa, from Monday, Oct. 21, to Saturday, Oct. 26. Details online: samoachogm2024.ws.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—FRIDAY, NOV. 1

COP16 Conference on Biodiversity—The COP16 Conference on Biodiversity will take place from Monday, Oct. 21, to Friday, Nov. 1, in Cali, Colombia. Details online: cbd.int.

MONDAY, OCT. 21—SATURDAY, OCT. 26

IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings—The 2024 annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will take place in Washington, D.C., from Monday, Oct. 21, to Saturday, Oct. 26. Details: worldbank.org.

TUESDAY, OCT. 22

'Ask a Dentist' Event—The Canadian Dental Association hosts "Ask A Dentist" event featuring refreshments, a Candy Showdown game, and dentists on hand to answer questions, part of the CDA's days on the Hill. Tuesday, Oct. 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET in the atrium of the Wellington Building, 197 Sparks St.

Report Launch: 'Ending the GBV Epidemic in Canada'—The Women's Legal Education and Action Fund hosts the launch of, *What it takes: Establishing a gender-based violence accountability mechanism in Canada*, a new report calling for the creation of a Gender-Based Violence commissioner in Canada. There will be a panel discussion and remarks by MPs. Tuesday, Oct. 22 at 4 p.m. ET at Norton Rose Fulbright, 99 Bank St., Suite 500. Details via Eventbrite.

Canadian Energy Innovation Network Reception—The CEIN celebrates the energy supply chain across economic regions in Canada with a parliamentary reception. The group will be led by Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, and supported by the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Prince Rupert Port Authority, and the Chemistry Industry Association of Canada. Tuesday, Oct. 22, 5:30-8:30

p.m. ET, Rabbit Hole, 208 Sparks St. To RSVP, please email clansley@global-public.com.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 23

Bank of Canada to Announce Overnight Rate—The Bank of Canada will announce its decision on the target for the overnight rate and publish the *Monetary Policy Report*. Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 10 a.m. Details online: bankofcanada.ca.

Roundtable: 'How Foreign Repressive Governments Target Women Journalists'—The Coalition for Women in Journalism and the University of Ottawa host a roundtable discussion on "How Foreign Repressive Governments Target Women Journalists in the West" exploring how transnational repression is killing free speech, and is the next big threat to freedom of the press in sovereign states. Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 1 p.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, 55 Laurier Ave., E. 12th Floor. Details: womeninjournalism.org.

2024 Democracy Awards—Presented by The Parliamentary Centre's EngageParlDiplo program in partnership with Carleton University, this year's Democracy Awards will be awarded posthumously to former prime minister Brian Mulroney and former NDP leader Ed Broadbent. Special thanks to British High Commissioner Susannah Goshko who has supported the awards show since its inauguration. Wednesday, Oct. 23, 6-8:30 p.m. ET, at the British High Commission, 140 Sussex Dr.

THURSDAY, OCT. 24

Panel: 'Navigating Uncertainty'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts a lunch event, "Navigating Uncertainty: The U.S. Election's Impact on Canada's Future." Panellists include Baxter Hunt, U.S. Consul General in Toronto; and Stephen Tapp, chief economist at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Thursday, Oct. 24, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, 100 Front St. W., Toronto. Details: economicclub.ca.

2024 Distinguished Achievement Award—Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention and the University of Ottawa will bestow the 2024 Distinguished Achievement Award upon Project Ploughshares co-founder Ernie Regehr, who will deliver a lecture on "The Arctic and the East-West Nuclear Confrontation." A reception will follow. Thursday, Oct. 24, at 4 p.m. ET at uOttawa's Faculty of Social Sciences Building 4004, 120 University Priv. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

Official Launch: Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada—The Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada was founded by Matthew's family and friends to continue his mission to help people overcome addiction. It provides direct wraparound support for individuals during their first year of recovery following treatment. The event will be held in partnership with Ottawa Salus and the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. Thursday, Oct. 24, 5-7 p.m. ET, TwentyTwo at The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr.

Lecture: 'Canada's Relationship with the U.S.'—The Public Policy Forum hosts its Fall 2024 Lecture: "Canada's relationship with the U.S." featuring five speakers: former U.S. ambassadors to Canada Kelly Craft and Gordon Giffin; Clifford Young, president of IPSOS U.S. Public Affairs; University of Toronto professor Janice Stein; and PPF's president and CEO Edward Greenspon. Thursday, Oct. 24, at 5 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details: ppforum.ca.

FRIDAY, OCT. 25

Conference: 'Security Options for a Troubled World'—NDP MP Heather McPherson will take part in the day-long conference "Security Options for a Troubled World" hosted by the University of Ottawa. Other participants include former Amnesty International head Alex Neve; Peggy Mason, president of the Rideau Institute; former Canadian

ambassador to the UN Paul Meyer; and Cesar Jaramillo, executive director at Project Ploughshares. Friday, Oct. 25, at DMS 4101, 55 Laurier Ave. E., University of Ottawa. Details online: cips-cepi.ca.

SUNDAY, OCT. 27

Roméo Dallaire To Discuss His New Book—Former Senator and retired general Roméo Dallaire will discuss his new book, *The Peace: A Warrior's Journey*, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers Festival. Sunday, Oct. 27, at 11:30 a.m. ET at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details: writersfestival.org.

95th Anniversary Persons Case Pink Tea—The Famous 5 Foundation hosts a celebration of the 95th anniversary of the Persons Case, and to today's Ottawa Famous 5 award recipients. Sunday, Oct. 27, at 2 p.m. ET at the Canadian Museum of Nature, 240 McLeod St. Details via Eventbrite.

Minister Valdez to Attend Event—Minister of Small Business Rechie Valdez will take part in an event hosted by the Mississauga-Streetsville Federal Liberal Association. Sunday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m. ET at QSSIS Banquet Hall, 3474 Kingston Rd., Toronto. Details online: liberal.ca.

MONDAY, OCT. 28

Bank of Canada's Monetary Policy Report—Mario Lefebvre, regional director of the Bank of Canada's Quebec Office, will outline the bank's Monetary Policy Report at an event hosted by the Ottawa Economic Association and the Association des économistes québécois. Monday, Oct. 28, at 5 p.m. ET at the Bank of Canada, 234 Wellington St. W. Details: cabe.ca.

TUESDAY, OCT. 29

Canada Green Building Council Reception—Liberal MP Julie Dabrusin, NDP MP Charlie Angus, and Green MP Mike Morrice host a reception for the Canada Green Building Council. Celebrate the green building sector's contribution to an innovative and low-carbon economy in Canada. Tuesday, Oct. 29, at 5 p.m. ET at TwentyTwo, 22nd Floor of the Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Contact: jfagelson@cgabc.org.

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