



WILL INCOMING
**CBC CHIEF
BOUCHARD**
CHANGE THE
CHANNEL?

▶ PAGE 4

TELECOM



▶ PAGES 15-24



**MEET
GERMANY'S
DYNAMIC DUO**

▶ PAGE 36

**Centre
Block
renos**
p. 6

**Voter data
privacy**
p. 14



**THE
HILL TIMES**

THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR, NO. 2172

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024 \$5.00

NEWS

Grits' new campaign director has the resumé and respect needed to right sinking Liberal ship, say former staffers

BY STUART BENSON

Charting the Liberal Party's course in the next election will require a "seasoned, experienced, and competent" political navigator willing to go down with the ship, former Liberal staffers and insiders told *The Hill Times*. But with the S.S. Trudeau foundering in the polls, they say the Liberals' newest national campaign director will need all three decades of his experience—both successful and not—to chart a path forward "and figure out which direction is up."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) named Andrew Bevan, who is chief of staff to Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.), to the role on Oct. 13, replacing Liberal campaign director Jeremy Broadhurst who resigned in September. The party also announced that Marjorie Michel, Trudeau's deputy chief of staff, will serve as deputy campaign director.

Previously, Bevan served as chief of staff and principal secretary to former Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne, and as director of communications for Stéphane Dion's bid for Liberal leader in 2006 before becoming his chief of staff and principal secretary in opposition from 2007 to 2008.

Continued on page 28

NEWS

**'It's inviting retaliation':
Bloc supply management
bill will have Canada
bracing for U.S. response,
say trade watchers**



U.S. President Joe Biden, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Ottawa on March 24, 2023. Access to the Canadian dairy market has been a sour point in the Canada-U.S. trading relationship. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

CUSMA would likely not have been possible if Bill C-282 were law, says a former U.S. trade negotiator.

BY NEIL MOSS

By threatening to add a new gripe to the list of Canada-U.S. trade disagreements, the adoption of a bill to ban supply

management concessions could fuel a fraught review of the North American trade pact in 2026, say former trade officials.

Bill C-282—a Bloc Québécois private member's bill that seeks to ban additional supply management concessions in trade negotiations—is inching towards clause-by-clause consideration at the Senate Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee.

The bill, which is sponsored by Bloc MP Luc Thériault (Montcalm, Que.), had all-party support in the House of Commons, but the Bloc have grown frustrated with the in-

depth review that the Senate committee is undertaking. The Bloc tied the bill to an Oct. 29 deadline for the minority Liberal government to maintain its support.

Critics of the bill have raised concern over the damage that could be done during the 2026 review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) if supply management is pre-emptively removed from the negotiation list.

"For any kind of negotiations, if you're taking a particularly

Continued on page 33

NEWS

Concern mounts over how immigration cuts will hit slow-moving program for Sudanese war refugees

BY NEIL MOSS

This article is the third and final instalment in a series exploring delays in Canada's family reunification regime put in place after the onset of the civil war in Sudan.

With Canada moving to cut the number of migrants it accepts in the coming years, some advocates are worried previously promised spots for those fleeing the Sudanese civil war will be at risk.

The federal government opened a pathway to bring affected family members to Canada nine months after the war began, but none have yet to arrive eight months after the applications could start being submitted.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) released the new immigration-level plans on Oct. 24, reducing the number of permanent residents that Canada will admit by more than 20 per cent. This includes a steep cut to those being admitted under humanitarian and compassionate grounds—which covered the Sudanese family reunification program—from 10,000 people in 2025, to 6,900 in 2026, and 4,300 in 2027.

"The announcement that came out last week now made sense of why they're delaying our people from coming," said Sudanese

Continued on page 29

Publications Mail Agreement #40068926
0 94922 81130 1



Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Charest, Monsef, and Leslie to talk modern democracy at Carleton



Former MPs Maryam Monsef, left, Megan Leslie, and Jean Charest will be in Ottawa on Nov. 20 to talk about modern democracy at Carleton University. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia, and courtesy of WWF

Three former MPs will discuss the current state of democracy at a panel discussion hosted by Carleton University next month.

Ex-Progressive Conservative cabinet minister and former Quebec premier **Jean Charest** will join former Liberal cabinet minister **Maryam Monsef** and ex-NDP MP **Megan Leslie** as they ponder “Protecting Democracy in the Modern Age” on Nov. 20.

This event is part of the Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation’s lecture series.

Professor **André Turcotte**, program director of the Clayton H. Riddell Graduate Program in Political Management at Carleton, told *Heard on the Hill* that a couple of factors inspired the creation of this event.

“The 2024 U.S. presidential election is definitely the backdrop of the general theme of ‘Protecting Democracy,’” he wrote by email last week. “Without taking sides, the spectacle down south does not bode well for democratic ideals.”

“But this is not about the U.S. election. This is about Canada, and we are having our spectacle to witness: a leader of the opposition who is pounding on [his] opponents despite a 20-point lead in the polls, a Parliament which is paralyzed, etc.,” Turcotte explained. He cited some dispiriting polling numbers issued by Pollara this past summer that show more than half of Canadians are “angry” with both their provincial and federal governments, as well as the news media.

“This tells me that Canadians feel there is something wrong with our democracy. Hence the theme,” he said.

Doors will be open to “anyone who is interested in politics; cares about democracy; students, practitioners, citizens, academics—we expect a full house,” said Turcotte, who is pumped about the panel of former parliamentarians from across the political spectrum “spanning different backgrounds and generations.”

Condolences pour in after death of former MP Robert Sopuck

Former Conservative MP **Robert Sopuck** died on Oct. 23, aged 73. He died at his acreage near Sandy Lake, Man., and is survived by his wife **Caroline** and two stepchildren, according to the Manitoba Historical Society Archives. Sopuck’s stepdaughter said his death was a “sudden, but



Then-Conservative MP Robert Sopuck in 2019. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

peaceful passing,” according to the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Born in Winnipeg in 1951, Sopuck was a biologist, farmer, out-fitter, and published author in Manitoba before he first came to Ottawa after winning a 2010 byelection. He was re-elected to the House of Commons twice more until 2019, when he chose not to re-offer.

In retirement, he served on various boards and also wrote regular columns for the *The Hill Times*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, and *National Post*, and even hosted *A Life Outdoors*, a four-part series of videos on YouTube.

“Canada has lost a great man,” wrote **Dan Mazier**, who has held Sopuck’s old seat since 2019, in a post on X on Oct. 25.

“Bob dedicated his entire life to defending and promoting the rural way of life,” he continued. “He had a soft and caring heart for the people he represented, yet a fierce commitment to his work. I will forever be grateful for his personal support over the years and for his willingness to share his plethora of knowledge and sage advice.”

Conservative Leader **Pierre Poilievre** shared his condolences “to [Sopuck’s] loved ones, those who were close to him in our Conservative family and all who had the honour of knowing him.”

Former prime minister **Stephen Harper** called Sopuck “a formidable colleague,” while ex-CPC leader **Erin O’Toole** remembered Sopuck as “one of the finest Canadians I served with in Parliament. Whip smart, passionate, and respectful. He taught so many MPs like me about conservation and the environment.”

Conservative MPs **Michelle Rempel Garner**, **James Bezan**, **Pat Kelly**, **Bernard Genereux**, and **Mike Lake** also expressed their condolences on social media, as did Alberta MP **Laila Goodridge**, who recalled Sopuck as an “overall wonderful man.”

A celebration of his life will be held Nov. 2 at the Sandy Lake Community Hall.

Paikin, Roy to moderate leaders’ debates

The independent Leaders’ Debates Commission is all set for the next federal election—when ever it may be—having announced that veteran journalists **Steve Paikin** and **Patrice Roy** will moderate the English and French leaders’ debates, respectively.

The commission made the announcement on Oct. 28.

Both journalists have past experience moderating these sorts of debates. Paikin, host of TVO’s *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*, has stick-handled the 2006, 2008, and 2011 federal leaders’ debates in English, as well as the past five Ontario provincial leaders’ debates.

Roy—who currently hosts two eponymous current affairs shows on Radio-Canada and on RDI—hosted the 2019 and 2021 federal leaders’ French-language debates, and the 2018 and 2022 Québec provincial leaders’ debates.

The commission also confirmed that CBC and Radio-Canada will produce, promote, and distribute the debates, which will also be streamable on YouTube. These free events will also be available in Indigenous languages and non-official languages, and accessible in ASL, LSQ, closed captioning, and described video, according to the press release.

MP Gazan at Equal Voice’s campaign school Nov. 10



NDP MP Leah Gazan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

In other election-readiness news, Equal Voice is launching its online campaign school on Nov. 3.

The six-week program—which runs every Sunday for two hours starting at 1 p.m. ET—is geared to women and gender-diverse

individuals to provide them with “the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to run for political office in Canada” at every level, according to the website.

Each session is on a different topic, starting with “Before the Ballot” with guest speaker Alberta Minister **Rajan Sawhney**. NDP MP **Leah Gazan** will take part in the second session on Nov. 10 on how to “Mobilize Your Team.” The other sessions will cover raising your profile, mass communications, facing barriers, and finally fundraising and budgeting. Register online at EqualVoice.ca/ONCS_Fall24.

Sen. Moodie taps 20 Coronation Medal recipients



Former Liberal MP Jean Augustine, left, and Senator Rosemary Moodie on Oct. 19. *Photograph courtesy Sen. Moodie’s X account*

Independent Senator **Rosemary Moodie** presented the **King Charles III** Coronation Medal to 20 laureates, including former Liberal MP **Jean Augustine** and former Ontario Liberal cabinet minister **Mitzie Hunter**.

A ceremony was held at George Brown College’s Waterfront Campus in Toronto on Oct. 19.

Moodie selected her nominees based on their contributions “towards improving lives through medical innovation, advancing education, shaping policy, or lifting up others through acts of philanthropy,” reads a press release.

Created in commemoration of the King’s coronation in May 2023, the medal “stands as a tribute to exceptional dedication and service,” reads the press release.

While the Office of the Secretary to the Governor General administers the King Charles III Coronation Medal program, Canadian Senators are among the official list of partner organizations that can nominate and present

Continued on page 3

CORRECTION:
The Hill Times, Oct. 23 issue

Re: “Poor procurement won’t keep our soldiers warm at night,” (*The Hill Times*, Oct. 23, p. 9). This incorrectly stated that the dune buggies for the Canadian battle group in Latvia are supplied by General Dynamics Land Systems. They are provided by GM Defense. *The Hill Times* regrets the error.

Continued from page 2

medals to individuals who meet the award's eligibility criteria. There are 30,000 such medals available for deserving individuals.

Senator Senior joins ISG



ISG Senator Paulette Senior. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Speaking of the Red Chamber, Ontario Senator **Paulette Senior** announced that she has joined the Independent Senators Group, "a choice I made after long consideration," she said in an Oct. 25 press release.

"Her background in psychology and social work and her impressive accomplishments, namely for vulnerable people, will surely enrich the diversity and multidisciplinary identity of our parliamentary group," said ISG Facilitator **Raymonde Saint-Germain** in the same release.

Senior was named to the Red Chamber in December 2023. Her addition to the ISG brings its total membership to 42.

ULaval to launch new interpretation program

With encouragement and help from Public Services and Procurement Canada's Translation Bureau, Laval University will launch a new "graduate microprogram in interpretation" for the start of the 2025 fall term.

The program will "consist of 12 credits in interpretation," and is aimed at helping boost the pool of potential new accredited interpreters in Canada, notes an Oct. 25 press release announcing the new "partnership."

"This partnership will allow the Translation Bureau and Laval University to collaborate closely on training students and recruiting interpreters, as well as carrying out research and activities focused on the future of the profession," reads the release.

Support from the bureau will include offering up the services of "at least" two interpreters to help with two of the program's courses, as well as "offering students opportunities to learn in the workplace," and making graduating students—who will be eligible to sit the Translation Bureau's accreditation exam—"aware of job openings" within the bureau.

A pre-existing shortfall of qualified interpreters in Canada—and globally—was exacerbated by Parliament's shift to hybrid proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased rates of injury reported by interpreters from covering virtual participants in House committees and debates. While progress has since been made in reducing the risks associated with virtual participation, issues persist, and much focus is now on mitigating the potential for the Larsen effect—feedback caused by a live earpiece getting too close to a live microphone, which can cause aural inju-

ry—among in-person participants. Added to the attrition mix is the expectation that a large portion of the existing workforce is set to retire in the coming years.

A lack of available interpreters has affected committee scheduling, and has led to a reduction of services for government departments, parliamentary associations, and caucus groups.

Only individuals with a master's degree in conference interpreting are eligible to sit the bureau's accreditation exam, and only two universities in Canada currently offer such a degree: the University of Ottawa, and York University's Glendon College. With a dearth of new grads, the bureau has been reaching out to universities across Canada—many in Quebec—to encourage them to create new programs.

This year's budget included \$35-million in funding for the federal Translation Bureau with the stated aim of helping it boost interpretation capacity and establish a scholarship program to encourage students to pursue required degrees.

—By *Laura Ryckewaert*

New book covers a century of Canada's foreign policy



Adam Chapnick and Asa McKercher's new book is out now. *Book cover image courtesy Oxford University Press*

Two of this country's leading foreign policy analysts have published a new book

this month that's billed as a "definitive history of Canadian foreign policy since the 1930s."

Canada First, Not Canada Alone: A History of Canadian Foreign Policy by **Adam Chapnick** and **Asa McKercher** "traces the history of Canadian foreign policy from a time when positioning Canada First meant shunning international obligations to today. It highlights key decisions taken and not taken in Ottawa that have shaped Canadians' safety, security, and prosperity over the last one hundred years," according to the promotional blurb.

Both Chapnick and McKercher teach defence and history, respectively, at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ont.

The 360-page book published by Oxford University Press argues that "Canada must look out for its own interests first, but in the modern world it can't do so effectively without co-operating with other states and non-state actors."

cleadlay@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Helping realize the potential of clean hydrogen to decarbonize our economy

CSA Group standards solutions for the hydrogen ecosystem

For more than 20 years, CSA Group has been a leader in research and standards development to help advance hydrogen as a clean energy and transportation fuel option. Our solutions address various aspects of hydrogen production, delivery, storage, and end use and support harmonization efforts across North America and globally:

- Hydrogen production sources, technologies, and equipment
- Hydrogen generation using water electrolysis
- Classification of carbon intensity of hydrogen production
- Hydrogen delivery, transmission, and distribution via pipelines
- Above and underground hydrogen storage
- Hydrogen fuel cells
- Safety of hydrogen vehicles and fuelling stations
- On-site fuelling station testing methods
- Use of hydrogen for marine, rail, and aviation applications

[csagroup.org/H2standards](https://www.csagroup.org/H2standards)

©2024 Canadian Standards Association. All rights reserved.



News

New CBC CEO must address Canadians' concerns directly to combat Conservatives' calls for cuts: Bloc MP Champoux

McGill University researcher Jessica Johnson says most Canadians across the political spectrum agree on the value of an effective public broadcaster.

BY STUART BENSON



Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge says she is confident the incoming CBC president and CEO is 'well-equipped' to handle the pressure from Conservative attacks on the public broadcaster. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Facing dwindling viewership and advertising dollars, as well as a potential government-in-waiting that promises to defund the CBC after the next election, the incoming head of the public broadcaster will need to speak honestly and directly to Canadians to convince them of the need for its continued existence, says Bloc Québécois MP Martin Champoux. However, despite the Conservatives' calls to defund the CBC, a new McGill University survey indicates Canadians are far more supportive of the broadcaster than the political rhetoric suggests.

On Oct. 22—a day after Catherine Tait, CBC/Radio-Canada's current president and CEO, made a controversial committee appearance—Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge (Brome-Missisquoi, Que.) announced Tait's successor: Marie-Philippe Bouchard.

Bouchard, who has served as president and CEO of TV5 Québec Canada since February 2016, will begin a five-year term with the CBC on Jan. 3, 2025, and will become the first francophone woman named to the position in the CBC's history. Before her role at TV5, Bouchard held senior management and executive positions at CBC/Radio-Canada, and has been a member of the Quebec Bar since 1985 after receiving a master's degree in public law from the Université de Montréal.

Speaking with reporters outside a Liberal cabinet meeting following the announcement, St-Onge said Bouchard is an excellent candidate, but noted that her appointment is only "the first piece of a broader work that we need to achieve to ensure the sustainability and the future of CBC/Radio-Canada."

As for whether Bouchard will get a "fair shake" from the Conservative opposition already promising to cut her funding before she even begins that work, St-Onge

said she is confident that Bouchard is "well-equipped to be able to deal with the pressure that comes with this title."

"She knows the CBC inside and out," St-Onge said after the cabinet meeting. "I know that the challenge is going to be big, especially in the current context, but I think she's the right person to be able to lead CBC/Radio-Canada through this period."

Champoux (Drummond, Que.), co-chair of the Canadian Heritage Committee and his party's critic on the file, told *The Hill Times* that Bouchard was a "very good" choice considering her "impressive track record" in the news industry.

"[Bouchard] seems to have a very solid reputation," Champoux said. "Every person I've spoken with only has good words for her."

Champoux said he doubts St-Onge could have found a better candidate than Bouchard given the broadcaster's present situation.

"I doubt it was easy to reach a lot of potential, high-quality candidates when all you can see in the near future is a government that wants to defund the CBC," Champoux explained, pointing to the promise made by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.).

Of all the challenges the CBC is currently facing, the most pressing will be maintaining the broadcaster's services in the face of a potential future government that is expected to be "hostile, to say the least," Champoux said.

Despite the Conservatives' attempt to separate the CBC's French-language services from their calls to defund, Champoux said that only displays "either ignorance or pure populism."

"You can't defund the CBC and not touch the French services; it's disinformation and pure lies,"

Champoux said. "If the [Conservatives] defunded the CBC, Radio-Canada would suffer the consequences, and that's never going to be acceptable to [the Bloc]."

Champoux said when the CBC's mandate is updated later this fall, new measures must be introduced to safeguard those French services and protect the broadcaster's independence, regardless of who forms the next government.

"Radio-Canada is a vehicle for French culture, especially Quebec culture, and the French language throughout Canada; we cannot lose that tool," Champoux said. "It would be devastating."

However, Champoux said that doesn't mean his party doesn't want to see significant changes to the broadcaster's mandate.

Champoux said that when the House Heritage Committee begins its study of the proposed new mandate, "it's all on the table," including how the CBC is funded and executive compensation.

During an Oct. 21 committee appearance, Tait was repeatedly questioned about the \$18-million in bonuses paid out to 1,180

non-unionized employees during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

While Tait said she has not yet received a bonus for the current fiscal year, she also declined to say whether she would refuse one if offered, and called her eventual decision a "personal matter."

Champoux told *The Hill Times* that he recognizes the nuances of that multimillion-dollar figure, but at a time when Canadians are struggling with the affordability crisis, "\$18-million in bonuses just can't go on."

However, Champoux said that the inability of the broadcaster and—by extension—Tait to answer those questions, or respond to Canadians' concerns honestly and directly has helped fuel the Conservatives' movement against them.

"Their problem is it takes three seconds to tell a lie, but many hours to debunk it," Champoux said, noting that the average Canadian doesn't actually pay that much money for the quality of public broadcasting they receive compared to other G7 countries.

According to a comparison of funding for public broadcasting conducted by Radio-Canada, the federal government spent \$33 per capita on the CBC in 2018, ranking sixth among G7 countries and 17th out of the 20 western countries surveyed, ahead of Portugal (\$27), New Zealand (\$14), and the United States (\$4), but behind countries like the United Kingdom (\$104), Germany (\$149), Norway (\$171), and Switzerland (\$187), which all spend well above the average \$88.

However, Champoux said the first question that needs to be answered is about what Canadians want from the CBC.

"If they still want one, then we can determine how much it costs," Champoux said. "But those

questions must be addressed with maturity instead of slogans."

On Oct. 23, McGill University's Centre for Media, Technology, and Democracy (CMTD) released the results of a survey it conducted this summer asking Canadians that specific question as part of a multi-year research project entitled "What Should the CBC/Radio-Canada Be?"

The survey suggested that the majority (78 per cent) of Canadians support the CBC's continued existence, and more than half (57 per cent) would like to see its funding maintained (24 per cent) or increased (33 per cent). Only 11 per cent of respondents said they would reduce its funding, including only 40 per cent of Conservatives, compared to 47 per cent who would prefer its funding be maintained (31 per cent) or increased (16 per cent).

Jessica Johnson, the project lead and a senior fellow with the CMTD, told *The Hill Times* that "surprisingly, but not surprisingly," the current "political rhetoric" surrounding the CBC "does not necessarily reflect where Canadians are at."

Despite the opinions shared in editorials or on social media—which Johnson said even she had begun to buy into—the data shows far more agreement across the political spectrum on the value and purpose of an effective public broadcaster.

"Most Canadians want reliable journalism, and they want more-reliable journalism than they currently have," Johnson explained. "Like many things in this country, there's a fairly broad consensus about basic stuff, regardless of what's going on in Question Period."

However, Johnson said there remain major splits among the population about the broadcaster's strengths.

When asked about their major criticisms, 23 per cent of respondents said the CBC is "irrelevant" compared to 39 per cent who disagreed with that statement. Twenty-seven per cent said it was "too woke," while 39 per cent disagreed. Similar splits were also reported when respondents were asked whether the CBC spoke to their interests, told people what to think, or had biased reporting.

Johnson said that if the data has any lessons for the new CEO, it's that Bouchard will need to work on finding more alignment from the public on what the CBC actually does and needs to do to improve.

To the former, Johnson said that Bouchard would need to better educate the public on her role and attempt to depoliticize it.

"You never want the president to be the story," Johnson said, adding that she doubts most Canadians could recognize the CEO of Via Rail, and if they started to, it would probably be a bad sign for the rail company as well.

"I don't think anyone actually understands what the president does, so I would be busy explaining the job to the public and that I'm not picking the programming," Johnson said. "Bring it back to the audience, focus on being a leader, and just do the work."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



TV5 Québec's Marie-Philippe Bouchard will become the first francophone woman to lead the CBC when she begins her five-year term in January. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Canada at a Crossroads: How Sensible Vaping Regulations Can Save Lives and Protect Public Health

Canada is at a critical crossroads in its fight against tobacco. The goal of reducing smoking to less than 5% by 2035, outlined in Canada's Tobacco Strategy, relies on the effective use of vaping as a harm-reduction tool. Mounting evidence shows vaping to be a significantly less harmful alternative to smoking, yet ill-conceived advocacy efforts to push through a nationwide flavour ban threatens to derail the smoking cessation efforts of millions of adult Canadians. Hasty policy decisions will ultimately drive consumers toward unregulated and unsafe alternatives and decimate a thriving industry that employs more than eight thousand Canadians from coast to coast to coast; with many more thousands of jobs in associated sectors including government – supporting thousands of Canadian families.

Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past. In the early 20th century, Canada's prohibition laws, aimed at curbing alcohol consumption, instead fueled the rise of an illicit market. Organized crime syndicates thrived by smuggling and illegally producing alcohol to meet high public demand. Rather than reducing consumption, prohibition empowered the criminal networks, demonstrating that bans drive consumers toward contraband products. This will happen again if the Government rushes to a decision; a decision not backed by science or common sense.

Now is the time for the Government to support this important public health initiative. Take a stand by supporting responsible vaping policies backed by scientific-based evidence, prioritizing harm reduction, and protecting Canadians from the potential public health crisis of a dangerous, illicit vaping market.

The Dangers of Prohibition

The push for restrictive vaping policies, such as flavour bans and punitive taxation, already shows negative consequences. **A flavour ban may drive former smokers back to traditional cigarettes, as 90% of Canada's 1.9 million adult vapers depend on flavours other than tobacco, mint, and menthol to remain smoke-free.** Canadian adult vapers deserve a voice in the policies that impact their smoking cessation choices. Banning legal vaping products will ultimately expand the illicit market, where unregulated and unsafe products will satisfy the demand for flavours.

The economic fallout will be severe. The vaping industry contributes \$2 billion annually to the Canadian economy and generates an estimated \$400 million annually in Excise Tax revenue to the federal government. This revenue supports essential government programs, such as pharmacare. Any decision to restrict flavours to only tobacco, mint, and menthol must be carefully considered, as it will impact these revenue sources and have larger consequences.

The Case for Vaping as Harm Reduction

According to the UK's Royal College of Physicians, vaping poses less than 5% of the health risks associated with smoking, offering a less harmful alternative to combustible tobacco. Yet, reactionary anti-vaping organizations pushing for prohibition ignore the science.

Québec instituted a provincewide flavour ban on vaping products last October with devastating outcomes. A recent Léger survey in Québec, commissioned by the Coalition des droits des vapoteurs du Québec, reveals the cost of these bans: 36% of former vapers returned to smoking after the flavour ban was imposed – with 22% of those who had previously quit resume smoking and 14% taking up smoking for the first time. The data paints a stark picture, when access to vaping flavours is restricted, smokers go back to cigarettes, undoing hard-won public health gains aimed at reducing smoking-related health issues and diseases.

Addressing Youth Vaping: Sensible Solutions Without Punishing Adults

We can all agree that youth should not have access to vaping products. It is illegal for a minor to purchase vaping products in this country. We need to enforce the existing laws that are in place to protect youth. However, policies like flavour bans harm adult vapers far more than they protect youth. Youth vape because of mental health, peer pressure, and stress, among other reasons. Organized crime is already exploiting youth through illicit trade and banning these products for adults will not solve the root causes of youth vaping. It will do more harm than good.

A balanced approach is needed, one that addresses protecting youth without denying adult vapers the harm-reduction tools they rely on. Educating parents, teachers, and coaches, combined with enforcing existing regulations, can curb youth vaping without destroying an industry that provides a less harmful alternative to smoking. By focusing on enforcement and compliance rather than blanket bans, we can address youth vaping concerns.

A Call for Sensible Policy

The path forward is clear. The Government must reject reactionary and aggressive advocacy tactics that threaten public health. The focus should be on evidence-based policies that allow adult vapers to make their own decisions about their health. The stakes are too high to get this wrong again. Canada can and must continue to lead on harm reduction, protecting public health, safeguarding small businesses, and keeping illicit markets away from youth.

Canada should not follow the example of countries like the USA and Australia, where strict vaping bans have resulted in increased smoking rates and the growth of illicit markets. Banning vaping flavours will have far-reaching economic and public health consequences.

The time to act is now—we need real solutions, not prohibition.

THE CANADIAN VAPING
ASSOCIATION



L'ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE DE LA VAPE

www.thecva.org

News

Centre Block reno update: project

Plus, Senators recently threw a wrench in efforts to revamp the approach to the future renovation of the Confederation Building, which houses MP offices.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

A total of \$975-million has now been spent as part of the Centre Block Rehabilitation Project—which includes both the renovation of the 100-year-old building, and construction of a new underground welcome centre—out of its estimated \$4.5-billion to \$5-billion total price tag.

The spending update was included as part of Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) most recent quarterly progress report on the project, and represents an increase of \$79-million in spending since the last update. The report, which broadly summarizes project progress between July 1 and Sept. 30, was released on Oct. 11.

On the design side, PSPC told *The Hill Times* by email that spending from the most recent quarter was focused on “advancing designs” for the Parliament Welcome Centre (PWC) and Centre Block, including the “design strategy for high heritage spaces, and key destination spaces” in the welcome centre, like its planned public cafeteria.

“On the construction front, spending within the last quarter is mainly attributed to the Centre Block and includes the purchase and installation of piling and steel bracing to support the transfer of

the building load, the construction of concrete shear walls, the purchase of rebar and concrete to continue the level one slab replacement, continuation of the masonry program and installation of scaffolding in the west courtyard,” as well as the drilling of geothermal wells, PSPC explained.

Project health trackers, which had slid closer to the red in the previous quarterly update, remained static, with the project's schedule still the largest source of concern.

Recent progress highlights include the completion of the installation of 92 geothermal exchange wells along the bottom of the 23-metre-deep pit in front of Centre Block that will house the PWC, which had been 80 per cent complete in the previous update.

The installation of support posts—or steel piles—that will form part of the network that will hold up Centre Block once required excavations under the historic building begin is now 76 per cent complete, according to PSPC, up from 63 per cent the previous quarter. The department has previously estimated that around 800 steel piles will need to be installed as part of this effort, meaning around 600 are now in place.

Excavation under Centre Block—currently slated to begin in September 2025—is needed to complete base-isolation seismic upgrades, and to connect the main building to the new underground welcome centre.

Also on the to-do list for prepping Centre Block for this work is replacement and reinforcement of the building's slab. “We continue to make progress in rebuilding the level 1 concrete slab and drilling support posts in the basement,” reads the report.

In an email, PSPC specified that, as of September, level 1 concrete slab replacement was roughly 25 per cent complete. Reaching 20 to 25 per cent com-

pletion of this work was a “milestone” the department missed last spring, but progress now falls within the 25 to 30 per cent target set for the summer. This fall, PSPC is aiming to have rebuilt 40 per cent of the building's slab.

All three of the department's “milestones” for the summer have been checked off, the other two being the start of structural work on the first through sixth floors, and to complete installation of scaffolding along Centre Block's west façade and its western courtyard that will be needed both for masonry restoration work and installation of a new sloped mansard roof.

“With this scaffold in place, we have started installing a roof enclosure to protect the building during the removal and reconstruction of the roof,” replacement of which is set to begin this winter, said PSPC by email.

Structural work to date has focused on Centre Block's uppermost fifth and sixth floors, and has involved “installing bracing to support the building as we remove outdated elements to facilitate the upcoming upgrades”—a list that includes new elevator shafts, stairwells, wall construction, and incorporation of new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.

Masonry restoration is now overall roughly 18.5 per cent complete, up from 17.5 per cent in the previous quarter. The north façade was already 100 per cent finished, and progress on the east façade has jumped from 36.5 per cent to 39.5 per cent complete, while the west façade has gone from 21 per cent complete to 26.5 per cent.

CIBA says ‘no’ to swing space proposal

Senators have thrown a wrench into PSPC's attempt to take a one-phase approach to the future renovation of the Confederation Building, which is home to MP offices.

On Oct. 10, members of the Senate Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration Committee (CIBA) adopted a subcommittee report recommending against giving an OK—at least for now—to the department's pitch to use part of the Senate's share of Block 2 offices as interim space for MPs in order to clear out the Confederation Building and renovate it in one go, rather than tackling its renovation in phases.



The Centre Block building, as seen across Wellington Street from the site of the future Block 2 office complex on June 25. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Construction of the new office complex to be built in Block 2—bounded by Metcalfe and O'Connor, and Sparks and Wellington streets—is only just getting going, and is roughly estimated to be finished by the early 2030s. It will include more than 150 parliamentary offices, with 94 designated for MPs and 54 for Senators, in addition to other meeting spaces, multi-purpose rooms, a cafeteria, administration offices, and more.

After Block 2, the Confederation Building and the East Block are next in line for renovation as part of PSPC's multi-year, multibillion-dollar project to revamp Parliament Hill, known as the Long-term Vision and Plan (LTVP).

In May, the House Board of Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration's (BOIE) LTVP working group gave PSPC the green light to explore a potential one-phase approach to renovating the Confederation Building, which current approved plans would see renovated in multiple phases while still partly occupied.

At a May 2 meeting, Deputy Speaker Chris D'Entremont (West Nova, N.S.), chair of the working group, explained that PSPC had “identified an opportunity” to tackle the Confederation Building in one phase, which would shave an estimated four years off the project's schedule, offer cost savings—including by “avoiding sunk costs and off-hour premiums”—and would mean less disruption for MPs, in part by avoiding the need for multiple moves.

Speaking to the BOIE, PSPC acting assistant deputy minister Jennifer Garrett highlighted that finding “appropriate swing space” is key to enabling such an approach, but while the department is “leaving no stone unturned,”

options within the “tight geographical boundaries” that make up the Parliamentary Precinct are slim.

The House's share of new Block 2 office space has already been dedicated as swing space for MPs who will be displaced from the Confederation Building, but with 162 office units needing to be relocated overall, more space is required.

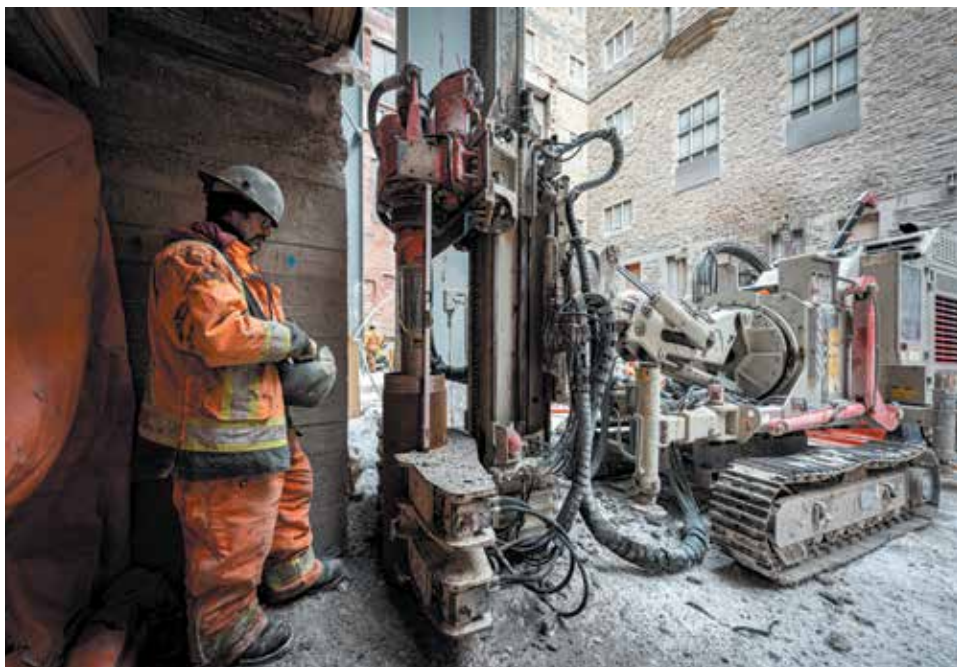
At the May meeting, BOIE members discussed the possibility of leveraging the Senate's share of Block 2 offices, as well.

The idea hasn't been embraced by Senators.

On Oct. 10, Conservative Senate Leader Don Plett (Landmark, Man.), a member of the Senate's LTVP subcommittee, told CIBA the group believes “the House will need something in the neighbourhood of 34 temporary office spaces to cover the shortfall of office space if MPs need to move out of the Confederation Building sooner than they originally planned.” However, PSPC has been “unable” to provide “precise timelines” for when those move-outs will need to begin, or a timeline by which the building will be renovated and ready for re-occupancy, he said.

The Senate's share of Block 2 offices are currently set to be used to relocate remaining East Block residents—46 offices—once renovation of that building begins. In 2022, the Senate reworked its plans to bump up renovation of the Victoria Building—which also houses offices and sits within Block 2—to be done as part of that block's overhaul. Previously, the East Block had been set to be tackled first, followed by the Victoria Building, but its full renovation is now set to follow completion of both the Block 2 and Centre Block projects.

Plett noted that if the recent pitch is accepted, it would further



A worker stands by a rig in Centre Block's west courtyard used to drill steel piles into the building's base level in February 2023. *Photograph courtesy of PSPC*

spending to date nears \$1-billion



delay Senators' move out of East Block "by at least seven years."
"Based upon the number of variables that are unknown at this

time, the subcommittee believes it is far too early to begin discussing a major change to the Senate's long-term accommodation plans, which have been in place for a few years already," said Plett. "We also believe that our permanent end-state building should not be used as temporary space for MP offices," but are "willing to work with" the House and PSPC to "find alternatives from the Senate's inventory of office spaces as they become available." This includes the Senate of Canada Building, and the Chambers Building at 40 Elgin St., which is already home to Senators displaced by Centre Block's renovation.

Centre Block contract updates

A few contracts awarded in connection with the Centre Block project have been amended in recent months.

On July 17, the contract for architectural and engineering services—first awarded to Centrus, a joint venture being led by WSP Canada, in 2017 when it was valued at \$127.4-million—was once again amended to increase the total estimated contract by almost \$54-million, bringing its total value to \$597.4-million. The

contract, which was originally slated to expire in April 2021, now runs through to the end of 2033.

On Oct. 9, an amendment valued at almost \$646-million was posted in connection to the construction management services contract for the Centre Block project held by a joint venture of PCL Constructors and EllisDon. First awarded in 2017—when it was valued at roughly

\$598.1-million—the contract's current total value is \$3.5-billion.

A week later, the contract for project management support services, which was first awarded to a joint venture of Colliers Project Leaders and Tiree Facility Solutions in January 2017, was amended to both increase the total expenditure limit by \$6.8-mil-



Level 1 slab replacement work in progress on the west side of Centre Block on Feb. 7. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

lion, and extend its duration to the end of 2029. Originally valued at almost \$15-million through to the end of 2021, the latest update brings the contract's total value to roughly \$39.3-million.

Plus, one new contract was awarded this month for electrical upgrades tied to Centre Block Underground Services, the

moniker given to the building's existing basement level that houses its electrical guts. Posted on Oct. 8, the current 12-month contract awarded to Arc & Spark Electric—referred to as 1663587 Ontario Inc., in the online notice—is valued at \$337,870.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Payroll
IS NOT
simple



Payroll
IS NOT
just pushing a button



Payroll
IS navigating complex Federal and Provincial regulations



Learn more



Editorial

Editor Kate Malloy
 Managing Editor Charelle Evelyn
 Digital Editor Samantha Wright Allen
 Executive Editor Peter Mazereeuw
 Deputy Editors Stephen Jeffery, Laura Ryckewaert
 Deputy Digital Editor Ian Campbell
 Assistant Deputy Editor Abbas Rana
 Publishers Anne Marie Creskey,
 Jim Creskey, Leslie Dickson, Ross Dickson
 General Manager, CFO Andrew Morrow

Editorial

New CBC president can change the channel to good news

The Oct. 22 announcement of the next head of CBC/Radio-Canada will hopefully demarcate a turning point in the public broadcaster's currently messy narrative.

When Heritage Minister Pascale St-Onge spoke to reporters after announcing that Marie-Philippe Bouchard would take over as president and CEO of the CBC on Jan. 3, 2025, she said Bouchard is "well-equipped to be able to deal with the pressure that comes with this title."

Some of that pressure is being created by Bouchard's predecessor, outgoing president Catherine Tait, who has been in the habit of making headlines for all the wrong reasons.

Bouchard will be entering an environment that Bloc Québécois heritage critic Martin Champoux said will be "hostile, to say the least."

As *The Hill Times'* Stuart Benson reports, Bouchard will be taking on the role amid a push by the Conservative Party to defund the CBC—a call that may seem to be gaining steam anecdotally, but isn't necessarily supported by data.

"To anyone paying attention to media headlines or social media comment sections of the past year or two, it might seem easy to assume strong political polarization in Canada about funding for the CBC/Radio-Canada," reads a recent report by McGill University's Centre for Media, Technology, and Democracy, which conducted research into public sentiment about the CBC.

According to the centre's survey results, the majority (78 per cent) of Canadians support the CBC's continued existence, and more than half (57 per cent) would like to see its funding maintained (24 per cent) or increased (33 per cent).

"Our national public broadcaster brings us and our understanding of one another closer together despite massive distance. CBC/Radio-Canada is our place for discovering and sharing stories that embody francophone, anglophone, and Indigenous cultures, on a range of innovative platforms," Bouchard said in a Heritage Canada press release.

There are no easy rides in media right now. Funding is sparse and newsrooms are shrinking, and despite its federal funding, the CBC is not immune to the challenges faced by many—if not most—news outlets. But it also has unique challenges in that there is extra scrutiny due to its public funding. And Tait has taken some public heat over how that money has been handled under her leadership.

"You never want the president to be the story," McGill researcher Jessica Johnson told *The Hill Times*.

At a time when trust in the companies and the people who produce news is deteriorating, strengthening one of the most visible and far-reaching purveyors of journalism in the country can have a positive ripple effect for the rest of the industry, and our democracy.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Criticism of UN force in Lebanon well-founded, says Ontario reader

Re: "UNIFIL meant to discourage aggression by presence rather than through force, says Ottawa reader," (*The Hill Times*, Oct. 23, p. 8).

In 2006, Hezbollah—the Lebanese terrorist group backed by Iran—kidnapped three Israelis and launched a war with the Jewish state. The war ended with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which mandated that the terrorist group disarm and move its fighters north of the Litani River, away from Israel.

A new United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was tasked with overseeing this.

To the surprise of nobody, that never happened. Right under UNIFIL's nose, Hezbollah dramatically grew its weapons stockpile, built terrorist bunkers throughout southern Lebanon, and then last year

on Oct. 8—one day after Hamas' massacres in Israel—began firing rockets into Israel, unprovoked.

These are not allegations, but demonstrated and widely documented facts. Yet letter writer Morgan Duchesney waves them away, calling them "flawed logic." A recent video even shows a Hezbollah terror tunnel with a UNIFIL watch tower right behind it, showing that these supposed peacekeepers have been at best oblivious, and at worst, complicit with Hezbollah.

Hezbollah, supported by Iran, promises to destroy Israel. UNIFIL—despite being tasked with ensuring Hezbollah disarms and moves away from Israel—has refused to do that, letting themselves be used as human shields for Hezbollah.

Donna Broslaw
 Vaughan, Ont.

Trump lacks the coherence to be a fascist, but he still must go: Marlatt

Donald Trump, fascist? Actually, no. Trump is incapable of sustained rational thought, or the coherence to establish or conceive of a system of government. I should have written: has Trump taken Americans to "the brink of fascism"?

Fascism is a vile—but coherent—system of government. Its extremism and intolerance, inherent racism, and ultra-nationalism express extreme right-wing views imposed through authoritarianism. All of that is found in #Trumpism, along with dictatorial demands of personal "loyalty" to the head of state—in the words of his own running mate J.D. Vance, the "American Hitler." Fascism is commonly populist.

But no. Trump lacks the intelligence, coherence, and commitment to the nation rather than self to be a fascist. Trump isn't about the people or the nation, he is about himself. Except as a pejorative description, Trump is incapable of being even coherent enough to be a fascist, merely the brink of fascism. A dictator, a threat to democracy, who thinks it is OK to say he will be a dictator on Day 1 only—only a fool would believe that lie—and to call any election in which he is not elected corrupt and a "stolen election," and who promises "revenge" on those who oppose him.

Trump was defeated soundly by every measure in the 2020 United States

presidential election, but refused to accept the result, sought to "find" votes for him that did not exist, and did nothing to prevent the violent Jan. 6, 2021, seizure of the Capitol and threat to "Hang Mike Pence," the vice-president who carried out his constitutional duties to validate the vote of the Electoral College to elect President Joe Biden.

In 2016, Trump—although losing the popular vote—became the U.S. president by committing felonies for which he has now been convicted.

Even today, the defeated 2020 presidential candidate is facing additional charges of wrongful possession of classified documents after leaving office, and for attempting to subvert justice to overthrow the 2020 election.

Vice-President and Democratic candidate Kamala Harris, a former prosecutor and senator, faces no such allegations, charges, or record of convictions. And she is intelligent, and coherent, with a personal record of accomplishment, whereas Trump is not and does not.

It is time for all Trump supporters to call for his withdrawal from the 2024 presidential election, and to go forward with prosecution of the charges against him.

Brian Marlatt
 Honeymoon Bay, B.C.



EDITORIAL

NEWS REPORTERS Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Sophal Duch, Riddhi Kachhela, Irem Koca, and Neil Moss
 ENGAGEMENT EDITOR Christina Leadlay
 PHOTOGRAPHERS Sam Garcia, Andrew Meade, and Cynthia Münster
 EDITORIAL CARTOONIST Michael de Adder
 COLUMNISTS Andrew Caddell, John Chenier, Sheila Copps, David Crane, Jim Creskey, Gwynne Dyer, Michael Harris, Erica Hill, Joe Jordan, Rose LeMay, Alex Marland, Arthur Milnes, Tim Powers, Susan Riley, Ken Rubin, Bhagwant Sandhu, Evan Sotiropoulos, Scott Taylor, Nelson Wiseman, and Les Whittington.

ADVERTISING

VICE PRESIDENT MARKETING AND MULTIMEDIA SALES Steve MacDonald
 DIRECTORS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Craig Caldbick, Erveina Gosalci, Martin Reaume, Ulle Baum

DIGITAL AND DESIGN

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER David Little
 SENIOR WEB DEVELOPER Nick Vakulenko
 DIGITAL AND PRODUCTION MANAGER Joey Sabourin
 SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER Neena Singhal
 GRAPHIC DESIGNER Naomi Wildeboer

ADMINISTRATION

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER Tracey Wale

SUBSCRIPTIONS

MARKETING DIRECTOR Chris Rivoire
 SENIOR SUBSCRIPTION SALES CONSULTANT Ryan O'Neill
 LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER Melanie Grant
 OFFICE AND CIRCULATION MANAGER Irma Guameros
 SALES CONSULTANT Brendan MacKay

DELIVERY INQUIRIES

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.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40068926
 RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO: CIRCULATION DEPT.
 246 Queen Street Suite 200, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E4



CAF's fear of publicity shouldn't trump justice

Kristen Adams' courage has exposed how the military's fear of media coverage overrode its sense of responsibility to its employees.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



The military should be less worried about trying to protect its public reputation, and more concerned with the welfare of its people, writes Scott Taylor. *Unsplash photograph by Kristina Flour*



OTTAWA—Last week, *Ottawa Citizen* reporter David Pugliese wrote a couple of news items to follow up on how a Department of National Defence (DND) civilian employee continues to battle resistance from her former employers over the sexual assault she faced in the workplace. The assault took place during an overseas mission.

Back in October 2023, *The Citizen* first broke the story that Kristen Adams had been sexually assaulted by an Albanian soldier on the NATO base in Latvia. What made the story exceptionally newsworthy was the fact that when Adams reported the assault, she was told by her employers that she should have realized she faced such dangers when accepting a job supporting Canada's military mission in Latvia.

I can understand that when a soldier voluntarily enlists, they realize they are entering a contract which entails unlimited liability in that they could be killed in the line of duty. However, I cannot fathom a civilian position with DND that comes with the inherent risk of sexual assault.

To recap events as they unfolded: Adams was employed by the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) to support Canada's forward-deployed battle group in Latvia. On Dec. 3, 2022, she was working at the Commons canteen on Camp Adazi, which is open to all the NATO contingents stationed there. According to Adams, she greeted an Albanian soldier whom she knew and he proceeded to grab her left breast without her consent. Following this action, the Albanian reportedly commented to Adams, "Oh, you are very strong."

Shortly thereafter, Adams reported the incident to Canadian military police who promptly told her that under NATO rules, they had no jurisdiction to investigate. As a result, Latvian military police were brought in to examine the case.

After interviewing only Adams and the accused, on Dec. 14, 2022, the Latvians notified the Canadian Military Police that the investigation was "concluded," without providing any further details.

While it was outside their jurisdiction, the Canadian Military Police created a "shadow file" of Adams' case which did not dispute Adams' version of the events.

"On Dec 3, 2022, the victim was working as a civilian employee when a military member from another nation touched them inappropriately and without consent," the DND shadow file concluded.

No charges were laid against the Albanian man, and on Feb. 3, 2023, CFMWS informed Adams that her contract was being terminated two months early, "In order to ensure there is no further risk to [Adams'] health."

The real kicker came three months later when Ben Ouellette, a vice-president of CFMWS, wrote a letter to Adams. It read in part: "As you were made aware during pre-deployment training which occurred from 6 to 15 September 2022, there are risks involved in deploying to a theatre of operations where numerous countries work and live together and of the cultural differences that exist. In accepting to deploy, you [were] taking on a certain risk of working in this environment."

Come again? Does Ouellette truly believe there is a culture on this planet wherein males can simply grope women's breasts?

Given that by the time Ouellette sent Adams this note, the nationality of the accused was well known, are we to assume that Ouellette believes this is the cultural norm in Albania? How

is this man the vice-president of anything?

Furthermore, all the soldiers at Camp Adazi are members of NATO, and therefore, they are considered to be the defenders of the shared values which we purport to collectively defend. Why, then, would Adams be at risk of sexual assault while in Latvia?

After the original story broke, Adams told the *Ottawa Citizen* that she felt her case was swept under the rug to protect the Latvia mission. That did not stop her quest for justice. Using the Privacy and Access to Information acts, Adams was able to obtain a treasure trove of documents revealing how the leadership at both DND and CFMWS reacted out of fear of media coverage, rather than out of a sense of responsibility to their employee.

After *The Citizen's* first story broke there was an internal backlash among CFMWS employees as to how a fellow staffer had been thrown under the bus. This prompted CFMWS chief executive officer, retired Major General Ian Poulter, to issue an apology to all CFMWS staff for the manner in which this affair had been handled. The one person who did not receive an apology from Poulter was Adams. The documents obtained by Adams reveal that no apology was sent to her for fear that the *mea culpa* would prompt further stories in the *Ottawa Citizen*. Well, it turns out their prediction came true.

In the interest of full disclosure, I served with Poulter from 1984-1986, and I considered him a bright young officer. We have remained friendly—if not friends—over the years, and I must say these actions are not those of the man I once knew.

He knew that CFMWS had failed Adams, and he formally admitted so to all the employees, but he would not make that same admission to the victim for fear of repercussions in the media. That is not leadership. Those are the actions of a bureaucrat who puts the reputation of the institution ahead of the welfare of the victim.

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

The Hill Times

MPs, SENATORS, AND STAFF PLEASE JOIN US

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024
6:00 - 9:00 PM

O'Born Room, National Arts Centre
1 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario

CANOLA PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION 2024

RÉCEPTION PARLEMENTAIRE DU SECTEUR DU CANOLA DE 2024



This event is invite only

Comment

Sanewashing, denial, and hate-mongering: the new normal in the U.S.

About half the voting populace seems ready to cast a presidential ballot for a criminal who has trod on every notion of decency in American public life.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—We're about to find out how bad things really are in the United States.

About half the voting populace seems ready to cast a presidential ballot for a psychopathic criminal who has systemically and enthusiastically cast aside and trod on every normal political standard and notion of decency in American public life.

Donald Trump has—among many others things—called his mainstream rivals vermin, said there will be a “bloodbath” if he loses on Nov. 5, promised to deport millions of immigrants he claims are “poisoning the blood of our country,” threatened to use the military to suppress “disloyal” opponents, and envisioned weaponizing the U.S. justice department against his perceived enemies. During his first term, Trump reportedly praised Hitler’s generals for their absolute obedience to the *Führer* rather than the rule of law.

The use by politicians of the slogans and symbols of extremist elements of society has been a huge enabler for people who were once little more than eccentric outcasts. And no one, of course, has accelerated the normalization of extremism more than Trump. The turning point came in 2017 with his *de facto* support for a “Unite the Right” white supremacist rally held by neo-Nazi and KKK groups protesting the planned removal of a Confederate-era statue in Charlottesville, Va. It led to the death of a

counter-protester and several dozen injuries—an event at which, according to Trump, there were “very fine” people on both sides. You can draw a direct line between Charlottesville and the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol Hill insurrection Trump inspired to overthrow the 2020 election.

Trump’s racism draws on a particular Republican tradition that has been building for more than half a century, but no modern mainstream politician has been so explicit in their bigoted rhetoric. As well, he has effectively tapped into the economic insecurity of the working class that arose ironically from Republican lawmakers’ anti-worker policies going back to Ronald Reagan. In doing so, Trump has constructed what some have called a “white grievance party.” Its attitude toward people of colour is often driven to hateful extremes by convictions—amplified by Trump—that the government is providing breaks for minorities while white people fall behind. Researchers find that this resentment outweighs any doubts about Trump’s lying, rep-

rehensible character. Linked to this is the belief that the former president’s legal troubles are phoney.

In a paper entitled “The Authentic Appeal of the Lying Demagogue” published in the *American Sociological Review*, several researchers concluded that—for voters who feel betrayed by the existing power structure—Trump’s brazen disregard for truth, tradition, and custom can work to his advantage: “The greater his willingness to antagonize the establishment by making himself persona non grata, the more credible is his claim to be his constituency’s leader. His flagrant violation of norms (including that of truth telling) makes him odious to the establishment.”

“But this very need by the establishment to distance itself from the lying demagogue lends credibility to his claim to be an authentic champion for those who feel disenfranchised by that establishment,” the paper continues.

All this has real consequences, of course. A study by the *Washington Post* found that U.S. counties that had hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally saw a 226 per cent increase in reported hate crimes over comparable counties that did not host such a rally.

The Jewish Democratic Council of America (JDCA) cited a report by the Anti-Defamation League saying that, in the 2022 U.S. midterm elections, a record number of extremist candidates ran for office. At least 119 ran in

the primaries, and roughly 25 per cent won their election, the report noted. “One hundred percent of these extremists ran for office as Republicans, demonstrating that right-wing extremism has found a political home within the Republican Party,” the JDCA said.

Rendering the Republican leader’s excesses as ordinary has been facilitated by a mainstream media in the U.S. that has been completely overwhelmed by the Trump phenomenon of constant lying and canned outrage. Out of fear or in the name of some misguided idea of fairness, media have generally accepted the reality of a convicted criminal and insurrectionist running for president. The press has also been roundly criticized for so-called sanewashing. This is the practice of heavily editing or repackaging Trump’s often incomprehensible, crazy-sounding ramblings to make them readable and understandable. Some critics say this embroidery of the former president’s comments amounts to a steady diet of disinformation.

“Trump constantly saying extreme, racist violent stuff can’t always be new,” *The New Republic*’s Michael Tomasky commented. “But it is always reality. Is the press justified in ignoring reality just because it isn’t new?”

Oh, and incidentally, 45 per cent of Canada’s self-described Conservatives would—according to Leger—cast a ballot for Trump.

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

Justin Trudeau is fighting back, and it’s not pretty

The ruthlessness with which the prime minister dealt with challenges in the past couple of weeks may be a harbinger of the next election campaign.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—So much for “Sunny ways.”

When Justin Trudeau took Wilfrid Laurier’s slogan as his own in the election of 2015, I was encouraged he might copy one of the most popular leaders in Canadian history. Laurier won four consec-

utive elections to serve 15 years as prime minister, and was an MP for 45 years, both long-standing records.

It was said Laurier succeeded because he maintained his positive disposition, seeking out the best in people and working toward compromise. “Sunny ways” was more than a slogan—it was his vocation.

Sadly, the same cannot be said for the current occupant of the Prime Minister’s Office.

On Thanksgiving Monday, he announced an alleged conspiracy involving agents of the Government of India in “widespread violence” in Canada, including the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June of 2023 outside a gurdwara in Surrey, B.C. As a result, six Indian diplomats—including the high commissioner, Sanjay Kumar Verma—were expelled from the country.

An avowed Khalistani separatist with a shadowy background, Nijjar obtained Canadian citizenship in 2015 after two prior immigration refusals due to fraud. He was described as a

“community leader” or “an activist,” although he was wanted for murder in India. Before Verma was forced to leave, he pointed out India had 27 outstanding requests for extradition of Khalistanis wanted for violence in India, all of which had been refused by Canada.

While extrajudicial murder is absolutely unacceptable in a system of international law, so is harbouring fugitives from justice. By siding with the Khalistan movement for a Sikh state—a spent force in India—our prime minister is throwing any pretence of neutrality out the window. And although I am no fan of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist BJP government, when a regional power comes calling for bad guys, Canada should co-operate. Had FLQ killer Paul Rose escaped to India, would we not have expected him to be extradited?

The next day, the prime minister testified before the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference chaired by Justice Marie-Josée

Hogue. While his own party has been accused of being the tool of Chinese agents who allegedly ensured party nominations, he turned the tables on the opposition with a declaration, “I have the names of a number of parliamentarians in the [dramatic pause] Conservative Party of Canada ... who are engaged in foreign interference.” To me, this sounded like demagogic 1950s American senator Joseph McCarthy who claimed to have a “list of names” of public servants who were communists.

Then on Oct. 23, Trudeau stared down a failed caucus *putsch* by 24 or so unnamed MPs in his own party who had drafted a letter of unknown content. The *Toronto Star* revealed it asked him for “reflection” on “change” in the leadership of the party. My impression was Trudeau looked at his own reflection in the mirror, liked what he saw, and decided change would involve those two dozen MPs.

The next day, with a backdrop of a rainbow of Liberal MPs and Immigration Minister Marc Miller, he announced an anodyne plan to reduce the number of permanent residents arriving in Canada over the next two years. The fanfare, the MPs, and the change in policy after more than a year of immigration turmoil was accompanied by a message from

Trudeau to Liberal rank and file: I am staying.

While all these actions will no doubt be effective, they are the desperate acts of a prime minister who has lost the support of most Liberals. Some analysts are suggesting it is the sign of a stubborn man who doesn’t comprehend his time has run out.

I think he is buying time until the American presidential election next month. If Donald Trump wins, Trudeau can say Pierre Poilievre cannot be trusted to deal with Trump, while he has prior experience. As well, if the Parti Québécois wins the next election in Quebec, Trudeau could say only he—like his father—can defeat Quebec separatism.

All of this is highly unlikely, given polls showing the Liberals facing a calamitous defeat. But the ruthlessness with which the prime minister dealt with challenges in the past couple of weeks may be a harbinger of the next election campaign. More and more, he is proving he is no Laurier.

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

Apocalyptic or appealing? Conservative policies not slotting into Liberal trap

As the Liberals push the narrative that Pierre Poilievre poses a threat to the country, the Conservatives are pushing out policy items that don't reflect the PM's proof points.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has survived the Cotton Revolution launched by some members of his caucus—for now. Unsurprisingly—and as pre-

dicted in this space last week—the PM did not bow to elements of his caucus who wrote him a “Dear Justin” letter in hopes he might break up with them. Nope. The marriage, as it is, continues.

Prominent and well-respected former New Brunswick Liberal premier Frank McKenna told Vassy Kapelos on CTV's *Question Period* that he would step away were he in the prime minister's current position. McKenna—an established political winner himself—knows of what he speaks, but still the PM appears to not want to listen.

As the Liberals fumble about hoping that their political fortunes will fix themselves, they have another flank to worry about. This one involves policy. God forbid policy initiatives get in the way of a political drama.

On Oct. 28, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre—who has been accused by his opponents of being absent on the policy front—made an announcement about housing that is winning some early reviews. He announced that if the Conserva-

tives were to form government, they would not require the payment of GST on new homes sold for less than \$1-million. According to the Conservatives, this would see about 30,000 homes built in Canada every year. They say the move would save Canadians \$40,000 in mortgage payments on an \$800,000 home.

At the time of writing there was no official reaction from the Liberal government. How will they respond? It will likely take them somewhat off-track as it both distracts from their criticism of Poilievre's refusal to get a national security clearance, and casts a spotlight on their own housing strategy. Neither of those things is easily explained, nor as simply digested as cutting the GST on new home purchases under \$1-million. Whether it's an effective, thoughtful policy is for others to judge. But it is certainly consumable.

The Conservatives' housing announcement comes just a few days after the Liberals announced changes to their immigration policy surrounding

permanent residents. They cut their 2025 intake number by 21 per cent from 500,000 to 395,000. When the prime minister made this announcement, he gave a tacit acknowledgement that their initial targets may have been wrong. Poilievre and the Conservatives have been implying “we told you so” since the new targets were released. While organizations like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and Restaurants Canada have offered thoughtful criticism of the Liberals' changes, politically, a narrative of the Liberals chasing their tail or putting a finger in the wind to find public opinion plays well for the Conservatives who have been challenging the Liberals' immigration position for a while.

While simplistic in nature and questionable in practice, the Conservative Party has been religious in its promise to scrap the “carbon tax” should they take office. Though chastised as a simple slogan, it has been an effective-enough political device because the Trudeau govern-

ment still struggles mightily to convince Canadians that their carbon rebates are working to address people's own affordability challenges. Many Liberals have lamented the fact they have been pummelled in this public policy debate.

As the prime minister pushes the narrative that Poilievre poses a threat to the country, the Conservatives are pushing out some policy items that don't reflect Trudeau's proof points. Simultaneously, the government struggles to promote a contemporary policy framework that is both understandable and connects with enough of the public. The wins they had on childcare and even dental care seem like lifetimes ago, and a skeptical public is yet to buy an unpopular messenger's cry that the sky will fall if the Conservatives form government.

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

The Hill Times



More coverage. More places.

We're proudly launching satellite to mobile service to connect Canadians in the most rural and remote parts of our country.

 ROGERS

Feature

Q&A | Immigration reverse course and a system 'in chaos'

Elizabeth Long, an immigration lawyer, says immigrants, foreign workers, and international students shouldn't be scapegoated for all of the problems that the government has created.'

BY PETER MAZEREEUW

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced a significant cut last week to the number of temporary and permanent immigrants who will be admitted to Canada in the coming years.

The Oct. 24 announcement marks a reversal of the Trudeau government's approach to immigration, where, as recently as two years ago, Canada had welcomed a record-setting number of new permanent residents, and the government was planning to bring in even more in the coming years.

Now, those targets have been cut from a planned 500,000 permanent residents in 2025, to 395,000. The following years promise further cuts to 380,000 in 2026, and 365,000 in 2027.

The government is now also planning to significantly reduce the number of temporary foreign workers permitted to stay in Canada in the coming years after allowing a steep and steady increase in their numbers through much of Trudeau's time as prime minister.

The Hill Times' Peter Mazereeuw spoke to Elizabeth Long, an immigration lawyer and partner at LM Law Group in Toronto, to get her perspective on this shift.

Listen to that episode of *The Hill Times' Hot Room* podcast for



Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced a U-turn in the government's immigration policy on Oct. 24, scaling back plans for the number of new permanent residents from 500,000 to 395,000 in 2025. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

the full interview about what it could mean for immigrants who have already settled in Canada, and those who want to.

The following interview has been edited for length, style, and clarity.

We learned last week that the government is planning significant cuts to the number of permanent and temporary residents in the coming years. What was your first reaction when you saw this announcement?

"I mean, I wasn't really surprised by the announcement. I think we've heard a lot about what they're planning to do. I think it was more of a disappointment. Essentially, these decisions are being made, I think, as a reaction to what they perceive as public reactions, and not necessarily due to what our country needs."

The government explained the changes were being made to alleviate pressure on housing infrastructure and social services caused not by immigrants

in particular, but by population increase. Do you think there's something to that?

"You know, there are many, many reasons for the housing crisis. We've had a housing crisis for, you know, the last 40 years. I don't think that immigrants or foreign workers or international students should be scapegoated for all of the problems that the government has created."

"One of the reasons why I said I was disappointed about permanent residency numbers going down is because right now, when we're talking about people who are getting permanent residence, we are not talking about necessarily people who are coming into the country for the most part. We are talking about, for the most part, people who are already here in Canada, people who are already working in Canada, for them to be able to stay and immigrate."

You can make the argument that people who manage to immigrate in the coming years, they'll have less competition for jobs, housing,

and so on, instead of having more cohorts of people with similar skill sets coming through every year.

"I'm not disagreeing with not allowing so many international students. We had almost 900,000 last year come into the country. We can certainly limit new people from coming to the country. We had a lot of open work permits issued for people from countries like Ukraine, Iran, Israel. The list goes on as to how many humanitarian work permits were issued without ever accounting for how people are supposed to be able to stay long term, or being settled into the country. Because these kinds of work permits were not issued based on their ability to work in Canada, but on a humanitarian basis."

"The government has, through their actions, ballooned the [number] of temporary workers, international students in Canada, which was not a good decision. However, people are now in Canada. They have been in Canada for many years, and most of them are working in Canada right now. It is not going to be good for any of us to shrink the labour pool by this much. Just selfishly speaking, as someone who is a Canadian, I don't want to see restaurants closing down and businesses from large to small, suffering because necessary workers are not able to extend their work permits, and are not able to get permanent residence and stay in Canada. That's not good for anyone."

"It's not necessarily a correlation between having people come into this country and they are creating unemployment in Canada. In fact, I would say it's the opposite. When people come into the country, they create the need for services and goods, which will create more jobs for Canadians as well."

The government is planning to decrease the size of the temporary resident population by more than 400,000 individuals in 2025, and then by about that same number again in 2026. On a background briefing call with public servants from the immigration department, one of the questions journalists asked multiple times was: what's going to happen with all these people? Does the government have a plan to make them leave the country? It didn't seem like there was any plan that was articulated clearly in that briefing. What kind of options do these people have available to them?

"Well, I'm not surprised to hear that they didn't have a plan because I don't necessarily think that there is a good plan for people. Their options are either—if they cannot extend their work permits, and the government is shutting doors left, right, and centre on their ability to extend their work permits—that they will have to leave Canada and have to leave their jobs, or that they will be staying and working illegally in Canada."

What does that picture look like for someone who stays and works illegally in Canada? We hear a lot about people who don't have resident status in other countries. You don't hear as much about that in Canada. What do our rules say about people without status here?

"The reason why we haven't heard a lot of that in Canada is because, for the last few years ... traditionally speaking, we had good immigration systems which allowed people who had jobs in Canada to be able, for the most part, [to rely on] immigration policies to allow them to immigrate. And our immigration situation in Canada is very different from the U.S., where a lot of people cross the border and they enter the U.S. illegally. Instead, in Canada, we're surrounded by oceans and the United States, so we don't have a lot of people who are illegally entering Canada. We have international students who probably spent their families' lifelong earnings to be able to afford the international student fees to come to Canada and study for many years earning their degrees. And then were working in Canada, in high-skilled positions, for the most part, because that's what they're required to do, or in-demand occupations, because that's what they're trying to do in order to legally immigrate to Canada."

"And then, all of a sudden, the government then switches the rules on them. And many of these students were promised by schools, by the government officials, when they were recruited to come to Canada: 'We have an amazing immigration system. After you graduate, you can get a work permit, you can work for a year, then most people immigrate.' That's what they were told. And instead, now they're facing the possibility that they're going to need to leave Canada, and the life if they did stay in Canada is definitely not an easy one. If



Peter Mazereeuw, left, speaks to immigration lawyer Elizabeth Long on an episode of *The Hot Room* podcast.

An election promise for a questionable consumer advocacy office is all but dead

Achieving greater marketplace compliance and consumer protection seems to be far from what is on the minds of most political and bureaucratic operatives these days.

Ken Rubin

Opinion



OTTAWA—One of Justin Trudeau's promises from the Liberal 2019 election platform was to create a federal consumer advocacy office. But that—like other campaign promises—seems to have evaporated, and was both superficial and controversial.

Trudeau's Dec. 19, 2019, mandate letter to then-innovation minister Navdeep Bains asked him to "create a new Canadian Consumer Advocate to ensure a single point of contact for people who need help with federally regulated banking, telecom or transportation-related complaints."

The idea—as recently obtained access-to-information documents note—was narrow, and was put forward to draw in the existing complaint mechanisms of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the Canadian Transportation Agency, and the banking ombudsman into a central office. This would require changes to "four pieces of legislation (Banking Act, Telecommunications Act, Broadcast Act, Canada Transportation Act) and four Ministerial mandates."

However, no mention was made of whole consumer files like food, housing, or health that could use federal advocacy intervention.

Even some insiders at Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) mentioned that, federally, "the (proposed) role of Advocate needs to be revisited and reassessed as markets and technology evolve."

No records were provided outlining a broader advocacy office with flexibility that was forward-looking, and really independent. Noticeably absent in the documents is any talk of an advocacy office aggressively tackling the tight control industrial oligarchies have on the consumer marketplace.

A Dec. 20, 2019, document had mentioned creating "an interdepartmental forum for departments and agencies to discuss and take action on emerging consumer policy issues, set priorities for collaboration, monitor results and cohesively report back to Canadians." But that was not done.

The records reveal the proposed none-too-ambitious advocacy office was originally supposed to be in place by the summer of 2021. Costs for such an initiative were not included in the received documents.



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne had his own ideas on how to proceed with the consumer file, writes Ken Rubin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

It appears the advocacy office proposal met resistance from the banking, telecom, and transportation agencies that would lose all or part of their complaint mechanisms and funding. No records were provided of industry weighing in.

As well, by 2021, the political will for the idea seemed to have dimmed with no mention made by Prime Minister Trudeau of a consumer advocate office in the 2021 mandate letter to new Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne.

Existing consumer groups had been divided on the merits of such a government-sanctioned advocacy office that would have little independence, have no penalty powers, and which could mean cuts to their roles and cost award or other government funding.

As the advocacy office idea faded away, only the Consumers Council of Canada remained committed to pressing for one that they now wanted to be a broader, independent body. On their website, they argue that "Canadian consumers deserve

a national agency that has the sole objective to argue for consumers, advance their needs, and stress the relationship of those needs to the decision-making processes within agencies of government."

But that was not met with enthusiasm by other consumer groups that remained suspicious of the motivations behind a proposed consumer government advocacy bureaucratic intervention office, seeing it more as an attempt to stifle and control any independent consumer advocacy at a time when it is most needed.

Champagne—himself a very ambitious minister championing industry—had his own ideas on how to proceed with the consumer file.

He embarked on getting a few million dollars more annually in place through the Office of Consumer Affairs to disperse among consumer groups to do research projects on areas like shrinking food packaging that his government thought would benefit consumers and the government's standing.

Champagne has now widened who can do consumer research to academics, think tanks, and other groups—some with corporate ties. That will likely lessen monies on which some consumer groups were relying, and weaken the thrust for a more progressive, fairer marketplace.

An ISED spokesperson indicated that "tripling its investment" in consumer research and analysis is where the initiative now stands, with no mention of an advocacy office or of bolder interventions. However, the increased monies are still minuscule compared to those received by industry in addition to incentives for the corporate sector lobby.

In the meantime, some consumer groups are trying to wean themselves from mainly relying on government grants and regulatory cost awards, looking to new funding models ranging from mass membership dues, to government-sanctioned utility check-off fees, and to billing the private sector for court actions either through class actions or in individual cases.

Meeting the issues of affordability, lax regulation, and unfair marketplace tactics needs a more aggressive federal-provincial/territorial co-operative approach, the enactment of tougher consumer protection laws, and the active participation of Canadian consumers. So, it is understandable that an advocacy office would be questioned as an effective tool for consumer protection, empowerment, and advancement.

The federal consumer advocate office—either housed inside government, or as a quasi-government agency with a narrow or more general-purpose focus—has its supporters and detractors. But the idea never gained widespread consumer trust, nor—as expected—corporate or inter-agency acceptance, and is now effectively politically dead.

Such election promises can go by the wayside even though politicians are always saying they will somehow help consumers find the means to meet growing problems.

Effectively protecting and encouraging consumer involvement, or achieving greater marketplace compliance and consumer protection seems to be far from what is on the minds of most political and bureaucratic operatives these days.

Ken Rubin is a consumer and transparency advocate reachable at kenrubin.ca. *The Hill Times*

Join us in welcoming
Nathaniel Lipkus
as the Intellectual
Property Institute
of Canada's newly
elected President.

president@ipic.ca | 613.234.0516
360 Albert Street, Suite 550
Ottawa, ON K1R 7X7

ipic.ca



Intellectual Property Institute of Canada
Institut de la propriété intellectuelle du Canada

News

Liberals, Tories, and NDP remain united in court battle for ‘exclusive jurisdiction’ over voter data

New documents obtained by *The Hill Times* show the parties plan to focus their appeal on whether provincial laws should have jurisdiction over federal political parties.

BY IAN CAMPBELL

Despite their increasingly fractious relationship in the House of Commons, Canada’s three largest national political parties remain shoulder to shoulder in an ongoing legal battle that could have big implications for how they communicate with voters in future election campaigns.

New documents obtained by *The Hill Times* show that on Oct. 9, the federal Liberals, Conservatives, and NDP all filed appellant factums to the British Columbia Court of Appeal stating their case to overturn a B.C. Supreme Court ruling issued earlier this year. That judgment by Justice Gordon Weatherill would require the parties to follow stricter rules about how they use voters’ personal data—which plays a key role in fundraising, targeted persuasion, voter ID, and get-out-the-vote activities for all political parties.

The Liberal Party, which has taken the lead role among the political parties in litigating the case, filed a 98-page factum. The New Democrats delivered a nearly identical document, while the Conservatives filed a five-page item which simply says their party “adopts, reiterates, and relies on” the Liberal factum.

The filings come at a moment of otherwise heightened rhetoric between the parties, and amid parliamentary gridlock that has led to speculation a federal election could be triggered at any time.

If the next election comes before the appeal—which is expected to be heard in spring 2025—it’s unlikely the parties would have to comply with stricter privacy rules during that campaign because B.C.’s Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) has told *The Hill Times* its enforcement of the ruling will remain on pause pending the appeal.

If the ruling stands, federal political parties would be subject to B.C.’s Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).



Despite growing tensions in the House of Commons, the parties of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh filed identical arguments on Oct. 9 in an ongoing legal saga over the use of voters’ personal data. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

B.C. has one of the strictest privacy regimes in Canada, while current federal laws impose limited oversight on how political parties use voters’ personal information. Federal Privacy Commissioner Philippe Dufresne has said the current rules amount to “self-regulation.”

Privacy experts—and the complainants who challenged the parties over their data practices, setting the legal saga in motion—have said rapid technological advancement, including the use of AI for targeted messaging, requires greater regulation of how political parties collect and use voters’ data on a mass scale.

Federal laws must regulate federal parties, says appeal

However, the political parties say it’s not up to the provinces to make laws that regulate federal parties. The new appeal documents focus largely on this aspect—a key issue the political parties also raised previously at trial.

They argue the application of B.C.’s PIPA would “frustrate that federal purpose” of the Canada Elections Act, allowing provincial jurisdiction in an area Parliament intended to be “exclusively subject” to federal rules.

“Constitutionally, Parliament has exclusive jurisdiction to decide what balance to strike between enabling [federal political parties] to engage with voters, and voters’ ability to limit use of their personal information for election purposes,” says the Liberal Party factum.

Connor Bildfell, a B.C.-based lawyer with McCarthy Tétrault specializing in litigation and privacy who is not involved with the case, previously told *The Hill Times* that “in a nutshell, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that provincial privacy laws and federal election laws can live in harmony.”

“Provincial privacy laws aim to address the collection and use of personal information from the perspective of protecting the privacy of people within the province generally,” said Bildfell, describing the judge’s analysis in his ruling.

“Meanwhile, federal election laws aim to regulate federal political parties’ practices, and their need to communicate with voters,” he said. “In this way, the court reasoned, the two orders of government address the same issue through different lenses.”

The appeal is challenging several aspects of Weatherill’s decision in this regard.

The parties argue that federal laws in place in March 2022 already established Parliament’s paramouncy, when a delegate first ruled that the OIPC has jurisdiction over federal parties. The appeal says Weatherill erred in his judicial review by upholding that aspect of the OIPC delegate’s decision.

If the court does not accept that position, the appeal also argues that an amendment to the Canada Elections Act passed in 2023 further clarifies Parliament’s intent to have sole jurisdiction in this area.

The Liberal government’s 2023 Budget Implementation Act, passed in June 2023 as Bill C-47, contained amendments to the Canada Elections Act. It states that the act is intended to provide “a national, uniform, exclusive, and complete [privacy] regime” for federal political parties.

The Liberal factum argues that these amendments further established Parliament’s paramouncy, and they should be applied retroactively to the OIPC’s decision. They say Weatherill erred in not doing so.

Weatherill and the Liberal Party lawyer discussed this aspect in a key exchange near the end of the trial earlier this year, held between April 22 and May 1.

Retroactivity issue sparked key exchange with judge

On the final day, Liberal Party lawyer Cathy Beagan Flood reiterated her argument that the 2023 amendments were retroactive. Weatherill challenged her claim.

“It’s very clear that it was never intended to be retroactive,” said Weatherill. “The plain English reading of it was that it doesn’t take effect until ... the period of six months after—between the time that it’s enacted and the next election.”

The amendment states that, “Despite subsection 554(1) of the Canada Elections Act, the amendment ... applies in an election for which the writ is issued within six months after the day on which this Act receives royal assent.”

Beagan Flood argued this section of the bill was meant to establish that it wouldn’t apply to an election within six months of it receiving royal assent, but “that doesn’t mean it’s not also retroactive.”

She also said Parliament’s “intent” should be inferred from the context in which the bill was crafted.

“The purposes for which the amendment was made—which the complainants acknowledge—was to respond to the delegate’s decision in this case. The purpose of the legislation clearly was to change that interpretation,” she said.

Weatherill said the legislation was clear.

“This isn’t the first time that the drafters of federal legislation have picked up a pen and paper,” said Weatherill. “The easiest thing in the world for Parliament to have done, particularly in the circumstances here where they were clearly intending to deal with this [OIPC] decision ... was make it expressly retroactive.”

“Why on earth wouldn’t they have taken the time to write a few more words,” he said. “I.e. maybe four: It is also retroactive.”

Further amendments hang in the balance of uncertain Parliament

The Liberal factum touches on additional legislation before Parliament to amend the Canada Elections Act. It argues these changes will further reinforce Parliament’s intent to be the sole authority.

Bill C-65—introduced in March 2024 as the Electoral Participation Act—adds some additional details to what parties must include in their privacy policies, such as measures related to data breaches. Privacy experts have said it still falls short of several key elements needed for a robust privacy regime.

There is no guarantee it will ever become law before the appeal.

The bill passed second reading in June, and was referred to the Procedure and House Affairs Committee. That study has not yet begun, and the bill could die if Parliament is prorogued or the House gets dissolved for an early election.

Even if passed, there could also be questions about its retroactivity. The bill uses language similar to C-47 regarding when and how its amendments would come into force.

Pass stricter federal laws, say advocates

The documents reveal the federal parties have dropped some of their past arguments, including others touching on jurisdiction. They are also no longer arguing they did not receive a fair trial at the initial hearing held by the OIPC delegate.

The complainants have until December 2024 to file their response. None of the parties responded to requests for comment from *The Hill Times*.

Some privacy experts who support stricter data regulation for federal parties have previously told *The Hill Times* that the primary force driving the issue is not a desire to see federal parties subject to provincial laws, but rather to ensure there are robust privacy rules governing federal parties. They say they would welcome federal legislation to address this.

“This whole complex and expensive case would go away if the federal political parties agreed to apply the same standards to their operations that they have been happy to impose on government agencies and private businesses over the years,” said Colin Bennett in a March 2024 interview with *The Hill Times*.

The case is expected to return to court in the spring. The next election could come at any time, meaning there is no guarantee it will be heard before Canadians go to the polls.

icampbell@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

TELECOM



Boltman:
**The free ride
is over for
Netflix, isn't it?**
p. 18

**Aubin: Updating
Canada's
broadcasting
policy
framework:
a process
gone awry**
p. 20

O'Toole:
**Connectivity
equals
sovereignty**
p. 19

**Ghiz: Telecom's
role in solving
Canada's productivity
crisis** p. 21

And more...

Telecom Policy Briefing

Funding gaps, policy shortfalls keeping rural Canada offline, experts say

‘What has constrained a lot of these rural communities is they still see it as something that either the federal government or big telecommunication companies are going to come and solve,’ says University of Alberta professor Michael McNally.

BY PHALEN TYNES-MACDONALD

Despite billions of dollars in government funding aimed at bridging the digital divide, Canada’s current connectivity policies are falling short by leaving rural and Indigenous communities behind, experts argue.

For a number of Canadians living in rural areas, the promise of reliable, affordable internet remains out of reach. While the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s (CRTC) universal service objective and the federal government’s connectivity strategy have pledged Canada-wide access to internet download speeds of 50 Mbps and upload speeds of 10 Mbps by 2030, progress has been slow for residents outside of urban areas. With rural, remote, and Indigenous households making up a disproportionate amount of those still disconnected, some experts advocate for a shift in policy focus, moving beyond simply funding infrastructure and towards fostering an environment in which local initiatives can flourish.

“The irony is that the people that need the connectivity the most are typically going to be the last ones in line to get it,” said Wayne Kelly, director of Brandon University’s Rural Development Institute, in an interview with *The Wire Report*.

“Because this is all based on market stimulus funding, then you’re typically rolling it out on a model that’s based on market demand,” said Kelly, pointing to “easy-access” rollouts that prioritize areas with higher population density and market demand. By going incrementally from bigger towns, to slightly smaller ones, to the next tier of smaller ones, and so on, the smallest, most-remote communities are expected to be the last to be connected.

Despite the challenges of the current market-stimulus approach, Kelly acknowledged the benefits that recent funding initiatives have had for rural connectivity, noting “an expansion of networks across rural Manitoba.”

The CRTC’s 2016 establishment of the universal service objective was a “game changer,” he said. “It’s been really important from a policy perspective, and from an impact perspective.”

According to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED), 94.8 per cent of Canadian households had access to high-speed internet as of the end of 2023. While the department did not provide specifics on the disparities between urban and rural households, a report from the federal auditor general shows that as of 2021, 99.3 per cent of urban households had high-speed internet access, compared to 59.5 per cent of households in rural and remote areas, and 42.9 per cent of households on First Nations reserves.

Although these communities present a less-profitable market for major providers, they are the most in need of connectivity because of existing barriers to accessing essential services, such as health care and education, as

well as economic opportunities, Kelly argued.

“Building it isn’t enough. It’s not a ‘build it and they will come’ scenario, it’s just the very first phase. Is it a required element? Absolutely. But you need to build the digital infrastructure, then you need to build the digital capacity, and then you need to build the culture of use—and it’s only at that point that you really start to see the benefits of digital technology,” said Kelly.

To help rural and remote communities catch up on the digital usage front and know what is available to them, “it’s going to take targeted and dedicated supports,” said Kelly.

He argued that the connectivity for communities in these areas will continue to lag behind the rest of the country—even if they eventually gain access to target speeds of 50/10—unless the government implements supports for them to develop their own broadband solutions so they can upgrade their networks.

“Those targets were fantastic for 2016. The problem is the target was [set] for 2030, 14 years later,” he said, noting that in 2002, the broadband service target was 1.5 Mbps.

“The thought of having 1.5 Mbps speeds in 2016 was ridiculous, you couldn’t do anything,” said Kelly.

There is a risk that rural and Indigenous communities—particularly those that have been connected through fixed wireless or other technologies not considered future-proof—are going to continue to be left behind as technology and data needs evolve, he argued.

“We need to consider much more strongly how to incorporate community solutions in areas where markets are not providing the answer,” said Kelly.

Michael McNally, library and information studies professor at the University of Alberta, echoed Kelly’s sentiment.

“Even now, I think it’s questionable putting money into



Rural Economic Development Minister Gudie Hutchings said that ‘communities large and small need to have a reliable connection so they can grow their potential in this digital world,’ in a June press release. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

projects at 50/10 when the United States is looking at speeds double that, and the Europeans are building gigabit networks with the target of universal gigabit coverage by 2030,” he said.

“Some of the projects we’re funding are not going to be scalable,” said McNally. “The speed target is one of the key things that needs to be addressed because it’s simply not going to be competitive in a few years’ time.”

According to Ian Baggley, director general of the Broadband Fund, the CRTC is focused on the 50/10 universal service objective.

“There are still areas that don’t even have that minimum level of service,” said Baggley in an interview with *The Wire Report*.

“The fact of the matter is, a significant number—if not the majority—of the projects that we have funded provide services that exceed that minimum standard,” he stated, noting that fibre speeds can go up to 1 Gbps.

Baggley said ISED will be examining the service standard “of their own accord” following recommendations from the auditor general report, but the CRTC will

continue moving forward with its current funding plan “as it is.”

‘No one-size-fits-all solution for rural broadband’: Michael McNally

McNally noted the importance of mobile wireless for rural connectivity. According to the CRTC, 97.1 per cent of rural communities have mobile wireless coverage.

According to the Spectrum Policy Framework established in 2007, “market forces should be relied upon to the maximum extent feasible.” McNally argued that this fails to consider the reality of rural connectivity.

“That doesn’t necessarily work in rural communities where there are little to no market forces in telecommunications,” he said.

McNally called for the framework to be revisited so that “strategic considerations around how to get the most out of spectrum in rural context” could be carved out.

Continued on page 24



Investing in Canada's connected future

Canada's telecom sector is laying the groundwork for Canadian businesses to enhance their productivity and competitiveness by investing in advanced network infrastructure and technologies, including gigabit networks, 5G, AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and cloud computing.

In addition to economic growth, this increased productivity creates better job opportunities for Canadian workers, raises living standards, and helps fund social programs that assist the most vulnerable.

However, for Canada to fully realize its productivity potential and stimulate economic growth, policymakers must support and encourage ongoing investment in advanced telecommunications.

Policies should also encourage the adoption of digitization across Canadian industries to increase output more efficiently. By fostering such an environment, Canada can combat stagnating productivity and ensure that its economy becomes more dynamic and competitive in the years to come.

Canada's future depends on connectivity, which is why we are investing in Canada's future.

Learn more at canadatelecoms.ca



Telecom Policy Briefing

The free ride is over for Netflix, isn't it?

To date, the American streamers' exposure of Canadian shows to Canadian audiences has been poor, writes Marla Boltman. *Unsplash photograph by Shutterstock Speed*



The CRTC must take seriously Parliament's mandate to make the streamers an equal partner with domestic broadcasters in producing and promoting Canadian storytelling.

Marla Boltman

Opinion



Back in September 2017, when the idea of an Online Streaming Act was off the Liberal table, then-heritage minister Mélanie Joly signed a confidential agreement with Netflix for \$500-million of streaming production to be shot in Canada.

To this day, we don't know how much Netflix spent on shows you could honestly describe as Canadian content, as opposed to shooting American shows on Canadian soil. It was a Netflix plan for Canada instead of a Canadian plan for Netflix.

Now we have the Online Streaming Act. Yet Netflix and Hollywood's Motion Picture Association haven't stopped campaigning for a Netflix plan for Canada. The tip of their rhetorical spear has been reminding us

how much shooting of American shows they do while using our world-famous facilities and talent, while cashing in on Canadian tax credits. Nobody on either side of the border has ever complained about that win-win arrangement.

But following the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) ruling to implement the new Act—which includes requirements for the streamers to contribute to local news and Indigenous production—you could hear the teeth grinding all the way from California. The streamers are indignant at the Canadian regulator, and they are hoping to go to court over it.

The streamers' court appeal will fail, and the CRTC's next challenge will be to soothe their savage passions.

The Commission got a head start on doing that in June, reducing the streamers' "initial basic (cash) contribution" to Canadian media funds from five per cent to 3.5 per cent of their Canadian revenues, provided the streamers devote the rebated 1.5 per cent to making their own Canadian content—which historically has required Canadian stories to be owned, controlled, and told by Canadians.

Going forward, the Commission has at least two other big pieces to fit into this regulatory puzzle.

The first is assigning "Canadian Programming Expenditures" for the streamers to earmark in their budgets; spending on actual Canadian content programming like *Blackberry*, *Kim's Convenience*, and Netflix's own *Jusqu'au déclin*.

For context, Canadian broadcasters spent \$33-billion over the last 10 years doing just that.

The CRTC measures Canadian programming spending as a percentage of Canadian revenues. The streamers' 1.5 per cent discount is a down payment on their as-yet-undetermined Canadian content budgeting.

This number that the CRTC eventually puts to paper is where the rubber will hit the road. Expect the public hearing on the issue—not scheduled for another year—to benchmark streamer Canadian content spending against our Canadian broadcasters' own spending.

What is that benchmark? In 2023, Canadian cable licensees—including Montreal's Club Illico, Halifax-based Wildbrain, or Vancouver's OutTV—earned \$3.83-billion in revenues while spending \$1.83-billion on Canadian programming. That's a 48 per cent Canadian spend.

Among all Canadian services, Netflix's most direct competitor is Bell Media's cable service Crave. Last year, it earned \$115-million while spending \$30-million on Canadian content, a 27 per cent Canadian spend (the CRTC has yet to release matching data from Crave's streaming platform).

Once the CRTC has fixed its number for streamer spending on Canadian stories, we must ensure their online discoverability, meaning the efforts streaming platforms make to push their Canadian shows to the foreground where customers are enticed to watch.

To date, the American streamers' exposure of Canadian shows

to domestic audiences has been poor.

Visit the "Canadian" menu on Netflix.ca or any of the streamers' Canadian services. Mostly, you will find previous seasons of classic Canadian shows rubbing elbows with popular American programming that casts a Canadian or two in anything but a leading role. What you will rarely find is fresh, authentic Canadian content pushed for its own sake. By all means, log in and count the number of Canadian shows in the "top 10 watched in Canada," or the "just for you" recommendations.

So here is the call to action. Both Canada and the European Union have told the streamers that they must deliver better results on local content. But it's hard to move the needle on discovering Canadian content unless the streamers redouble efforts to recommend Canadian shows, exactly what Members of Parliament told them to do by passing section 3(1)(r) of the Online Streaming Act.

The mission for the CRTC is to take seriously Parliament's mandate to make the streamers an equal partner with our country's broadcasters in producing and promoting Canadian storytelling.

Making great Canadian content that sells domestically and globally is well within the considerable abilities of the streamers. After all, Canadian broadcasters have been doing it for decades. The CRTC need only help the streamers see and do it.

Marla Boltman is the executive director for Friends of Canadian Media.

The Hill Times

Closing the connectivity chasm

Despite the successes, several crucial gaps in expanding rural coverage remain.

Michael B. McNally

Opinion



Digital connectivity is essential infrastructure for the 21st century. Broadband is ubiquitous in urban Canada, but rural, remote, and Indigenous communities continue to lag behind.

Since the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) declared broadband an essential telecommunication service in late 2016 and set a national speed target of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload with an unlimited data cap—also known as "50/10"—availability of broadband has increased from 82 per cent of households to 93 per cent in 2022. The initial goal of increasing availability to 90 per cent of households by the end of 2021 was met, and the CRTC estimates that the goal of universal access to the target speed by 2031 is on track. Unprecedented federal funding—commitments over the last 10 years more than double expenditures over the previous 20 years—are an important factor in expanding rural coverage.

Despite the successes, several crucial gaps remain. Mobile wireless coverage in rural areas continues to trail urban areas. While in urban Canada 5G coverage is increasingly prevalent, less than two-thirds of rural Canadians have access to the latest wireless speeds. Although recent funding programs including both Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada's (ISED) Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) and the CRTC's Broadband Fund have in part targeted roadway coverage, the CRTC reports that the Trans-Canada Highway still has 600 km of roadway lacking a wireless signal. More broadly, there are more than 14,000 km of major roads and highways without mobile access. These roads and highways are often found in more northern and remote routes where cellular service is crucial for public safety.

The push toward universal access at 50/10 by 2031 belies another challenge. The 50/10 speed target was set in 2016, and while these speeds are currently sufficient for households, communities will need faster connections to support businesses and community anchor organizations

Continued on page 23

Connectivity equals sovereignty

Building a connected Arctic will demonstrate our commitment to sovereignty, reconciliation, and a modern, inclusive Canada.

Erin O'Toole

Opinion



Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal. We need strategic federal investment and meaningful partnerships with Inuit communities and private-sector providers to create sustainable, long-term connectivity in the Arctic, writes Erin O'Toole. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and the path to reconciliation with Inuit and Indigenous Peoples demand one of the most significant telecom investments Canada has ever undertaken. The stakes are high: without connectivity, the economic opportunities, security measures, and community resources essential for northern Canadians will remain out of reach. Now is the time for the federal government to prioritize Arctic subsea fibre optic cables as the foundation of an inclusive, secure, and resilient northern future. Canada must make good on its commitments to invest in Arctic sovereignty and rural broadband by funding and building the critical infrastructure needed to bridge the northern digital divide.

In its landmark 2023 report, *A Secure and Sovereign Arctic*, the House Standing Committee on National Defence put forward a bold vision for Arctic sovereignty that includes Recommendation 17: a call for Canada to prioritize the laying of subsea fibre optic cables in the Arctic. The committee emphasized that these connections are critical not only to the functioning of northern communities, but also to Canada's national security, economic development, and social services. Fibre infrastructure will empower remote communities to engage fully in the digital economy, access vital government services, and ensure Arctic Canada remains a key component of our sovereign territory.

Alert, on the northern part of Ellesmere Island in Nunavut,

is the most northerly inhabited point on the planet. Established as a critical Canadian Armed Forces and weather observation outpost in 1950, Alert was constructed to be the physical embodiment of Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. It still plays that role.

Grise Fjord, the nearest populated community, tells a very different story of Canada's historical assertion of Arctic sovereignty. It was here, in 1953, that Inuit families were forcibly relocated under the High Arctic Relocation program, effectively becoming "human flagpoles" in a Cold War-era strategy to populate the Arctic. Their lives were forever altered to exert Canada's sovereignty in the Far North.

Decades later, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

confirmed that the relocation "did contribute to the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty," and in 2010, the government issued a formal apology for the hardship these families endured. In the apology, then-minister John Duncan noted the "extreme hardship and suffering for Inuit who were relocated" to Grise Fjord and Resolute Bay, calling it a "dark chapter" in Canadian history.

However, apologies must be backed by action, and today, Grise Fjord and other Arctic communities remain among the most isolated places on Earth. They face an extreme digital divide, with less than half of Inuit households connected to the internet, according to the 2023 auditor general report on rural and remote connectivity.

To be connected in the Arctic is not simply about fast internet—it's about addressing this legacy, empowering communities, and ensuring access to education, health care, and emergency services. Yet, current telecommunications in these areas rely on satellite or microwave transmission, which is costly, prone to environmental and electromagnetic disruptions, and geopolitically precarious. The recent controversy around the control of commercial satellite options—such as Starlink—has highlighted how vulnerable the North's connectivity remains. By contrast, subsea fibre provides a reliable, high-performing solution that would also securely connect our military and observational facilities, but it requires a federal commitment and a strategy to construct and safeguard these critical networks.

In 2019, Canada launched *High Speed for All*, a rural and remote internet strategy with a mandate to provide high-speed connectivity across the country, built on three pillars: access, investment, and partnerships. The auditor general's 2023 report confirmed that we're failing to meet the goal of "high speed access for all." However, we still have a path forward through the other two pillars: we need strategic federal investment and meaningful partnerships with Inuit communities and private-sector providers to create sustainable, long-term connectivity. This infrastructure must serve a dual purpose: reconciling with the Inuit for past wrongs, and ensuring the sovereignty of Canada's High Arctic.

Building subsea fibre optic networks to link our Arctic communities would be as transformational for the North as the railway was for Western Canada. By investing in subsea cables, the government can finally make good on its apologies and promises. Building a connected Arctic will demonstrate our commitment to sovereignty, reconciliation, and a modern, inclusive Canada. It will open new economic pathways, support education and health care, and provide remote communities with the tools needed to thrive in the digital era. More importantly, it will be an investment in Canada's security, sovereignty, and unity—a step toward ensuring that our true north remains strong, connected, and free.

Erin O'Toole is the president of ADIT North America, and former leader of the Conservative Party of Canada.

The Hill Times

Towards a new Canadian broadband future?

We will need to face the reality that the fundamental competition now is not primarily between the telecom carriers, but with other value systems.

Erik Bohlin

Opinion



There have been renewed concerns about Canada's lagging productivity and weak investment climate, especially around broadband infrastructure, which provides a foundation for a thriving digital economy. Turning adversity into opportunity, now is the time to develop new visions

for enhancing prosperity and growth against the backdrop of telecom infrastructures.

Long-standing gaps with the United States in both labour productivity, and information and communications technology investments have been identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and more recently, productivity concerns have been raised in the construction sector and high tech in Canada. One of our technology sectors—telecoms—is facing increasing problems with growth, profitability, and falling stock prices.

Research over the last 20 years has established that broadband plays a significant role in enhancing productivity and economic growth. Moreover, the importance of an inclusive digital infrastructure for all to benefit from the opportunities has been recognized since the start of commercial internet in the 1990s. However, an investment paradox has emerged since then, both for wireline and wireless networks. While relying on the telecom infrastructure, the so-called BigTech companies

have developed strong platforms and applications that wield substantial market power and capture significant value, and even newer players have started to dominate artificial intelligence.

This paradox is not being reversed by 5G. The build-out of 5G has been most extensive in markets where telecom is rapidly expanding, such as China and India. Countries—such as Canada—which had expansion in 4G are relatively slower in 5G, reflecting typical investment cycles.

Moreover, the traditional broadcasting industry is meeting the same challenges where—increasingly—the old broadcasting style of programmed and pervasive TV is being replaced by on-demand and online streaming where new players produce content that captures the audience. Some broadcasters around the world have been able to transit towards online platforms, but others are remaining in the old style, and losing out.

In this context, the recent Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission decision directing the major telephone

companies to provide wholesale access to fibre networks may prove pivotal for investment incentives.

For 25 years, the European Union has followed a primary emphasis on mandated access in telecoms, and has lower rates. However, the recent debate initiated by the European Commission to push BigTech to compensate the telecom carriers for investment shortage suggests that all is not well in Europe. A telecom investment shortage of more than 150-billion euros has been identified in recent well-publicized EU reports.

The crises in productivity, inclusion, growth, and complex regulations present themselves as an opportunity. What we need is an increased dialogue about Canada's objectives and about the impact of long-term infrastructure development on citizens' welfare because telecom even has potential benefits on climate change and resilience. There is a need for government funding, as well as collaboration between government and industry. New modes of infrastructure finance and public-private partnerships need to be developed.

We also need an increased dialogue between industry and government about the fundamental objectives for developing a strong, viable Canada, and the enabling role that telecom infrastructure may play in achieving that vision—a vision that will need to face the reality that the fundamental competition now is not primarily between the telecom carriers, but with other value systems.

Ivey Business School is taking some small steps toward that end by hosting a series of workshops where government and industry are invited to reflect on the pressing situation for the telecom infrastructure for Canada. The workshops have centred on broadband policy and new frameworks for resilience, with a recent one centred on satellites.

Erik Bohlin is an expert in telecommunications policy, an inter-disciplinary topic concerned with the impact of digitalization in the economy and society. Bohlin holds the Ivey Chair in Telecommunication Economics, Policy, and Regulation at Ivey Business School at Western University.

The Hill Times

Telecom Policy Briefing



CRTC chairperson and CEO Vicky Eatrides. The CRTC's decision to impose contributions on streaming services before addressing the definition of Canadian content reflects its capture by legacy broadcasters, write Len St-Aubin and Philip Palmer. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Updating Canada's broadcasting policy framework: a process gone awry

The CRTC's inability to respond with agility or openness to the possibilities of the internet age undermines the purposes of its consultative processes.

Len St-Aubin & Philip Palmer

Opinion



The delivery of audio and audiovisual content over the internet poses a host of issues for Canadian cultural policy, and directly threatens the traditional broadcasting industry's business model. Yet, despite this fundamental shift in how content is created and consumed, Canada has failed to modernize its policy framework to reflect this new reality.

It is hard to enforce borders on the internet. It's in this context of a

global online content market and distribution that Canada faced two important policy questions:

1. What content do we want to support? Traditionally, that included audio and audiovisual content created by Canadians (CanCon), as defined by industrial policy criteria.

2. What is best way to support CanCon? Historically, that was done through legacy broadcasting quotas, levies on distributors, tax incentives, and public financing.

Both government and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) can define CanCon. The government for tax credits and public financing, and the CRTC for regulatory obligations. Yet neither Bill C-11—the Online Streaming Act—nor subsequent government policy addressed this key issue, leaving it for the CRTC to define.

So, with the enactment of C-11, the CRTC now faces two key questions:

1. What does “Canadian content” mean today if you take into account how Canadians create, produce, market, and access content online?

2. With that in mind, what are the most effective measures to promote CanCon today?

Bill C-11 amended the Broadcasting Act to give the CRTC

the power to regulate streaming services such as Netflix and YouTube as if they were broadcasters, subject to CanCon obligations. Rather than modernizing broadcasting policy and regulation to reflect the reality of the internet, the Act pulls streaming services into the outdated framework of Canadian broadcasting.

Early in the parliamentary process, observers—including regulatory experts—identified the prime area of regulatory risk: if foreign streamers were to be required to invest in and present CanCon, would content they produce and finance, and/or upload using Canadian creators, talent, and crews be considered CanCon? Some streamers were already doing that, and Canadian creators of unregulated online content were reaping the benefits.

Had the CRTC addressed that issue in its first round of consultations, we would now have clear ground rules. Foreign streaming services, Canadian creators, and producers would all now have a degree of regulatory certainty.

Instead, CRTC regulatory proceedings—a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernize Canada's broadcasting policy and regulatory framework—failed to address this foundational issue. As a result, the consultative and

regulatory processes have gone awry.

This has led to foreseeable consequences that risk undermining Canadian broadcasters, producers, creators, and Canadians' ability to access online content of our choice. These consequences include:

- A CRTC process that extends regulatory uncertainty for online streaming until at least the end of 2025—and likely much longer as appeals play out.

- Predictable legal challenges to an initial, mandatory “base contribution” of five per cent of online streamers' Canadian revenues to an array of special-interest CanCon funds, some unrelated to streamers' content offerings. And the CRTC suggestion of more obligations to come.

- A definition of CanCon applied to online streaming that remains grounded in mid-20th-century radio and TV distribution models, reliant on quotas and subsidies.

- No apparent recognition of streamers' market-based investments in CanCon, and production in Canada that supports an outsized, world-class production sector.

- Netflix's consequent withdrawal of more than \$25-million in support to Canadian organizations, including First Nations groups, which had been focused on developing next-generation creators.

- For Canada's young digital-first creators who use streamers to reach global audiences, continued uncertainty about the potential impact of regulating social media.

- The possibility that some streamers will block access from Canada, diminishing Canadians' ability to access content online.

The CRTC's fumbling regulatory initiatives take place against—and exacerbate—a challenging real-world environment. Faced with increased competition from global streamers for Canadian audiences—and now for publicly

financed CanCon, too—Canadian broadcasters are seeking reductions in their own CanCon obligations.

The CRTC's decision to impose contributions on streaming services before addressing the definition of Canadian content reflects its capture by legacy broadcasters, and those who benefit from the closed Canadian audio and audio-visual production community. It also disregards the thousands of Canadian creators who produce content for a global audience without subsidy or regulatory protection.

In its initial exercise of its new powers under C-11, the CRTC has signalled its clear preference for the protectionist system created for the era of over-the-air broadcasting. Its inability to respond with agility or openness to the possibilities of the internet age undermines the purposes of its consultative processes. No segment of Canadian society benefits from participation in a consultation that has approached the issues in the wrong sequence and leans in favour of outdated, legacy regulation.

Len St-Aubin is an independent internet and telecoms consultant whose clients have included streamers, carriers, government, and not-for-profits. He is a former director general of telecommunications policy at Industry Canada, and a past member of the policy teams that developed both the 1991 Broadcasting Act and the 1993 Telecommunications Act. Philip Palmer, vice-president of the Canadian Internet Society, is an Ottawa-based lawyer specializing in internet and telecommunications law. He is a former senior general counsel at the Department of Justice. Palmer has helped develop the Broadcasting, Radiocommunication, and Telecommunications Acts, Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation, and has frequently testified before parliamentary committees and appeared in notable telecom cases.

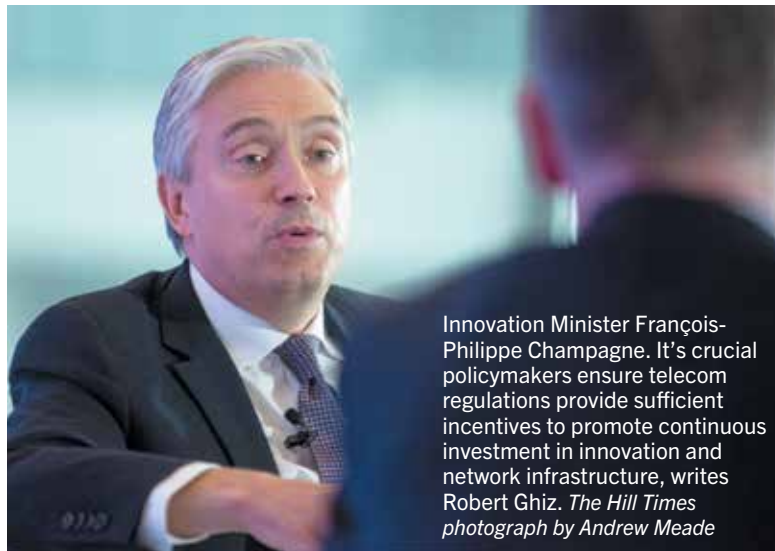
The Hill Times

Telecom's role in solving Canada's productivity crisis

Telecom networks are the critical infrastructure underpinning the digital economy, and the foundation for Canada's future economic growth.

Robert Ghiz

Opinion



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne. It's crucial policymakers ensure telecom regulations provide sufficient incentives to promote continuous investment in innovation and network infrastructure, writes Robert Ghiz. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada is experiencing a productivity crisis. The wealth gap between Canada and the United States has widened, and Canada's GDP per capita has dropped below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average. Carolyn Rogers, senior deputy governor

of the Bank of Canada, recently highlighted this issue, calling it a "productivity emergency."

A key contributor to our lagging productivity is Canada's weak record of business investment. Boosting productivity requires Canadian industries to increase their investments in the latest tools and technologies that

will make their workforce more productive and their businesses more competitive.

Increasingly, this involves adopting digital technologies and data to increase productivity by streamlining processes, automating operations, and using data to drive continuous improvement in efficiency and sustainability. A

recent Statistics Canada report shows that industries heavily reliant on digital technologies saw productivity gains during the post-COVID recovery period.

Despite the benefits of digital transformation, too few Canadian businesses are embracing it. More must be done to understand the reasons behind this reluctance. Governments at all levels should also consider policies and programs that encourage the adoption of productivity-enhancing technology.

However, encouraging the adoption of digital technologies by industries is only part of the solution to Canada's productivity crisis. The telecom sector provides the critical infrastructure and services that new digital technologies—such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and robotics—depend upon. Only through sustained private sector investment in expanding and enhancing high-speed and high-capacity wireless and wireline technologies can Canadian industries fully realize the productivity benefits of digital transformation.

Telecom: the backbone of economic growth

Telecom networks provide more than faster home internet or better mobile phone service—they are the critical infrastructure underpinning the digital economy and the foundation for our future economic growth. In 2023 alone, the telecom industry contributed nearly \$81-billion to this country's GDP, and supported more than 780,000 jobs across industries. The expansion of the digital economy—particularly through advanced connectivity solutions—is projected to add an additional \$112-billion to Canada's GDP by 2035, according to consulting firm PwC.

These contributions to the domestic economy are fuelled by the investments made by the telecom sector to expand and enhance its network infrastructure and services. Since 2010, the sector has invested more than \$177-billion in capital expenditures, including \$29-billion in payments to the Government of Canada for radio frequency spectrum licences. In comparison to peers in the U.S., Japan, Australia, and Europe, Canadian telecom providers invested—on average—42 per cent more in capital expenditures per subscriber in 2023.

But there is more work to be done. Demands on telecommunications networks

Continued on page 24

Rural connectivity divides: a case for public fibre transport and a reframing of affordability

While there appears to be little appetite in provincial or federal government to support public broadband infrastructure, this could change in the right hands.

Michel Mersereau

Opinion



At a recent panel discussion hosted by the Youth Internet Governance Forum of Canada, I was happy to share my thoughts with a representative from North

End Connect, a not-for-profit working to build connectivity solutions in north Winnipeg. The technical, economic, and sustainability challenges faced by northern Winnipeg residents in obtaining and maintaining reliable internet connectivity are not dissimilar to those reported by community practitioners in rural and remote regions, and that various levels of government have taken steps to resolve in the years following the pandemic.

We can observe successes in some rural and remote communities as a result of these efforts, including federal funding of transport fibre in northern Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and in Nunavut. Through 2021, the Ontario government tabled legislation to ease access to provincially regulated public infrastructure, and allocated \$4-billion in a reverse auction that resulted in fibre projects across 339 underserved communities. On the consumer side, in 2023 the federal government's Connecting Families program was expanded

to Far North communities for the first time through Northwestel.

At the household level, data collected by local governments and NGOs indicates that while progress has been made in overall levels of household broadband adoption, there are indications that affordability remains a problem in low-income households. The issue of affordability is not simply one of upfront service costs, but is comprised of a number of in-use fees including overage, late, and reconnection charges. The data also suggests that households most affected by these issues tend to opt for mobile as their primary, and—frequently—sole means of remaining connected to the internet. This highlights how—for low-income households—maintaining internet connectivity consumes larger portions of their budgets, and often puts them in an either/or position when it comes to connectivity options.

In the summer of 2022, and in response to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada's proposed direction to

the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission on a renewed approach to telecommunications policy, I penned a letter of comment that was jointly signed by the city managers of Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. The recommendations contained in that letter speak directly to the issue of affordability. We encouraged the federal government to establish a more meaningful metric for assessing affordability by framing the combined costs of connectivity—i.e. mobile and fixed—as a percentage of household income. When viewed this way, disparities across income quintiles are both apparent and stark.

On the telco side, notable successes have been achieved by non-dominant community-based carriers in rural and remote regions, but these entities face significant capital works and interconnection barriers. One pathway to resolving this is to undertake policy action that is more broadly supportive of publicly owned

transport infrastructure. With new forms of access agreements, public networks could provide openly accessible transport capacity, as well as public oversight of pricing that would be instrumental to the continuity of small carrier operations. This model has been successfully implemented in the United States, and is regarded as one of the most efficient ways of achieving broad fibre-to-the-premises coverage.

While there appears to be little appetite in provincial or federal government to support public broadband infrastructure, this could change in the right hands. A receptive provincial government could table legislation that would see deployment of public transport infrastructure as-of-right in capital works projects. A receptive federal government could insist that a fixed percentage of excess capacity be built into any project benefitting from public funding; capacity that could be reserved for wholesale access. The barrier and risk to all of this is politicization of public broadband infrastructure, which tends to result in governments selling off these assets. Until then, I'll continue to look to the small pockets of success in rural and urban regions for inspiration.

Michel Mersereau is an assistant professor of policy studies at the University of Toronto's faculty of information, with a research focus on the political economy of telecommunications infrastructure.

The Hill Times

Telecom Policy Briefing

Canada needs to up the ante against copper thieves

When copper wire theft occurs, telecom, cable, and internet services are disrupted, putting the safety of Canadians at risk.

Brian Lakey

Opinion



Right now, Canada's cities and rural communities are facing significant threats to public safety and economic stability, many of which remain under-recognized by the Canadian public. While auto theft has rightfully garnered national attention with insurance claim costs rising by 254 per cent and losses amounting to more than \$1.5-billion in 2023 alone, there is another equally devastating crime that consistently goes underreported: copper wire theft. Given the serious risks it poses, this issue demands our immediate focus and legislative action.

The scale of copper theft is staggering. Since 2015, Telus has repeatedly experienced copper wire theft from its telephone lines in Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. As of writing, Telus has seen a 46 per cent increase in major copper theft incidents since 2023. When this occurs, telecom, cable, and internet services are disrupted, putting the safety of Canadians at risk. In 2023 alone, Calgary saw a 400 per cent increase in major copper wire thefts and vandalism, leaving thousands of customers



Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, left, and Justice Minister Arif Virani. We must legislate stiffer penalties in order to prosecute, and—ideally—deter copper thieves, writes Brian Lakey. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

without landline, internet, and cable services.

The power of public awareness and targeted efforts can yield positive results, as demonstrated by the recent 17 per cent decrease in auto theft during the first half of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. It's time we apply this same level of attention to the dangerous rise of copper theft plaguing our nation. By doing so, we can address the glaring disparity between the severity of this crime and its current ineffective legal consequences, ultimately safeguarding our communities and the critical infrastructure that helps to keep them safe.

We've seen the impacts and heard the stories directly from our customers about what happens when they lose connectivity due to copper theft. Families are

unable to reach first responders during emergencies. Small business owners face operational shutdowns for days, resulting in financial losses. Vulnerable residents—such as elderly individuals living alone—are left without a means to call for help. These examples underscore the critical importance of protecting telecommunications infrastructure from theft and vandalism.

The persistence of copper theft incidents underscores the complex challenges faced by the justice system in effectively deterring these crimes. While the factors contributing to the frequency of such offenses are multifaceted and require further study, there's a growing concern about the impact of repeat offenses on critical infrastructure and community safety. When copper

thieves do get caught, they often face minimal consequences—if any at all—despite the significant impact of their actions.

To help fight these thefts, Telus partners with various levels of law enforcement using security tools that enable an enhanced response to repeat copper wire cuts and thefts, and we have invested significantly in security cameras, specialized locks, fencing, and GPS trackers on wires in high-risk areas. Additionally, the company liaises with local law enforcement—including RCMP and various municipal agencies—on theft investigations, and works with the Criminal Intelligence Service Alberta on trends and communications. Unfortunately, these measures have not sufficiently deterred thieves, and the impacts

are compounded by the justice system's failure to recognize the severity of copper theft. Currently, it is viewed as being akin to bicycle theft, with charges falling under the banner of "theft under \$5,000." This lack of a significant legal deterrent frustrates law enforcement, telecom companies, and the communities we serve, who must deal not only with the fallout and expense of connectivity being compromised, but also the prospect of it happening again and again because there is no sufficient punishment for stealing copper.

Addressing these critical issues requires comprehensive reform. Copper theft should be recategorized as a serious crime, similar to our southern neighbours in California where any thefts over \$950 are considered a felony offence, and can result in state imprisonment. This approach has shown promising results, as evidenced by recent efforts in Los Angeles. According to a July 30 *Los Angeles Times* report, the L.A. Police Department arrested 82 people and seized 2,000 pounds of stolen copper wire in a major crackdown on copper theft. The operation resulted in 60 felony charges, demonstrating the effectiveness of treating copper theft as a serious offence. The Scrap Metal Recycler Act, a crucial link in deterring copper theft, needs to be updated with stricter identification and record-keeping requirements. This could complement law enforcement efforts, as seen in L.A. where recyclers were targeted and successfully prosecuted. Collaboration across industry and all levels of government is key to protecting critical infrastructure, and ensuring universal service availability.

By aligning punishments more closely with the true nature and consequences of crimes, and by closing loopholes in related legislation, we can create a more effective criminal justice system that better protects Canadian communities and deters future offences. Shutting down a telecoms network is not the same as stealing a bike, and shouldn't be treated as such. We must recognize the real effect that copper theft has on individuals and communities, and legislate stiffer penalties in order to prosecute, and—ideally—deter criminals.

We've seen firsthand that network infrastructure—which is vital for keeping Canadians connected and safe—is under threat from copper thieves. With collaboration across industry and all levels of government, we can better protect universal telecommunications service availability. Together, we can make changes that improve the security of our communities, and support economic vitality through connectivity.

Brian Lakey is the vice-president of the Reliability Centre of Excellence at Telus, and co-chair of the ISED Canadian Telecommunications Network Resiliency Working Group.

The Hill Times



In 2023 alone, Calgary saw a 400 per cent increase in major copper wire thefts and vandalism, leaving thousands of customers without landline, internet and cable services, writes Brian Lakey. *Photograph courtesy of Unsplash*

Tackling the ‘wicked’ rural broadband gap

Policymakers must resist the temptation to throw up their arms in frustration, or—worse—leave the entire problem to the whims of Elon Musk.

Gregory Taylor

Opinion



The trendy term for Canada’s intractable rural connectivity issue is that it’s a “wicked problem”: a seemingly insurmountable obstacle. And while there may be no simple solution, policymakers must resist the temptation to throw up their arms in frustration, or—worse—leave the entire problem to the whims of Elon Musk. We are hardly in uncharted policy waters here. As professor Harold Innis noted in 1930, “The economic history of Canada has been dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin.”

The urban-rural split in Canada’s broadband internet access has clear precedent in the growth of Canadian communications infrastructure. From the telephone to radio and television coverage, Canada remains an enormous challenge to connect. In the West, most telephone service of the 20th century was provided by public provincial, and, in some cases, municipal services—MTS, SaskTel, Alberta Government Telephones,



Elon Musk’s Starlink satellite internet service is a boon to many in rural and remote regions, but Canada may wish to ask whether internet access should be left to the fancies of a foreign-owned company whose CEO has recently shown disdain for the democratic process, writes Gregory Taylor. Photograph courtesy of Daniel Oberhaus (2018)

Edmonton Telephone, and BC Tel—which had to step in when the private sector came up short. Simply put, there is no money to be made hooking up Canada’s hinterland. While most small towns in Canada currently have access to CBC Radio coverage, that is largely thanks to the federal government’s Accelerated Coverage Plan announced in 1974. CBC Radio launched in 1932. Clearly, some patience is required.

A key problem for Canada’s quixotic effort to connect every home in the country to high-speed internet is that for much of the last two decades, our regulator had one hand tied firmly behind its back. In 2006, then-industry minister Maxime Bernier issued a rare directive to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The order was explicit that the regulator was to “rely on market forces to the maximum extent feasible.” The 2006 directive was foregrounded in every CRTC decision until it was officially repealed in 2023. For 15 years, this ahistorical faith in markets to deliver communications to sparsely populated regions left rural areas further behind as broadband deployment flourished in the cities. As observed in the expansion of the telephone, radio, and television signals to rural and remote regions of Canada, sometimes markets do not deliver without a regulatory push.

The shortcomings for rural internet are well-documented. A 2023 report from Auditor General Karen Hogan found that the federal government’s 2019 connectivity strategy had improved

some coverage but failed to deliver equal access to high-speed Internet and mobile cellular services for many rural and remote communities and First Nations reserves across the country compared with services available in urban areas.

Perhaps expecting equal access to our wired cities would be something of a lofty goal. Still, one would expect a closer gap than the CRTC’s most recent data, which lists high-speed broadband access in 91.4 per cent of Canadian households; however, the number drops to 62 per cent for rural communities. The national media regulator is clear: “many Canadians, particularly those in rural and remote areas, do not have adequate access to these services.”

There are a range of well-funded programs available trying to bridge our national digital divide. The CRTC has the \$675-million Broadband Fund, which has existed in various forms since 2016; and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada oversees the \$3.225-billion Universal Broadband Fund. There are also provincial, regional, and municipal programs. Yet, despite our best efforts, the problem persists.

It has been eight years since the CRTC made the bold 2016 objective that “Canadians in urban, rural, and remote areas can access affordable, high-quality telecommunications services,” and set 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload as the ambitious targets to qualify as the required speeds. That audacious goal doubled the 2015 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) target when the American regulator set benchmark speeds at 25/3 Mbps.

However, this once-bold policy stand is starting to look increasingly timid in 2024. In its recent 2024 Broadband Deployment Report, the FCC raised its fixed speed benchmark for broadband to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

Despite the many reasons to bemoan Canada’s inability to fully fix the rural digital divide, there are recent sprouts of green in this perpetual issue. Yes, Musk’s Starlink satellite internet service has proven a boon to many in rural and remote regions. Still, as a country, Canada may wish to ask whether something as essential as internet access for a portion of our citizens should be left to the fancies of a foreign-owned company whose CEO has recently shown disdain for the democratic process. At the very least, a secondary option is required. Closer to Earth, regional and municipal fibre build outs are providing real alternatives to the major providers. In 2023, in an effort to increase competition, the CRTC ruled that Canada’s largest telephone companies—Bell Canada, SaskTel, and Telus—which have vigorously protested the decision, must provide competitors with workable wholesale access to their fibre networks.

Add these elements together and the rural broadband divide is decreasing in Canada, however slowly. However, looking at the growth of other communication technologies in Canada over the last century, the work is just beginning.

Gregory Taylor is an associate professor in the University of Calgary’s department of communication, media, and film.

The Hill Times

Closing the connectivity chasm

Continued from page 18

such as schools, hospitals, and libraries. Other nations are staking out more ambitious speed targets. The Federal Communications Commission in the United States recently increased its target speed to 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload—double Canada’s speeds. In the United Kingdom, the government is aiming to have speeds of 1,000 Mbps (or one Gbps) available to 85 per cent of households by the end of 2025, increasing to 99 per cent by 2030. The European Union’s Gigabit Infrastructure Act legislates universal household availability of one Gbps speeds by 2030. According to ISED’s response to the auditor general’s 2023 evaluation of rural broadband, only 80 per cent of UBF-funded projects are capable of being scaled up to one Gbps. In other words, Canada is funding some infrastructure that cannot keep up with its peers’ investments.



The CRTC reports that the Trans-Canada Highway still has 600 km of roadway lacking a wireless signal, writes Michael McNally. Pexels photograph by Tara Robinson

Fortunately, several policy options remain for the federal government that do not involve massive new expenditures. Revisiting the national speed target—

especially as other nations take on more ambitious ones—will help ensure funds spent today are able to best serve future needs. For mobile coverage, ISED should

be recognized for developing several new policy approaches, from more granular licensing areas to new frameworks for accessing spectrum, including the in draft Indigenous Priority Window. However, ISED should also revisit its *Spectrum Policy Framework for Canada*. The 2007 document lacks special considerations for the unique challenges of rural deployments, and is premised on the guideline “market forces should be relied upon to the maximum extent feasible.” The same approach was repealed as a CRTC policy direction in 2023 resulting in ISED’s wireless policy using an outdated and mismatched set of policy guidance.

Increasing strategic alignment between ISED and the CRTC will also increase the effectiveness of broadband policy. Canada remains unique on the global stage by splitting regulatory, policy, and funding responsibilities between two regulators. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development as well as several national blue-ribbon panels, have recommended streamlining Canada’s regulatory structure, and this approach enables wireless policy, which is the purview of ISED, to be better aligned with the CRTC’s broadband policies. To address future funding concerns, Canada’s lucrative spectrum revenues could be earmarked for rural connectivity rather than going to the general federal coffers.

Canada’s telecommunications policy objectives—outlined in Section 7 of the Telecommunications Act—are clear: reliable, affordable, high-quality services are for all. Rural Canadians should not be left waiting to connect.

Michael B. McNally is an associate professor in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta. He is a co-founder of the Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition (ARCC), and co-chair of ARCC policy committee. In addition to a variety of academic articles on broadband, he is also an author of Understanding Community Broadband: The Alberta Broadband Toolkit.

The Hill Times

Telecom Policy Briefing

Funding gaps, policy shortfalls keeping rural Canada offline, experts say

Continued from page 16

He also called for policy measures aimed at providing local governments with the necessary training and expertise needed so they can make their own informed decisions about what connectivity solutions are best for their community.

“There’s no one-size-fits-all solution for rural broadband, but what has constrained a lot of these rural communities is they still see it as something that either the federal government or big telecommunication companies are going to come and solve,” he said.

Individual communities do not have to go it alone, noted McNally. He pointed to several examples of groups of communities consolidating demand and taking up their own projects to tackle connectivity challenges, including initiatives like Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology, the Eastern Ontario Warden Regional Network, and K-Net.

These initiatives can be structured in various ways, such as community-owned and operated internet service providers, co-operatives, non-profits, or public-private partnerships with regional providers.

“Ownership is the key to broadband development” in rural and Indigenous communities, said Tim Whiteduck, chair of the First Mile Connectivity Consortium (FMCC) and technology director

of the First Nations Education Council.

He said he believes community ownership is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and responsiveness of internet services in rural and Indigenous communities, noting that when communities control their own networks, the benefits that stem from those networks stay within the community.

Community ownership—while often a more affordable option—does not automatically mean that networks in high-cost service areas are sustainable, noted Whiteduck. He emphasized the importance of optimizing operational costs and trying to support them through different means.

Sustaining services “can become costly when you’re remote. You’ve got to pay for your engineering, your network maintenance contract, which is huge.” He noted that contracts for next-day service repair in some areas can run as high as \$30,000.

Currently, the Broadband Fund administered by the CRTC does not consider any costs incurred after a broadband build is complete as eligible for funding.

Redundancy builds should also be considered eligible, Whiteduck said.

As chair of the FMCC, Whiteduck is responsible for relaying messages from the First Nations that the consortium represents, one of which is the community of

Opitciwan in the Mauricie region of Quebec.

“The only way we could get to them is by road, and the closest corridor where we could make the connection into the network was 160 kilometres away,” said Whiteduck. It is connected by one fibre cable buried under a main road, which he noted is “highly likely to be dug up somewhere, and the fibre will break.”

“If something were to happen to that fibre, [the community is] in trouble,” said Whiteduck.

Members of the Independent Telecommunications Providers Association (ITPA) also advocated for more financial support on the operational side.

Government subsidies have been a “great boon” in helping make the business cases for internet justifiable in rural areas, said Ken Naylor, general manager of Mornington Communications Co-operative. Without them, the typical return on the initial investment could be around 10 years or more, he noted.

“After 10 years, the electronics on both ends of the fibre starts to age out and you have to do replacements—and there’s just ongoing maintenance and such. So to have this massive investment, and then not to keep throwing money into it to maintain it, is a losing proposal,” said Naylor.

“So some support on the [operational expenses] would be appreciated. The concern is, if that doesn’t happen, then the only

resource left is to increase rates for consumers, which then you get into this divide about consumers in urban areas having access to affordable services, whereas in rural areas—just to maintain services—we have to increase prices.”

Fellow ITPA member Richard Biron, vice-president of business development for Sogetel, agreed and noted that subsidizing the operational costs of telcos in high-cost service areas is not without precedent.

“There used to be a mechanism for telephony to be subsidized,” said Biron, referring to a now-removed provision of the CRTC’s revenue-based contribution regime. “I think in the long term, the CRTC or the government will have to think about such a mechanism to make sure that the networks that we have deployed, we can maintain them in rural areas.”

The office of Rural Economic Development Minister Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, N.L.) did not respond to questions by publication deadline.

*Phalen Tynes-MacDonald is a reporter with The Wire Report, a sister publication of The Hill Times that covers telecommunications, digital media, regulation, and more. Sign up for The Wire Report’s daily newsletter at thewirereport.ca/sign-up. phalentm@thewirereport.ca
The Hill Times*

Telecom’s role in solving Canada’s productivity crisis

Continued from page 21

are increasing rapidly. Businesses adopting the latest digital technologies need faster data speeds, reduced latency, and more coverage. This will require continued private sector investment in networks that deliver high-bandwidth and speed, support a massive number of connected devices, and can deliver services tailored to each business’ connectivity requirements.

The need for sustained investment comes at a time when the telecom sector is encountering several challenges, including high borrowing costs, increased network building costs, heightened climate-change risks, and declining service prices. For instance, while telecom operators were increasing their investments in expanding and enhancing their wireless networks, Statistics Canada’s Cellular Services Index revealed a nearly 50 per cent decline in cell service prices in the five years ending September 2024, while the overall consumer price index increased by more than 18 per cent during the same period.

That is why it is crucial for policymakers to ensure that telecom regulations provide sufficient incentives to promote continuous investment in innovation and network infrastructure. Policies that discourage investment in telecom infrastructure put Canada at risk of falling behind in network performance, service quality, and reliability, thereby prolonging our productivity crisis.

Canada’s telecom sector is renowned for delivering world-class services thanks to substantial investments made by service providers in network infrastructure and services. These networks enable Canadian industries to leverage the latest digital innovations to modernize their operations, increase their productivity, and contribute to the growth of Canada’s economy. Maintaining a healthy telecom sector that has the continuous capacity to invest in its network infrastructure and services—as well as encouraging Canadian industries to adopt digital transformation—is critical to increasing productivity in this country.

Robert Ghiz is the president and CEO of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, and was previously premier of Prince Edward Island.

The Hill Times



Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry François-Philippe Champagne on Sept. 24 in Ottawa. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada's digital services tax is not worth the risk



This summer, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced that the Biden administration had requested dispute settlement consultations with Canada to resolve the conflict over the DST. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Tax fairness for whom? Canadian negotiators present roadblocks in reforming global tax rules

The UN Tax Convention is a long-awaited and promising process, and Canada needs to stop standing in its way.

Katrina Miller
& Dereje Alemayehu

Opinion



Worldwide, countries lose billions of dollars in revenue to tax avoidance. This is money that could be used for life-saving public services, such as health care and education, and investments in climate action. Instead, the ultra-wealthy and multinational corporations abuse the weaknesses of our current global tax rules, and the rest of us are forced to foot the bill.

Our current international tax system is rooted in unfairness, and it is time for a change. The solution lies in the worldwide push towards a United Nations Tax Convention. Last year, led by the Africa Group and the G77, countries from the Global South successfully triggered negotiations for new global tax rules at the UN. This is historic: it is the first time that all UN member states—not just those in the G20 or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—have been able to meaningfully discuss international tax co-operation on an equal footing.

On Aug. 16, following three weeks of discussion at the UN in New York, countries overwhelmingly approved the Terms of Reference to frame the negotiations of the convention, with 110 votes in favour, eight against, and 44 abstentions. The terms mark an incredible step forward for tax fairness. The terms reflect Global South and civil society demands with the inclusion of a fair allocation of taxing rights, taxation which supports sustainable

Continued on page 30

Our U.S. neighbours view the tax as a truly hostile move, posing significant consequences for trade between allies.

Rick Tachuk

Opinion



This past June, the Canadian government implemented the Digital Services Tax Act, which places a three per cent tax on revenues relating to online marketplaces, online targeted advertising, social media platforms, and user data. The federal government's decision to implement the tax will unquestionably lead to higher prices and a degraded online experience for Canadian consumers while creating unnecessary tension between Ottawa and Washington, which could have negative, unintended results for Canadians.

The United States accounts for more than 75 per cent of

Canada's imports and exports, representing about \$900-billion in trade each year. With many of the world's largest digital service providers based in the U.S., American political and economic leaders view the tax as blatantly discriminatory. The U.S. government predicted the Canadian digital services tax (DST) could "cost U.S. exporters and the U.S. tax base up to \$2.3-billion annually and could directly result in the loss of thousands of full-time U.S. jobs." American companies won't actually pay the taxes—Canadian consumers will.

After France implemented a similar levy, the Montreal Economic Institute found that what was then known as the GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) Tax resulted in prices that went up by two to three per cent for clients of targeted firms.

With America headed for a new presidential administration—regardless of Donald Trump or Kamala Harris' election—it's already a risky time for U.S.-Canada relations. Both candidates are calling for changes in the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), and the U.S. Congress is pressing the current and any new administration to retaliate for the imposition of the DST. Indeed, U.S. lawmakers have already taken notice, and

Canada's new tax is facing significant backlash from both sides of the aisle. Republican members signed a July letter to the Biden administration saying "the time has come to make clear to Canada's political leadership that the United States is done examining options and will act decisively to protect American workers, small businesses, and innovators." In August, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced that the administration has requested dispute settlement consultations with Canada under CUSMA to resolve the conflict: "The United States opposes unilateral digital taxes that discriminate against U.S. companies."

Canada's actions jeopardize its standing overseas, and its commitment to multilateralism. The new tax was implemented as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and G20 members negotiated a plan to update the global tax system to address profit shifting and develop an international digital tax framework. In July 2023, 138 of the 145 framework members agreed to hold off imposing DSTs to allow for more time for those talks. Canada was one of the few exceptions.

Canadian and U.S. businesses are united in this opposition to the DST. Earlier this year, the

American Chamber of Commerce in Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce issued a statement alongside the U.S. Chamber of Commerce recognizing that "the livelihoods of our workers and the prosperity of our citizens depend on the North American trade and investment partnership. At such a sensitive time in the trade relationship, we hope Members of Parliament remain committed to multilateralism and the importance of a common approach to the North American marketplace."

Canadian lawmakers should heed their country's own economic interests, while also being aware of how seriously this decision is being taken by our American neighbours. Regardless of intent, the digital services tax is viewed as a truly hostile move, posing significant consequences for trade between allies. It is simply not worth the risk.

Rick Tachuk is the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada. Representing the views of major U.S. companies invested in Canada, he works closely with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C., and other national business associations as an advocate for the expansion of Canada-U.S. trade and investment.

The Hill Times

Opinion



The narrative that Canada's entrepreneurs lack ambition or are too risk-averse misses the mark when the challenges are systemic, writes Stephan May. *Pexels photograph by Christina Morillo*

are two ways we can increase the flow of capital to Canadian entrepreneurs.

First, we could establish an Entrepreneurial Development and Capital Working Capital Guarantee Program. Modelled after Export Development Canada's successful Trade Expansion Lending Program for exporters, this domestic version would provide government-backed guarantees for loans or lines of credit issued to small and medium-sized enterprises. Administered through the Business Development Bank of Canada in partnership with financial institutions, this program would offer working capital guarantees of up to 75 per cent to encourage lending in high-impact sectors such as technology, agriculture, and innovation. Even better, we could be supporting management buy-out. This would reduce the risk for lenders and provide much-needed capital to Canadian entrepreneurs.

Second, we need to diversify our capital landscape by encouraging more fund providers. A corporate tax incentive for limited partners investing in first-time Canadian private equity or venture capital funds would do just that. By offering tax breaks to corporations and holding companies that invest as limited partners in first-time funds, we could stimulate private investment in the venture capital space. The policy would provide incentives such as a tax deduction for capital contributions, allowing corporations to deduct 100 per cent of their investments in these funds from their taxable income. Additionally, it could offer capital gains deferral for reinvested profits, tax-free dividend income, and loss carryforward for unsuccessful investments, thus reducing the risk for investors. These changes would create a more dynamic investment environment, with more players willing to fund the next generation of Canadian startups.

The narrative that Canada's entrepreneurs lack ambition or are too risk-averse misses the mark. In reality, the challenges Canadian entrepreneurs face are systemic: insufficient capital, limited shots at success, and a risk-averse investment culture. The solutions are clear: reduce the risk of starting a business, and create a more competitive, diversified capital market. With policies like RRSP withdrawals for entrepreneurs, one-time EI use for startups, working capital guarantees, and tax incentives for first-time fund investors, we can transform Canada into a country where entrepreneurs thrive and build globally competitive companies. All we need is the political will to make it happen.

Stephan May is the managing director at Welch Capital Partners. He is recognized for his expertise in mergers and acquisition, and private equity.
The Hill Times

The real reason Canadian startups sell out? A broken capital system

The solutions are clear: reduce the risk of starting a business, and create a more competitive, diversified capital market.

Stephan May

Opinion



I recently read yet another article in which a prominent leader lamented Canada's lack of competitiveness on the global stage, labelling it as the "600-pound beaver in the room." As a mid-market investment banker, I witness firsthand the challenges faced by Canadian entrepreneurs. The good news is that with a few smart

policy changes we can dramatically shift the landscape in favour of homegrown businesses. These are changes that any political party could support, and they could make all the difference in keeping innovative Canadian companies from selling out too soon.

A familiar refrain we hear is the "lack of ambition or risk-taking" among Canadian entrepreneurs. There's truth to that sentiment. While we build great businesses, too often they get sold to American companies as they scale. The most frequently cited reason for this? A lack of capital.

Before diving into solutions, there are two key points we must understand. First, numbers matter. When a Canadian entrepreneur identifies a problem and starts a business to solve it, chances are entrepreneurs in larger countries—like the United States—are doing the same. With a population 10 times the size of Canada's, the U.S. naturally produces more entrepreneurs tackling the same problems, which increases the probability of suc-

cess. This creates a survival bias issue—Canada simply doesn't have as many shots on goal.

Second, Canadian entrepreneurs face a significant capital disadvantage. In the U.S., 50 states mean 50 state pensions, teacher pensions, and police pensions—all large pools of capital actively funding private equity and venture capital. In Canada, we have some of the world's largest pension funds—like OMERS and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan—but their size demands that they focus on massive investments, often directly through their own funds, rather than supporting small, first-time venture capitalists or private equity funds. This has created a monolithic investment culture in Canada in which only the safest, most middle-of-the-road ventures get institutional capital. As a result, most first-time venture or private equity funds here struggle to raise money, and rely on high-net-worth individuals instead of institutional investors.

We don't need another analysis of the problem—we need

tangible solutions. There are two areas to focus on: growing entrepreneurship, and supporting successful outcomes for entrepreneurs.

Growing entrepreneurship: reduce the risk

To grow entrepreneurship, we must reduce the risks involved in starting a business. If we truly want to celebrate entrepreneurs, we need to make it easier for people to take the leap.

One policy option is to allow RRSP withdrawals for first-time entrepreneurs. Similar to the Home Buyers' Plan, which lets individuals withdraw from their RRSPs to purchase a home, this policy would enable people to tap into their RRSP savings to fund the launch of a business. This would be structured to ensure that retirement savings goals are still met through a repayment plan, much like the current RRSP home-buying model.

Another approach could be a one-time use of Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for business launch. Eligible applicants could receive up to 26 weeks of EI benefits or the equivalent value in a lump sum, which could be used to cover startup costs like salary, registration fees, office rental, or legal services. To qualify, individuals must have paid into the EI system for at least 12 months over the last five years. Neither of these options should be seen as a handout—they simply reduce the personal risk entrepreneurs take on when starting a business.

Supporting entrepreneurs: increasing capital availability

To grow successful companies, access to capital is essential. Here

SENATORS

HAVE A CRITICAL
ROLE TO PLAY IN **PROTECTING**

OUR FOOD SUPPLY

Bill C-282 is a tool to help Canada balance our national interests and international trade objectives. A vote in favour of Bill C-282 is a vote for strong domestic supply chains, rural economic activity and local food in our grocery stores.

Let's stand behind Canadian dairy, poultry and eggs by keeping supply management off the trade negotiation table.

VOTE IN
FAVOUR OF
BILL C-282



News

Grits' new campaign director has the resumé and respect needed to right sinking Liberal ship, say former staffers

Replacing Jeremy Broadhurst with Andrew Bevan swaps 'one extremely seasoned, experienced, and competent political operator with another,' says former ministerial staffer Olivier Cullen.

Continued from page 1

When Broadhurst publicly announced his resignation on Sept. 5, he cited the toll his more than two decades and five national campaigns with the party had taken on himself and his family, and said the Liberals deserved someone who could "bring more energy and devotion to the job than I can at this stage of my life."

Broadhurst had served as the Liberal Party's national director from 2013 to 2015 before joining the Prime Minister's Office after the 2015 federal election. He was then named national campaign director ahead of the 2019 election.

Despite the recent turnover, the Liberal Party "began planning and preparing for the upcoming campaign the day after winning the 2021 election," Liberal director of



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new national campaign director will need all of his talents and experience from 30 years in federal and provincial politics to chart a path forward for the Liberals, say politicos. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

communications Parker Lund said in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

Lund said that alongside appointing national campaign and platform committee chairs and naming its campaign director and deputy, the party has trained more than 3,000 volunteers and 27 Campaign Colleges this year, and has nominated 116 candidates. Additionally, he said the party achieved its "best September" for digital fundraising outside of an election year.

In November 2023, the Liberal Party named Tourism Minister

Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelega, Que.) and MP Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Man.) as co-chairs of its national campaign committee. Last month, it named MP Mona Fortier (Ottawa-Vanier, Ont.) as the national platform committee chair.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, Duguid described Bevan and Michel as "smart, strategic, and very experienced," with "a reputation for getting things done."

"[Martinez Ferrada] and I, as [co-chairs], have absolute confidence that they will ensure the Liberal team is ready for an election whenever it arrives," Duguid wrote.

While the party had faced criticism for the delay in naming Broadhurst's replacement, the news of Bevan's appointment was somewhat overshadowed by a group of caucus members organizing a call for Trudeau's resignation.

During the same national caucus meeting on Oct. 23 when those dissatisfied MPs expressed their concerns about the party's election readiness and chances while Trudeau remains the leader, Bevan was reportedly meant to make his first presentation about the upcoming campaign.

Exiting the caucus meeting, Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches-East York, Ont.) said Bevan had previously informed him of "a plan" he intended to deliver that day, "but obviously, other events overran that, for good reason."

\$300,000. Good luck to us fighting that fight," Erskine Smith said, adding that he still believes "there's absolutely a path forward where [Trudeau] can turn things around."

Former Liberal ministerial staffer Olivier Cullen told *The Hill Times* he's grateful Bevan was the one to volunteer to chart that course for the Liberals.

"They've replaced one extremely seasoned, experienced, and competent political operator with another," explained Cullen, now a director with Blackbird Strategies.

"[Bevan] is exactly the type of person they need: he's well-liked and respected among caucus, and he put his hand up," said Cullen. "[The Liberals] have a big job to get done, and now they have somebody to take it on."

Additionally, while some might view Bevan's experience at the helm of losing campaigns as a mark against him, Cullen said that means Bevan will have a realistic and experienced expectation of the party's current chances in the next election, and will be able to act accordingly.

"He's not going to be going in there overly optimistic; he knows where the party stands," Cullen explained. "He knows that we're down, and I'm sure he's already working very diligently to figure out what direction is up."

While Cullen said he would have preferred to have seen Broadhurst's replacement named earlier, he chalks that up to the usual pace of decision-making during his time working for the government.

"That's just how this government functions," Cullen explained. "You wait to do something until there isn't any time left because you're constantly chasing and doing what is most critical at that moment."

Angelo Bakoulas, a board member with the Liberals' Ottawa Centre riding association and a senior consultant with Bluesky Strategy Group, told *The Hill Times* that while the party certainly could have moved faster to appoint Bevan, he also believes there is a lot more work the party is doing and has already done in-

Continued on page 34



Andrew Bevan, pictured on Parliament Hill in 2004 during his time working as a staffer for then-minister of state John Godfrey. *The Hill Times* file photo



Liberal MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith says he's confident Andrew Bevan 'has a plan' and that 'there's absolutely a path forward' for the prime minister to 'turn things around.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Concern mounts over how immigration cuts will hit slow-moving program for Sudanese war refugees

'It makes us worry that some applicants will get rejected due to excessive demand,' says the Sudanese Canadian Community Association's Samah Mahmoud.

Continued from page 1

Canadian Community Association's (SCCA) Samah Mahmoud. "They've been delaying the processing of the applications because they had that in mind that they're planning to reduce the numbers."

The previous immigration levels plan set out that 13,750 refugees would be admitted for humanitarian and compassionate grounds in 2024, which would have been followed by 8,000 people in 2025, and another 8,000 in 2026.

As previously reported by *The Hill Times*, Sudanese Canadians have been sounding the alarm over the delay by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) in processing Sudanese applicants, arguing there is apathy and a lack of urgency in responding to the dire situation, which they say reveals a double standard to how the department prioritizes other groups, like those fleeing war in Ukraine.

Following a December 2023 announcement, the government officially opened a family reunification program in February. Eligible applicants must be sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, and must have been living in Sudan when the conflict broke out on April 15, 2023. Since the outbreak of hostilities in April 2023, more than 10 million people have been displaced by the civil war in Sudan, and 20,000 people have been killed.

Inequality in processing applications from Africa isn't a secret to the IRCC—in its 2023 strategy for Africa, the department stressed the need to build capacity for privately sponsored and government-assisted refugees to address the processing inequality. In its 2022 anti-racism strategy, the department heard from its



Immigration Minister Marc Miller, centre, flanked by Prime Justin Trudeau, right, and a group of Liberal MPs, announced on Oct. 24 that the number of permanent residents admitted to Canada will be cut. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

own employees about the need to examine selection and admissibility biases, including those related to African applicants, as well as the differing responses to global refugee crises, to "eliminate any trace of racism."

Despite the department identifying the need to fix the systemic issues, the processing for Sudanese applicants shows that hasn't been addressed, said Mahmoud, who works as an immigration consultant.

"You cannot deny that there is some sort of systemic racism in how they process the applications for African applicants," she said. "We have the worst intersectionality ever, where we're both Black and Muslim, so that makes it even harder for us."

Mahmoud said it is concerning that there hasn't been an exemption offered for excessive demand to the program to protect an applicant being rejected if the quota runs out.

"It makes us worry that some applicants will get rejected due to excessive demand even though they have done that exemption for other similar programs, but they haven't done it for us," she said.

Asked whether the government is committed to processing allotted applications under the resettlement program, an IRCC spokesperson said it "continues to fulfill its commitments with a target of 21,200 admissions over

three years for humanitarian and compassionate grounds," which includes the Sudanese program.

The family reunification program was capped at 3,250 applicants, which an IRCC spokesperson previously said accounts for around 7,300 people who were living in Sudan at the onset of the civil war. The regime requires a burdensome financial commitment for residents and citizens hoping to bring family members to Canada. For those approved, they will get a visa or a one-time travel document to come to Canada, and a confirmation of being a permanent resident.

The program reached its cap last spring, but Mahmoud said that the SCCA has been told the program will reopen for an additional 800 applicants to cover Quebec, as well as for 226 applications who were rejected due to the cap being reached.

Mahmoud said the SCCA was told the first five applicants were just approved earlier this month, but they have yet to arrive in Canada.

In a meeting with Miller earlier this month, the SCCA was told that "a handful" of people will arrive in Canada this year, with the rest coming in 2025 and into 2026 for "complex cases," according to Mahmoud.

Miller had previously publicly stated that applicants would be arriving in Canada in 2024, and into 2025. But some MPs have

told constituents that processing timelines are extending into 2027 and 2028.

Mahmoud said the IRCC has said that the timeline put forward by MPs was "a mistake," and not what will happen.

'Unconscionable' to cut levels for humanitarian refugees, says Canadian Council of Refugees

Canadian Council of Refugees co-executive director Gauri Sreenivasan said there is a tiny window for Sudanese refugees to come to Canada under humanitarian and compassionate grounds now that immigration levels will be shrinking.

"We are extremely concerned by the levels announcement," she said, remarking that reductions in those who can be admitted to Canada under humanitarian grounds are out of line with the reasons for the cuts being based on the country's needs.

"This is about people's needs who are fleeing danger and Canada's international obligations. For the refugee lines to have been cut so drastically as part of that broader immigration levels move, that is what is just unconscionable on Canada's part," she said.

Sreenivasan said Canada has a "huge responsibility" to ensure

that the Sudanese applications are processed in a timely and effective manner.

She said the delay coupled with the coming immigration reductions have turned the situation from "bad to worse."

Sreenivasan said it is "incredibly important" that the federal government pay close attention to both perception and evidence of inequalities, especially in how applicants from Africa are processed.

"And they take that into account when they look into the fewer [permanent resident] spots that they have," she said.

"It's a very fair concern [of] how the protection needs from Africa [must] be addressed in an equitable way in the context of these shrinking spaces," she said.

An IRCC spokesperson said the department is committed to "a fair and non-discriminatory application of immigration procedures."

"All applications from around the world are assessed on a case-by-case basis by highly-trained immigration officers and equally against the same criteria," the department said.

'Stark difference' in Sudanese versus Ukrainian refugee programs: Kwan

NDP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.), her party's immigration critic, told *The Hill Times* that the Sudanese family reunification is "deficient" and "extremely restrictive."

She said the regime for Sudanese family members stands in contrast to the speed and size of the program to bring Ukrainians fleeing the war to Canada.

"Community members are rightfully pointing out the stark difference of the political decision of the government to facilitate special immigration measures from one country versus that of others," Kwan said. "How is it that the government can come in with an arbitrary cap of 3,250? And then when we're talking about the Ukrainian situation, there was no cap."

"You have to question: why do some countries with conflict situations have caps and others don't?"

Kwan, speaking to *The Hill Times* prior to the unveiling of the new immigration levels plan, said a reduction would exacerbate the situation.

"I am very worried about that—that the government will choose political expediency over lives," she said.

After the release of the new plan, Kwan said in a statement that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Ont.) announced the changes thinking that "scapegoating newcomers will somehow turn his political fortunes around."

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Opinion

Put nature first, not politics

Partisan bickering is increasing the odds that the parliamentary clock will wind down before Bill C-73 is enacted.

Salomé Sané
& Anna
Johnston

Opinion



The current squabbling in the House of Commons is bad for nature. Bill C-73, the Nature Accountability Act, could be an important tool to hold Canada accountable to meet its international nature commitments. But partisan bickering is increasing the odds that the parliamentary clock will wind down before this key legislation is enacted.

Meanwhile, nature in Canada is in dire crisis. As of 2020, 873 species have been identified as critically imperiled, while more than 4,000 are either imperiled or vulnerable. Since 1970, grassland birds have declined by 67 per cent, aerial insectivores by 43 per cent, and shorebirds by 42 per cent. The population of highly endangered northern spotted owls in British Columbia has dwindled to just one female in the wild. Marine species are also not spared. The Northwest Atlantic blue whales suffered a 70 per cent de-



With COP16 underway in Colombia, Canadian politicians should prioritize strengthening and passing the Nature Accountability Act, write Salomé Sané and Anna Johnston. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/UN Biodiversity

crease in their population due to commercial whaling, and declines in Pacific salmon abundance are widespread across British Columbia and the Yukon.

Despite this ongoing crisis, Canada has repeatedly fallen short in fulfilling its commitments to protect nature since the international Convention on Biological Diversity came into effect three decades ago. So far, Canadian laws on nature have proven largely ineffective and poorly implemented. The 2030 Nature Strategy released earlier this year continues the trend, and is far too vague to be the roadmap that Canada needs. The performance

of provincial governments generally has been even worse.

Now, negotiators and policy-makers from around the world are gathered in Cali, Colombia, for COP16, the 16th Conference of Parties of this Convention. COP16 will focus on tracking the implementation of the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, a landmark agreement to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 and beyond, signed by 196 countries. Key targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework include ensuring effective restoration of 30 per cent of degraded ecosystems, protecting 30 per cent of terrestrial and marine

areas, and halting human-induced extinction of threatened species, all while respecting Indigenous rights and knowledge.

The fundamental question at COP16 is: what are countries doing to meet the Global Biodiversity Framework's targets and goals? For Canada—having talked the big talk internationally—the question is whether the federal government is now willing to walk the walk domestically.

Canada's recent climate experience shows that laws requiring governments to set national targets, and establish plans to meet those targets and provide reports do help drive progress. The same

is true for nature: accountability is required to ensure progress, and legislation is needed to ensure accountability.

Canada has an opportunity to show we are serious about implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework by sending Bill C-73 forward for pre-study by the House Environment Committee. The public agrees that Canada must get serious—a Greenpeace Canada petition calling for a strong nature law has almost 90,000 signatures.

However, Bill C-73 does need strengthening to put Canada on track to achieving its commitments under the Global Biodiversity Framework. The proposed legislation needs to enshrine targets into law, and provide regular reporting and legally enforceable accountability mechanisms. A whole-of-government approach is also critical to ensure consistency in Canada's commitments to nature protection. Finally, in a country that was built on colonial resource extraction, Bill C-73 must explicitly prioritize the rights and leadership of Indigenous Peoples.

Greenpeace Canada and West Coast Environmental Law are calling on all federal parties to agree immediately to pre-study Bill C-73 with a view to enacting a strengthened bill in this Parliament.

We are now facing a choice between supporting biodiversity or letting nature collapse. A renewed government and parliamentary commitment to enact a strong Bill C-73 would signal true Canadian international leadership to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030.

Salomé Sané is a nature, oceans, and plastics campaigner at Greenpeace Canada. Anna Johnston is a staff lawyer with West Coast Environmental Law. *The Hill Times*

Tax fairness for whom? Canadian negotiators present roadblocks in reforming global tax rules

Continued from page 25

development, addressing illicit financial flows, and taxing the ultra-wealthy.

Now comes the problem: Canada was one of only eight countries which voted against the final terms of reference for this UN process. We must do better.

Disappointingly, our Canadian delegates consistently presented roadblocks throughout the process, pushing back against basic text seeking to improve international tax co-operation and the global equity it supports.

Canada's many objections included opposing the establishment of a progressive international tax system. Not only is

progressivity an essential part of addressing inequality and ensuring fairness in tax collection, but language on tax progressivity has already been adopted by consensus at the UN as part of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to finance sustainable development. Canada's strange opposition also sits in stark contrast to the current government's stated objectives at home. The 2024 budget credits the growing progressivity of our domestic tax system with making the country a place where everyone can secure a better future.

Canadian negotiators also consistently called for a prerequisite of "complementarity" with other forums. On the face of it, it makes sense for the UN tax con-

vention to take into consideration the work done at forums like the OECD's Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting. However, much of the Global South and civil society were excluded from meaningful participation in the OECD negotiations, which took place behind closed doors. There must be an open discussion about the value of this work during the UN tax negotiations rather than forcing all countries to accept the OECD's tax policies as a package—tax policies which have not delivered on their promises. The UN is the right forum to air these concerns and build an effective and just international tax system.

Canada can still change its position and act as a leader for

inclusive, effective international tax co-operation.

Our first opportunity will be this fall when the finalized terms of reference for the UN Tax Convention are tabled for adoption by the UN General Assembly. Our negotiators need to know that we are watching, and we expect Canada to follow the same principles of tax fairness that they espouse at home, where our most recent federal budget contained a full chapter on "Tax Fairness for Every Generation."

Following the adoption, countries will begin the negotiations for the UN Tax Convention, which will conclude in mid-2027, where we expect all countries to

demonstrate their commitment to international tax co-operation.

The UN Tax Convention is a long-awaited and promising process that can finally deliver inclusive and effective international tax co-operation. The vast majority of countries support it; Canada needs to stop standing in the way.

Katrina Miller is the executive director of Canadians for Tax Fairness, a progressive tax policy and advocacy group. She has worked for more than 20 years to win environmental and social justice improvements at every level of government, collaborating with a wide array of labour, community, and academic experts, and helping organizations and individuals hone their skills and strategies. Dr. Dereje Alemayehu is the executive co-ordinator of the Global Alliance for Tax Justice, a South-led global coalition of networks including Canadians for Tax Fairness. Prior to his current role, Alemayehu served as the founding chair of Tax Justice Network Africa and GATJ. While in these voluntary functions, he worked as senior economic justice adviser at Christian Aid. *The Hill Times*



Embassy of Italy
Ottawa

**THE EMBASSY OF ITALY IS RECRUITING TO
FILL TWO LOCALLY-ENGAGED, FULL-TIME,
PERMANENT, IN-PERSON POSITION:**


Administrative/executive assistant. Candidates should have good working knowledge of Italian and English, both oral and written.

To participate in the selection process candidates must:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Have proof of education equivalent or superior to that specified in the job posting (see website below);
- Have been resident in Canada for at least two years.

Deadline: November 4, 2024.

Additional information is available on the Italian Embassy Website

 <https://ambottawa.esteri.it/>

 @Italyincanada

 ambottawa



Opinion

Right to repair legislation is a chance for Senators to address affordability

Two key pieces of legislation currently before the Senate will keep repair costs competitive.

J.F. Champagne

Opinion



Affordability is top of mind for Canadians. Vehicle costs are a major expense for households—usually the second-highest line item in their household budget.

While Canadians know well how expensive life has gotten, they may not be aware of two

important pieces of legislation currently before the Senate that will keep repair costs competitive—including vehicle repair costs. The auto aftermarket—which represents the country's auto care repair and maintenance shops—is calling on Senators to pass both bills at the earliest opportunity in support of Canadian workers and drivers.

The Automotive Industries Association of Canada has been actively advocating for the right to repair, emphasizing the need for legislative action to protect consumers, and the 500,000 Canadian workers in the auto-care sector. We were proud to speak at the Senate Banking, Commerce, and Economy Committee earlier this month as it studied bills C-244 and C-294—two pivotal pieces of legislation that will make it easier for Canadians to repair, maintain, or diagnose their devices through the repair shop of their choice.

What problem will these bills help to fix, and why should Canadians be paying attention? As vehicles become increasingly complex computers on wheels, the data and diagnostics required to repair and maintain them also grows in complexity. Today, auto-makers—not car owners—control and own this data including how much information is available, and who has access to it. Often, auto-care shops have challenges accessing this data from auto-makers, which creates problems for drivers looking to service their vehicles.

Bills C-244 and C-294 propose critical amendments to the Copyright Act, which aid in the “right to repair” movement. Bill C-244 focuses on allowing consumers to bypass digital locks to repair and maintain products, ensuring they do not infringe on copyright law while servicing their goods. Bill C-294 address-

es the need for connectivity between different programs or technologies, ensuring that one system can work without breaking copyright laws.

These bills are a welcome first step for Canadians in being able to rely upon their local mechanics and auto-care sector to repair and maintain their vehicles. Senators have the opportunity to pass both bills, which have received support from all parties, and take a step forward toward establishing the right to repair.

However, this would only be a first step. C-244 and C-294 stop short of addressing the root issue for automotive right to repair: consumer data ownership. To truly address this, standalone legislation guaranteeing the right to repair is needed. This legislation would mandate original equipment manufacturers to share data exclusively for the purposes of repair with reputable aftermarket partners. That way, consumers can freely choose where to have their devices repaired, and can access competitive options that will keep costs in check.

Right to repair is quickly becoming an affordability policy promoted by our allies. The European Union adopted the Right to Repair Directive, showing the EU's commitment to consumer

choice across all industries, and Australia has passed standalone legislation for the right to repair. Adopting legislation similar to Australia's would demonstrate a commitment to the automotive industry and consumer needs.

Canadians are clear that they want the right to repair, particularly for their vehicles. A recent study conducted by our association found that 94 per cent of Canadians agree that they should be able to get their vehicle serviced at any shop of their choosing, and 83 per cent believe that automakers should be legally required to share repair data with independent businesses.

Our message for decision-makers is simple: adopt both C-244 and C-294 as quickly as possible, and get to work on a right to repair framework that will give Canadians the choice and freedom to have their vehicles repaired at the shop of their preference.

Senators have a unique opportunity to advance affordability policies before 2025. The auto-care industry, and Canadians, are hoping they seize the moment.

J.F. Champagne is president of the Automotive Industries Association of Canada.

The Hill Times

Here's how Ottawa's productivity working group could have made a difference

For a working group to provide real value for Canadians, we need it to produce actionable ideas that can be swiftly implemented in both the private and public sectors.

Marty Eichenbaum, Michelle Alexopoulos & Jeremy Kronick

Opinion



It's a good start: on Aug. 27, the federal government announced that “the Honourable Anita Anand, President of Treasury Board, will immediately set up a working group to examine productivity and inform the government's economic plan. The working group will address barriers to achieving greater efficiencies for businesses so we can help increase productivity across the country.” Anand highlighted

restrictions on internal trade and overly burdensome regulations as critical, closely linked areas that policymakers must address.

The minister is right. However, for this working group to provide real value for Canadians, we need it to produce actionable ideas that can be swiftly implemented—and not just focus on the public sector.

Remarkably, there are still barriers to free trade across Canadian provinces and territories. These barriers are non-tariff barriers related to differences in provincial laws, regulations, permitting, licensing, and standards. Important examples include differences in trucking regulations (including weight standards); inconsistencies between provincially and federally inspected meat-processing regulations; different educational requirements in professions like social work, nursing, some skilled trades, and the legal field; as well as provincial and territorial laws that prohibit internal trade—for example, restrictions on cross-border purchases of alcohol and, most famously or infamously, our system of supply management for certain commodities. As if that wasn't enough, we have different provincial rules governing the kinds of toilet seats used on construction sites. Canadians should not accept such rules sitting down.

Interprovincial barriers discourage competition and harm productivity. They also reduce labour mobility, limit the opportunities available to Canadian workers, and prevent the efficient allocation of labour across occupations. In all cases, barriers inflate the costs to businesses that want/need to operate outside their provincial borders. Firms pass these costs down to consumers in the form of increased prices.

What are the costs of these interprovincial barriers to the Canadian economy? While complex to estimate, given how interrelated economic activity is in any given country, studies by the Bank of Canada, the International Monetary Fund, and others suggest that reducing these barriers would boost Canada's GDP by four to seven per cent. Based on 2024 GDP, that translates into somewhere between \$92-billion and \$161-billion. That's real money: only five provinces have a GDP higher than \$92-billion.

Interprovincial trade barriers are only one form of “barrier” to growth. Canada's federal government regulates many sectors, including media and telecommunications, transportation, health, and financial services. There are certainly benefits to regulation. However, overly burdensome regulations—in some cases accompanied by restrictions on investment

from outside the country—harm growth, investment, and productivity by imposing unnecessary costs on firms, impacting competition within sectors, and causing potential new business startups to move outside Canada.

Consider, for example, the issue of how to strike the right balance between attracting investment in major resource projects and mitigating the potential harm from those investments. While we can debate what that balance should be, to the extent the current balance stacks regulation over investment, it acts as a barrier to growth and productivity.

Construction, manufacturing, and transportation and warehousing provide even more dramatic examples. Productivity in those sectors—like the business sector as a whole—has actually fallen since 2017. Producers haven't forgotten how to do their job. A more likely explanation is that increased regulatory burdens are taxing productivity.

What can we do? The government announced a number of measures in the 2024 budget. While useful, further measures are needed. Here are a few ideas.

We need expert independent tribunals to play a larger role in decision-making concerning the resource sector. These panels are well-positioned to analyze the aggregate public interest

of a particular project. We also need regulators across sectors to take greater pains to perform more comprehensive cost-benefit analyses of rules and regulations. We do not have enough room in this column to review all of the possible reforms to reduce barriers to internal trade. That said, we are drawn to a proposal whereby Ottawa would reduce its tax take in exchange for provinces dropping specified barriers. Provinces could do as they see fit with the extra revenue, e.g., pay down their debt or help people who are made worse off by removing these barriers.

Canadians might roll their eyes at yet another working group. But the minister is right to focus on barriers and their role in harming productivity. Major reforms in this space are long overdue.

Marty Eichenbaum is an international fellow at the C.D. Howe Institute, and is Charles Moskos Professor at Northwestern University. Michelle Alexopoulos is a member of the C.D. Howe Institute's Business Cycle Council, and a professor of economics at the University of Toronto. Jeremy M. Kronick is associate vice-president at the C.D. Howe Institute, and director of the Centre on Financial and Monetary Policy.

The Hill Times

‘It’s inviting retaliation’: Bloc supply management bill will have Canada bracing for U.S. response, say trade watchers

CUSMA would likely not have been possible if Bill C-282 were law, says a former U.S. trade negotiator.

Continued from page 1

important issue off the table before you even begin, that already sets up a very difficult situation to find a way forward,” said Sharon Bomer Lauritsen, a former assistant U.S. trade representative for agricultural affairs from 2011 to 2020.

CUSMA includes a provision to undertake a review after six years, during which all three sides will have to decide if they want the trade pact to continue. If any one of Canada, the United States, or Mexico chooses to opt out, it would start a 10-year process of annual reviews until the agreement expires in 2036.

Bomer Lauritsen said that if a supply management concession ban had been in place during the NAFTA renegotiations, it is likely that the CUSMA might not have been agreed to.

“I would argue that we may not have a NAFTA or USCMA [the U.S. moniker for CUSMA] if this had been in place in 2017. I would have fully expected our dairy and our poultry industries to be up in arms opposing USMCA negotiations,” she said. “The risk is, obviously, we had a president who was prepared to walk away from NAFTA altogether. It really would have made things very difficult.”

As the U.S. prepares for its much-anticipated Nov. 5 presidential election, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has once again vowed to renegotiate the North American trade pact.

For the Democrats, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai indicated in March that dairy would be addressed during the review, as the CBC reported at the time.

U.S.-based trade consultant Eric Miller, president of the Rideau Potomac Strategy Group, said that if Bill C-282 becomes law it would be a “real problem” for Canada during the review.

“We know that one of the No. 1 priorities [for the U.S.] will be dairy,” he said, remarking that it is a concern for both Democrats and Republicans.



U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, pictured left with International Trade Minister Mary Ng in May 2022, has indicated that dairy will be a point of discussion during the 2026 CUSMA review. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Bill C-282, which is sponsored by Bloc Québécois MP Luc Thériault, has faced increased criticism in the Senate after enjoying all-party support in the House of Commons. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Progressive Senator Peter Harder says passing Bill C-282 would be akin to handing the U.S. a grenade and then pulling the pin. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

With an oversupply of milk in the U.S., Canada is one of the very few countries to which it can be exported without spoiling.

“If Canada enacts this [law], it will be in a situation where the U.S. will see it as a retaliatable measure,” he said. “The U.S. would very well see it within its right—especially under a Trump administration—to say, ‘If you don’t want to give access on dairy then how about we take access away on other sectors.’ It’s inviting retaliation.”

Miller said it would be hard to see that the U.S. wouldn’t withdraw access to other sectors given the American approach to trade negotiations.

“All the early indications are that dairy is pretty much at the top of the list of demands,” he said. “If you take this area off the

table, you are inviting the U.S. to take punitive action to put it back on the table.”

Bomer Lauritsen said she doesn’t see the importance of dairy changing in a second Trump administration, remarking that there will also be electoral pressure on a Harris administration to advocate for the dairy sector.

“If dairy is taken off the table by the Canadians, I fully expect that the U.S. dairy industry will immediately raise concerns, which then feeds into both Congress and the administration to also raise significant concerns,” she said.

Former Canadian trade negotiator John Weekes, who was the chief negotiator on the original NAFTA, told the Senate Trade Committee on Oct. 24 that during those initial negotiations in the

early 1990s, he was instructed not to negotiate away supply management concessions, which he told the American and Mexican chief negotiators in private.

When the deal was signed, no access was given on supply management.

“In my view, it would have been much more difficult—if not impossible—to achieve that outcome if this part of our mandate had been contained in statute. A statutory declaration of this nature would provoke a public reaction from the Americans,” Weekes told the committee.

He said if Bill C-282 becomes law, it likely would lead to a “public slogging match,” and prevent any scope for “finessing the matter in private negotiations” similar to what occurred during the original NAFTA negotiations.

“This legislation is unnecessary for achieving the objective of protecting supply management. Indeed, it would complicate and make more difficult Canadian efforts to achieve that objective,” he said.

Progressive Senator Peter Harder (Ontario), vice-chair of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee, raised the threat Bill C-282 could have on the CUSMA review during his speech in opposition to the bill during second reading.

“This bill is like handing the United States a hand grenade, and passing it would be akin to pulling the pin,” he said in the Red Chamber on April 11.

The U.S. Embassy declined to comment on how it views Bill C-282.

Canada no longer viewed as America’s closest ally: Miller

Miller said that if Canada adopts Bill C-282 as law, it would contribute to the growing sense in Washington, D.C., that Ottawa is no longer the U.S.’s closest ally.

The Biden administration has raised complaints over the Canadian digital services tax (DST), and there have been constant American quips over how much Canada spends on defence.

In a recent op-ed in *Newsweek*, Republican Congressman Mike Turner, chair of the House Intelligence Committee, took aim at the pace at which Canada has committed to reaching NATO’s two per cent spending target.

“Amazingly, Trudeau recently announced Canada will reach the Wales Pledge of 2 percent ... by 2032,” he wrote. “Take your time Canada; Russia can wait.”

Turner questioned those who characterized Trump as being a threat to the military alliance and global security in the face of Canada’s contribution.

“The threat to the stability and security of NATO is not what may happen in Washington this November. It’s what’s happening in Ottawa today,” he wrote.

Miller said there is an increasing sense that Canada is not pulling its weight.

“You’ve got dairy, you’ve got DST, you’ve got defence spending, you’ve got a series of other irritants; the sense is that Canada is no longer the U.S.’s best friend,” he said. “In Washington, if you ask U.S. officials in the Pentagon or even sometimes in the State Department, ‘Who is the U.S.’s best friend?’ The No. 1 answer you’ll find these days is Australia.”

Miller said that will force this country to decide how close it wants to position itself to the U.S. as it balances its own self-interest.

“The sense is that Canada has a lot of demands and concerns about things, but it’s not bringing solutions to the extent that the U.S. would like to see,” he said. “The broader frustration is pretty sure to play into the [CUSMA review] process.”

nmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

News

Grits' new campaign director has the resumé and respect needed to right sinking Liberal ship, say former staffers

Continued from page 28

ternally that isn't appreciated by the public or some in caucus.

Until recently, a primary concern "behind the scenes" had been how to best position the party for next year in the lead-up to the Canadian election in the context of an "extremely hostile White House" after the U.S. federal election on Nov. 5, Bakoulas said.

"Until basically July, most people were assuming that Donald Trump was fully going to win the White House in November, but that has obviously changed quite significantly since then," Bakoulas explained. "Should they have been a bit faster to pivot since Kamala Harris became the nominee? Probably ... but I do think that it's not exactly helpful for those processes when you have people making demands within the caucus, and then those demands leak."

Former PMO staffer Muhammad Ali told *The Hill Times* that while the caucus intrigue may have delayed Bevan's first presentation, with the latest round of drama mostly "put to bed," he expects those presentations to become a standard practice going forward.

As *The Hill Times* reported, Bevan is expected to make that first presentation at the Liberals' Oct. 30 caucus meeting.

Ali said those presentations will be vital in providing the caucus with the "needed awareness" of the party's election "big picture."

"Bevan's got the necessary capabilities and experience that go with running tough re-election bids," Ali explained. "His ability to see the bigger picture is all there, and I think that will be helpful for the Liberals as they try to map out what has worked, and what hasn't."

Ali said he believes that now that caucus has aired its grievances, the discussion about the campaign will help focus its attention and "get people's heads back on track to what they need to work toward."

"Despite all the hoopla ... around leadership and the caucus meeting, I think much of it has been put to bed now," Ali said. "That will help bring the focus back on getting ready for the election ... prevent a Conservative win, and retain power as a Liberal government."

While Bakoulas said he isn't sure Bevan's selection will satisfy those dissenting caucus members who may wish to see Trudeau ousted as leader, he doesn't believe the two are necessarily connected.

While his appointment may have been made public alongside the push to call for Trudeau to step down over the Thanksgiving weekend, Bakoulas said he believes the timing is accidental.

"The decision had been made; they just hadn't announced it yet," Bakoulas

said, adding that there had been internal rumours about the appointment before that weekend.

While some of the disaffected caucus members had also previously called for "fresh blood" to help turn things around—including senior staffing changes in the PMO and deputy prime minister's office—former Liberal ministerial staffer Greg MacEachern told *The Hill Times* he believes more caucus members are aligned with Erskine-Smith, and are still waiting for what they asked for at their London, Ont., caucus retreat in 2023: improvements in communications and advertising.

"They haven't seen that yet," added MacEachern, now a principal with KAN Strategies.

As to improving party communications more broadly, MacEachern noted that Bevan is mainly responsible for what he views as "the most interesting" innovation in party communications in recent Canadian politics: the pre-budget rollout.

Before the 2024 financial plan was tabled on April 16, Trudeau and Freeland crossed the country making announcements about key initiatives, such as a young mental health fund, and billions of dollars in defence spending.

While the rollout may not have had much of an impact on the party's standing in the polls, MacEachern said a fairer metric to judge its success is how Canadians and the opposition received those budget policies.

"Canadians really liked those policies, and they haven't really become fodder for the [Conservatives] either," MacEachern explained, adding that during the pre-budget period, the Liberals were "setting the agenda and the topic for the day or the week, which hadn't happened in a long time."

"Bevan deserves a lot of credit for that," MacEachern said.

MacEachern, who has known Bevan since their days working for ministers in the government of then-prime minister Paul Martin, explained that Bevan is "upfront" about both the wins and losses on his campaign record, but considering the challenge the federal Liberals currently face, "it's good to have somebody with that much experience."

"He has a strong personal network, and he's well liked," MacEachern said, adding that the latter may be more important than his resumé.

"People he will approach may be more likely to help him—when they otherwise may have stepped back—because of who he is and how he has conducted himself over his past three decades in Liberal politics."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Feature

Q&A | Immigration reverse course and a system 'in chaos'

Continued from page 12

they are caught by the [Canada Border Services Agency] officers, then they can be put into detention—which is like jail—and then they are going to be deported. And they likely will not be able to come back to Canada. And there are very, very, very few ways for them to be able to right their status once they have lost their status in Canada."

You have to leave basically, and then apply to come back?

"You're not going to be able to come back. If you have lost your status outside of Canada, it is very, very difficult for someone to be able to come back to Canada."

What role do you think politicians should play in matching the immigration system to fluctuations in the economy? Or is it better to have a system that has one set of rules no matter what else is happening?

"I am all for a system that can adjust itself according to the needs of our economy, especially for the economic-based programs. But the way that the system should be structured is something that is forward looking, and not necessarily just reactionary. Since the current act—IRPA, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act—was enacted in 2001, we have had 23 different immigration ministers. That's less than one year for each leader of the system, and most of these ministers are coming in with no background and understanding of the immigration system."

"The way that our system now is structured with ministerial instructions, where the minister can just enact policies without ever going through parliamentary scrutiny. Our system is in chaos because ministers and their staff make rash decisions on what kind of policies we should have. They're playing with millions of peoples' lives, and they are playing with one of the most important systems of our country ... without any parliamentary scrutiny. We're just allowing hundreds of thousands of people to come into the country ... and then all of a sudden we're saying, 'no, we changed our mind. No, no, you guys all need to go back.' That is not a system that is practical or sustaining, and it does so much damage to our reputation internationally."

When I've looked at this issue over the last number of years, it seems part of the problem is there's a disconnect between what people are thinking and doing in Ottawa, and what people overseas are hearing. How do we send a consistent and accurate message about what the policies actually are here, and what people can expect?

"Well, you know what? It first has to start with the government. We don't know what to expect with the government, even as immigration lawyers. Nobody really knows what the government is going to do. When someone plans as to whether or not they are going to come to Canada, it is not an easy decision. They spend hundreds of thousands of dollars—sometimes their life savings—trying to prepare to come to Canada. They are leaving very, very good jobs, very good opportunities back home. They're leaving their friends, their families, everything to come to a new country. And so it is our responsibility as a country who is attracting them to make sure a system is stable."

"It starts with the government, with a reputation. The reason why it is so easy to fool people overseas is because nobody really knows what the government is doing anymore. And so, yes, there's a lot of false rumors floating around about what [Canada is] planning to do. My answer is, 'well, the government hasn't announced it yet, but I can't say for sure if that is going to happen or not.' And that is a very, very difficult position for a lawyer to be placed in. And it's a very, very difficult position for people who are trying to decide whether or not they want to come to Canada."

"We are in a race right now for population growth. Some of the world's greatest economies—China, Japan, Europe—are going down because the population is not growing. We had a great advantage in attracting the young, educated, smart, hard-working people to come to our country and be taxpayers. And after we've done all of that work, now the government is saying, 'Goodbye, you're causing our housing crisis, and we're probably going to lose the election. So we don't want to lose the election, we're going to put all the blame on you.'"

peter@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, speaking on Oct. 24. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

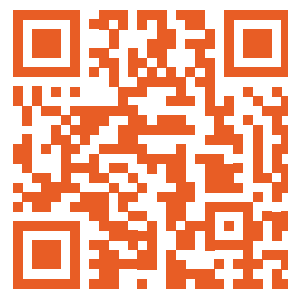


Your broadcast, digital and telecom news service

Our specialty is the intersection of business, technology, and government, with a special focus on the regulatory sphere.

We provide daily coverage of breaking news and longer-form features about the wireless, wireline, broadcast and streaming sectors, as well as digital advertising, privacy, copyright and other Internet-related issues.

WIRE REPORT



SIGN UP FOR
A **FREE TRIAL**
TODAY!

For more information visit
thewirereport.ca or call 613-688-8821



Neil Moss

Diplomatic Circles

We need to be ‘clear-eyed’ about Putin’s conflict with the West, says new German ambassador

In a wide-ranging interview, Tjorven Bellmann and Matthias Lüttenberg talk a new type of ambassadorial arrangement, the war in Ukraine, NATO co-operation, and allegations against India.

After more than two-and-a-half years since Russian President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, the West needs to be “clear-eyed” about his threat to Ukraine and beyond, says the newly minted German envoy to Canada.

During last July’s NATO summit, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed Canada to reaching NATO’s defence-spending target of two per cent of GDP by 2032. However, his government has yet to account for how it will reach the pledge.

New German Ambassador to Canada Tjorven Bellmann said Germany respects the “path forward” that has been laid out by Ottawa.

“From our point of view, there is a security threat that is clearly there. We clearly see that when we look at what’s happening on the Russian side, that Putin’s Russia sees itself in conflict with the West,” she said. “We see how they are restructuring their military. We see how they’re restructuring their economy to a war economy. And I think we must be very clear-eyed about what that means for Ukraine, but also beyond Ukraine.”

Bellmann is one half of the wife-and-husband team that will switch off as Berlin’s top diplomat in Ottawa. She will take the first eight-month term as ambassador before handing the reins over to her husband, Matthias Lüttenberg, at the end of March for his own eight-month stint in charge, as work accelerates towards the Canadian-hosted G7 summit in June 2025. Rotations will continue for the entirety of their posting in Canada.

Bellmann trumpeted the importance of Canadian and German leadership of NATO battlegroups on the military alliance’s eastern flank. Canada is leading a deployment in Latvia, while Germany is doing the same in Lithuania.

“What we’ve done is really try to address the huge capability gaps we face. We—for a long time—have set back and harvested a peace dividend and neglected our armed forces,” Bellmann told *The Hill Times* during an interview at the German ambassador’s Rockcliffe Park residence.

At the onset of the February 2022 Russian invasion, Germany launched a \$100-billion fund for defence spending.

As the war has carried on, fractures have started to emerge among German politicians, with populist parties on both the far-right and left—the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Sahra Wagenk-



Matthias Lüttenberg, left, and Tjorven Bellmann are the third spousal ambassador pairing in the German foreign ministry. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

necht Alliance (BSW), respectively—calling for peace.

Bellmann said there is still a majority of the German public that supports the Ukrainian effort, remarking that financial support for Kyiv will continue.

“When we talk about peace, it is a just and lasting peace, and something that isn’t dictated by Putin or Russia,” she said.

Lüttenberg said that Germany’s support for Ukraine is “crystal clear,” noting that Chancellor Olaf Scholz has repeatedly said that Berlin will stand with Kyiv “as long as necessary.”

“Of course, there are divergent opinions in the public in Germany ... the desire for peace is with everybody—everybody wants this war to end—but the question is at what price would peace have to come? And there you have different voices, and I think the government has a very clear position: we will continue our financial support, and we will continue our military support,” he said.

Until the war is over, Ukraine’s revitalized call to join NATO—a key component of the country’s victory plan—remains on the back burner.

Politico reported last week that getting approval from both Germany and the United States remains an obstacle to that goal, as do less ardent supporters of Kyiv, including Hungary and Slovakia.

Bellmann reiterated that the NATO position for Ukrainian accession is “very clear” that the alliance sees a future with Ukraine in it.

“The concrete invitation will be issued when conditions are there and allies agree, and that the path towards membership is irreversible,” she said. “The steps we took bring the Ukrainians operationally closer to NATO.”

“It’s also clear that at the moment there is no consensus in the alliance on a membership within war times,” she added.

‘It takes two’

The pair take the place of departed ambassador Sabine Sparwasser who served in the post for nearly seven years, and had a deep involvement in the Canada-Germa-

Bellmann was previously the assistant deputy minister for strategic affairs, politics, and G7 political director in the German foreign ministry where she worked on all bilateral relationships with North American and Europe outside the European Union, as well as security and defence policy, including the Arctic.

Her previous postings include a focus on NATO matters, as well as postings abroad in Israel and Iran. She also had roles in the press division.

Lüttenberg most recently was the deputy director—equivalent to a director general in the Canadian public service—of the political department in the foreign ministry, focusing on Eastern Europe, Russia, and Ukraine. Previously, he worked in the office of then-German chancellor Angela Merkel where he oversaw Southeastern and Eastern Europe. He also was posted abroad in Israel and started his diplomatic career with a focus on Kosovo.

The husband-and-wife team are bringing three children (15, 12, and 10 years old) to Canada and to Ottawa’s winter.

“One of the selling points to our children was we will have an ice rink in the garden,” Bellmann joked. “The Rideau Canal can freeze and that’s your biggest natural ice rink that you can have, so we dearly hope for a cold winter.”

Germany takes Canadian allegations against India ‘very seriously’

As relations between Canada and India reach a new low after Canada expelled the Indian high commissioner and five other diplomats, for which New Delhi responded in kind, Scholz led a delegation to India last week as the two countries worked to deepen their ties.

Bellmann called India “an important and strategic partner” for Germany, but noted that her country is taking allegations levelled by the Canadian government “very seriously.”

Canadian officials have publicly alleged that acts of criminal violence in Canada—including homicide—are tied to senior levels of the Indian government.

“We have full trust in the Canadian law enforcement and judicial procedures, processes, and institutions. And we do believe that these do need to be addressed,” she said. “In our view, the best way forward would be a process to be set up where both parties can actually address these issues.”

Bellmann said there has been “intensive contact” between Berlin and Ottawa on the issue, noting that she has spoken with senior Canadian officials and there has been direct contact between the capitals.

“We do take that seriously,” she said.

nmos@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times

ny bilateral relationship with three Canadian postings in total.

“I was almost tempted to say it takes two to replace [Sparwasser],” Lüttenberg joked. “She gave Germany such a great standing, also here in the community. And you see that everywhere we [go]. Politics, but also cultural, science, community—everyone loved what she did. And I think that will be our goal when we go in five years or whenever.”

Bellmann said they are “very lucky” to have Sparwasser as their predecessor, as she has opened doors and is available for advice.

Bellmann and Lüttenberg come to Canada as the third spousal ambassador team in the German foreign ministry.

Lüttenberg said he has heard from other diplomats who have expressed interest in having their own countries adopt the atypical arrangement.

“It’s not so revolutionary, but it hits a nerve,” he said. “The deeper underlying motivation for us, not as a family, but for the German service is really: how can the foreign office become a more attractive employer?”

The pair started their posting after 11 years working in the headquarters of the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin.

Former ambassador Sabine Sparwasser served as Germany’s top diplomat in Canada for nearly seven years. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade





Stuart Benson
Party Central

‘Matthew left his heart in Ottawa, and he found it when he came back,’ says Keith Morrison at launch of Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada

Family and friends of the late Ottawa-born actor and author celebrated the launch of the Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada on Oct. 24 at the Westin Hotel.

With the launch of the Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada and a flagship addiction recovery house on Oct. 24, Ottawa was and will always be where the late Matthew Perry’s heart is, his step-father Keith Morrison told guests at an evening reception on Oct. 24.

One year after Perry’s tragic drug-related death at the age of 54 on Oct. 28, 2023, his sister, Caitlin Morrison, has launched the Matthew Perry Foundation Canada in his honour to help those struggling with addiction, combat stigma, and support recovery. The foundation will also support a series of recovery homes across the country, beginning in Ottawa, which will provide wrap-around services for residents and the tools for long-term success.

Morrison was joined at the launch—at TwentyTwo in the Westin Hotel on Oct. 24—by Perry’s two other sisters, Emily and Madeline, his mom, Suzanne, and his stepfather, *Dateline NBC*’s Keith Morrison, and a whole host of Ottawa socialites, local non-profit executives, politicians, and for some reason, **Party Central**. Spoiler: event organizer Heather Bakken, Pendulum Group co-founder and president—to whom Party Central is grateful, and to whom you should direct any complaints if you don’t like how your picture turned out—is responsible for the invite.

After getting stunned by the panoramic view of the Parliamentary Precinct and the Ottawa River from the hotel’s new banquet room, **Party Central** was snapped back to reality by the unmistakably smooth voice of *Morrison Mysteries*, who was chatting with former CTV News colleague Jim MacDonald and his wife, Janet Silver, the vice-president at WPFC and former managing editor at *iPolitics*. CTV Ottawa’s Natalie van Rooy was also on late-shift reporter duty snagging interviews and b-roll for the 9 p.m. broadcast.

Milling amongst the crowd enjoying the view and open bar, or attempting to find a moment to chat or take a picture with Perry’s family, **Party Central** also spotted

Ottawa City Councillor Theresa Kavanagh; Liberal MP Yasir Naqvi; Blackbird Strategies CEO Lisa Kirbie, whose Ottawa strategic roost turns five this week; lawyer and former PMO adviser Elder Marques, and his wife Theresa Marques, president and CEO of the Rideau Hall Foundation; and Catherine Bélanger, the wife of the late Liberal MP Mauril Bélanger. Mauril, who died of ALS in 2016, is the MP who sponsored the bill that changed the national anthem’s lyrics to “in all of us command,” FYI.

Alongside many of the big names in the room, there were also video tributes and messages of support for the foundation from Perry’s more famous *Friends*, including Lisa Kudrow, Aisha Tyler, Kevin Pollak, and—one of his former classmates at Ottawa’s Pierre Elliott Trudeau Public School, presumably chosen at random—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Following the video tributes, Caitlin Morrison, the foundation’s executive director, took to the stage to offer her own tribute to her late brother, and to thank the event’s guests, supporters, and sponsors, as well as some light ribbing of the crowd, who were awkwardly standing in a semi-circle around the rows of unoccupied chairs in front of the stage. Obviously, Perry’s wit runs in the family.

Joining her on stage were Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Mental Health and Addictions Minister Ya’ara Saks, as well as Mark MacAulay, president and CEO of Salus Ottawa who has partnered with the foundation to help create the recovery home in the city.

The final speaker of the night was Perry’s stepfather, who began his speech by recalling the first time he met his son on the eve of a different Trudeau’s re-election.

While that young 10-year-old boy would go on to win over the hearts of millions with his charming smile and dry sense of humour over the next four decades, Keith Morrison said Perry “left his heart in Ottawa.”

Then, in 2022, in the midst of his struggles with addiction, Perry surprised even his own family when he released his memoir *Friends, Lovers, and the Big Terrible Thing*, and embarked on an international book tour, bringing him back home again.

“Matthew left his heart in Ottawa, and he found it when he came back,” his father said.

For more information about the foundation, visit matthewperryfoundation.ca.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Caitlin Morrison, executive director of the Matthew Perry Foundation Canada and the late actor’s sister, speaks at the foundation’s launch at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa on Oct. 24.



Hailey Hetchman, left, Heather Bakken, and Caitlin Morrison.



Dateline NBC’s Keith Morrison, Matthew Perry’s stepfather, left; CTV’s Jim MacDonald, and Janet Silver, former managing editor at *iPolitics*.



Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe.



Mark MacAulay, president and CEO of Salus Ottawa.



Emily, left, Madeline, and Suzanne Morrison; Catherine Bélanger, and Heather Bakken.



Ginny Sutcliffe, left, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, Suzanne and Keith Morrison.



Keith Morrison, *Dateline NBC* correspondent and Matthew Perry’s stepfather.



Mental Health and Addictions Minister Ya’ara Saks.



The Morrisons: Madeline, left, Emily, Caitlin, Suzanne, and Keith Morrison.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Caitlin Morrison, left, and Lisa Kirbie.



MacAulay, left, and Caitlin Morrison.



Laura Ryczewaert Hill Climbers



Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson has made a few recent changes to his team, including hiring a new director of issues management. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Energy Minister Wilkinson welcomes back a familiar face

Plus, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Gary Anandasangaree has a new policy adviser for Inuit relations in his office.

Energy and Natural Resources Minister **Jonathan Wilkinson** has lured back one of his former staffers, with **Carolyn Svonkin** returning to the minister's employ to take over as director of issues management.



Carolyn Svonkin is now director of issues management to Minister Wilkinson. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Previously Wilkinson's press secretary, Svonkin left the minister's team this past July to take on her first director-level role leading communications for Women, Gender Equality, and Youth Minister **Marci Ien**. She officially returned to Wilkinson's office on Oct. 7 as director of issues management.

Svonkin's first brush working in political offices came in 2020: while working towards a bachelor's degree in political science and government at Queen's University, she started volunteering in Kingston and the Islands, Ont., Liberal MP **Mark Gerretsen's** office, which turned into a summer internship the same year. After a 2021 summer internship with Navigator, Svonkin spent the subsequent summer as an intern in then-national defence minister **Anita Anand's** office. In August 2023—just before officially wrapping up a master's degree in communication and media studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science—Svonkin was hired as press secretary to Wilkinson.

Prior to Svonkin's hiring in July, Ien had been without a communications director since March of this year. Keep reading **Hill Climbers** for further updates on the women and gender equality minister's team.

Auston Pierce previously served as both director of parliamentary affairs and issues management to Wilkinson—a title combination that's typical among ministers' offices. Pierce has now dropped responsi-



Auston Pierce is director of parliamentary affairs to Minister Wilkinson. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

bility for issues management, but remains in charge of parliamentary affairs work.

A former assistant to Wilkinson as the MP for North Vancouver, B.C., Pierce first joined his team as natural resources minister in 2022, beginning as a parliamentary and Ontario regional affairs adviser. He changed titles twice last year: first to parliamentary adviser and issues manager, and was later promoted to "senior" status.

Pierce was elevated to his now-former dual director role earlier this year.

Charlotte Power recently joined the natural resources team as a new issues and communications adviser.

In turn, **Angelo Molhem**, who was most recently Quebec regional affairs adviser and issues manager, has changed titles and is now once again a Quebec and parliamentary affairs adviser to Wilkinson—the title he originally held when he first joined the minister's team in November 2023. Molhem first switched titles earlier this year. Prior to being hired to the natural resources office, he worked as a field organizer for the federal Liberal Party in Quebec.

As recently reported by *Climbers*, strategic communications and parliamentary affairs **Maheep Sandhu** left Wilkinson's office at the end of September to become a senior adviser for strategic communications to Environment and Climate Change Minister **Steven Guilbeault**.

Kyle Harrietha is chief of staff to Wilkinson, whose team otherwise currently includes: **Laura Mitchell**, deputy chief of staff and director of international affairs; **Samir Kassam**, director of policy; **Kaitlyn Cleary**, deputy director of policy; **Kieran Steede**, director of operations; **Joanna Sivasankaran**, director of communications; **Madeleine Gomery**, deputy director of communications; **Kaylie Stathopoulos**, senior policy and regional affairs adviser for Manitoba and the Territories; **Yasmine Atassi**, senior policy and Ontario regional affairs adviser; **Jan Gorski**, senior policy and regional affairs adviser for

Alberta and Saskatchewan; **Brenna Walsh**, policy and Atlantic regional affairs adviser; **Richard Mavin**, British Columbia and executive adviser; **Gary Xie**, policy and Prairies regional adviser; **Siavash Salamatian**, operations adviser; **Nicolas Takushi**, digital media manager; **Cindy Caturao**, press secretary; and **Sonja Blondeau**, scheduling manager.

New adviser for Minister Anandasangaree

Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** has welcomed **Carissa Inuujaq Metcalfe-Coe** to his office as a new policy adviser for Inuit relations.



Carissa Inuujaq Metcalfe-Coe has joined Minister Anandasangaree's team. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Inuujaq Metcalfe-Coe graduated from Carleton University with a bachelor's degree in human rights and social justice, with a minor in Indigenous studies, earlier this year, and spent this past summer as a policy intern in Anandasangaree's office. She officially started with the team full time on Sept. 20. Amongst other experience, she has been involved part time with the Laidlaw Foundation as an Indigenous youth adviser, and as a part-time board member and Inuit liaison with the City of Ottawa's Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Sherry Smith is director of policy to Anandasangaree, whose office is run by chief of staff **Shaili Patel**.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Conservative MP Dan Albas among speakers slated for GreenPAC breakfast on Oct. 31



Conservative MP Dan Albas is among the speakers expected at GreenPAC's annual Breakfast on the Hill on Oct. 31 at the Fairmont Château Laurier. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

TUESDAY, OCT. 29—THURSDAY, OCT. 31

CAEH24: The National Conference on Ending Homelessness—The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness will host its 11th annual Conference on Ending Homelessness from Tuesday, Oct. 29, to Thursday, Oct. 31, in Ottawa. Registration is open. Details: caeh.ca.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30

House Sitting—The House 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.

Exhibit: 'Protect What We Love'—Parliamentarians are invited to "Protect What We Love," an exhibition of artifacts from survivors of wildfires, flooding, and severe storms hosted by the Sierra Club Canada. The survivors will be in attendance. Wednesday, Oct. 30, from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET at Queen St. Fare, 170 Queen St. Contact conorc@sierraclub.ca.

Czech Finance Minister in Vancouver—The Czech Republic's Finance Minister Zbyněk Stanjura will deliver remarks at "Navigating Canadian Trade Ventures in Europe via CETA," an event hosted by the World Trade Centre Vancouver; the Consulate General and Trade Promotion and Investment teams of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland, Romania; and the EU Chamber of Commerce. Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 10 a.m. PT the Terminal City Club, 837 West Hastings St., Vancouver. Details: boardoftrade.com.

Panel: 'Unions and the Future of Work'—Toronto Metropolitan University hosts a panel, "Labour's new leadership: Unions and the future of work." A new wave of labour leaders in Canada are challenging the status quo, demanding fair wages, defending Charter rights, and defying gender stereotypes. Participants include Unifor president Lana Payne, Canadian Labour Congress president Bea Bruske, and Ontario Public Service Employees Union president JP Hornick. Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 1 p.m. ET at the George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre, 245 Church St., Toronto. Details via Eventbrite.

Webinar: 'Female Indigenous Leaders and the Digital Revolution'—

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosts a webinar, "Leading the Digital Revolution: Female Indigenous Leaders and the Canadian North," exploring the Sixty North Unity deal, the barriers to further Indigenous engagement in the digital economy, and the key roles that female Indigenous entrepreneurs play in this transition. Tiffany Eckert-Maret, CEO of Da Daghay Development Corporation and a leader of Sixty North Unity, will take part. Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 1:30 p.m. ET happening online. Register via Eventbrite.

Open Doors at Justice Canada—Justice Canada annually hosts an 'Open Doors at Justice' event to engage in dialogue with the public and stakeholders on various topics related to making government more open and accessible. Wednesday, Oct. 30, from 2–4 p.m. ET at the Department of Justice, 284 Wellington St., and virtually. Details via Eventbrite.

Lecture: 'The Limits of Canadian Tolerance?'—McGill University hosts this year's Mallory Lecture, titled "The Limits of Canadian Tolerance? Out-of-status migrants, public opinion, and the future of immigration policy," featuring University of British Columbia professor Irene Bloemraad. Wednesday, Oct. 30, at 4 p.m. ET at the Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

Pearson Centre Leadership Awards—The Pearson Centre hosts its Leadership Awards 2024, saluting organized labour for its leadership on advancing progressive social change. Laureates include Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions; and Sean Strickland, executive director, Canada's Building Trades Unions. Wednesday Oct. 30, at 5:45 p.m. at One King Street West, Toronto. Details: thepearsoncentre.ca.

THURSDAY, OCT. 31

GreenPAC's Breakfast on the Hill—Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne and Conservative MP Dan Albas will take part in GreenPAC's annual Breakfast on the Hill, which brings together Senators and MPs from all parties with business, academia, non-profit, and youth leaders who care about making positive environmental change. Thursday, Oct. 31 at 7:30 a.m.

ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details via Eventbrite.

Chinese Ambassador to Deliver Remarks—China's Ambassador to Canada Wang Di will deliver remarks in English at a lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Thursday, Oct. 31, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Online and in-person at Plaza Centre-Ville, 777 Robert-Bourassa Blvd., Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

EDC President to Deliver Remarks—Mairead Lavery, President and CEO of Export Development Canada, will deliver remarks at a roundtable lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Thursday, Oct. 31, at 12 p.m. ET, at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

FRIDAY, NOV. 1

Panel: 'Looming and Open War'—The Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies hosts a panel discussion on "Looming and Open War: The Role of 'Intel' in a Time of Shifting Geopolitics," and a keynote address by Peter Mattis with the Jamestown Foundation. Friday, Nov. 1 at 8:30 a.m. ET at the Canadian War Museum, 1 Vimy Pl. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOV. 1—SATURDAY, NOV. 2

Kosovar Refugee Diaspora 25 Years On—The Embassy of Kosovo, Carleton University, and the Bill Graham Centre host a two-day conference, "Canada, Kosovo, and the Kosovar Refugee Diaspora 25 Years On." Friday, Nov. 1 gala at the Chelsea Hotel, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto. Saturday, Nov. 2 panels at the University of Toronto's Campbell Conference Facility, 1 Devonshire Pl. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

SUNDAY, NOV. 3

Online Campaign School—Equal Voice's national online campaign school starts today. Over six consecutive weeks, women and gender-diverse individuals will gain the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to run for political office in Canada. NDP MP Leah Gazan is among the speakers scheduled for Nov. 10. The first session is Sunday, Nov. 3, from 1–3 p.m. ET happening online: equalvoice.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 4

Canada's Envoy to OECD to Deliver Remarks—Madeleine Chenette, Canada's ambassador to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, will deliver remarks at a webinar hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Monday, Nov. 4, at 12:30 p.m. ET. Details online: cdhowe.org.

Book Launch: *The Adaptable Country*—McGill University hosts the launch of Alasdair Roberts' new book, *The Adaptable Country: How Canada Can Survive the 21st Century*. In a turbulent world, authoritarian rule is a tempting path to security. Canada's challenge is to show how political systems built to respect diversity and human rights can also respond nimbly to existential threats. Monday, Nov. 4, at 4 p.m. ET at the Faculty Club, 3450 rue McTavish, Montreal. Details: mcgill.ca.

Estonia's Digital Affairs Minister to Deliver Remarks—Invest Ottawa and the Embassy of Estonia host a high-level digital transformation and innovation event between Canada and Estonia featuring a panel discussion with Liisa-Ly Pakosta, Estonia's minister of justice and digital affairs, alongside her Canadian counterparts and tech reps from both nations. There is also an exhibition, "Why Estonia? From the USSR to e-Estonia." Monday, Nov. 4, at 6 p.m. ET at Bayview Yards, 7 Bayview Station Rd. Details via Eventbrite.

TUESDAY, NOV. 5

Senator Omidvar's Retirement—Today is Ontario ISG Senator Ratna Omidvar's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

U.S. Presidential Election—The U.S. presidential election will happen on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Former U.S. president and current Republican candidate Donald Trump will face off against the Democrats' presidential candidate, current Vice-President Kamala Harris.

Enbridge Gas CEO to Deliver Remarks—The Empire Club of Canada hosts Enbridge President CEO Michele Harradence who will discuss with Hannah Thibedeau about "How Canada's Largest Gas Utility Is Becoming North America's Largest." Tuesday, Nov. 5, at 11:30 a.m. ET. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

Premier Doug Ford in Ottawa—Ontario Premier Doug Ford will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Tuesday, Nov. 5, at 11:55 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Register: economicclub.ca.

CPRA Reception—The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association invites MPs and their staff to join them for an exclusive reception with leaders in the recreation and parks sector from across Canada. Tuesday, Nov. 5, at 12 p.m. ET in Room 310, Wellington Building, 180 Wellington St. Contact colleen@cpra.ca.

IRPP Fall Lecture—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a lecture. American author and political scientist Hahrie Han, an expert in political organizing and social movements, will offer an analysis of the U.S. presidential election. Tuesday, Nov. 5, at 5 p.m. ET at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details online: irpp.org.

Canola Parliamentary Reception—The Canadian Canola Growers Association and the Canola Council of Canada host an invitation-only reception. Tuesday, Nov. 5, from 6–9 p.m. at the National Arts Centre, 1 Elgin St. Details: julial@ccga.ca.

U.S. Election Watch Party—The Canadian International Council's National Capital Branch hosts a lively watch party to track the results of the 2024 U.S. presidential election in real time. Tuesday, Nov. 5, from 7–9 p.m. ET, at The Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St. Details via Eventbrite.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6

Bank of Canada Senior Deputy Governor to Deliver Remarks—Carolyn Rogers, the Bank of Canada's senior

deputy governor, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. Details: economicclub.ca.

Vimy Gala—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute hosts the 32nd annual Vimy Gala, the most exclusive defence and security recognition gala of its kind. Former chief of defence staff Walter Natynczyk will receive this year's Vimy Award. Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 6 p.m. ET at the Canadian War Museum. Details: cdainstitute.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 7

'Salute to Service and Security'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a special lunch event in honour of Remembrance Day. Lt.-Gen. Michael Wright, commander of the Canadian Army, will deliver remarks on "Salute to Service and Security: Honouring Our Veterans." Thursday, Nov. 7 at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

THE HILL TIMES CLASSIFIEDS

Information and advertisement placement:
613-688-8821
classifieds@hilltimes.com

CONDO FOR SALE



WAKEFIELD HARBOUR!

Spacious and bright 2 bedroom ground floor condo in this Riverfront Community. 9 foot ceilings, wood floors, gas fireplace, heat pump with air conditioning, two bathrooms and laundry. Stroll out from your living-room and across the lawn to the Club House with heated inground pool and exercise room. Or grab your kayak and hit the river at the private docks. Walking distance to the shops and restaurants in this quaint Village. Vorlage Ski Resort 2 minutes away. A great maintenance free get away from the city or as an investment property. Just 20 minutes from the city! \$579,000 Danny Sivyer Remax Direct 613-769-4884 dannyremax.wakefield@gmail.com

CONDO FOR RENT



\$2,175

Bright and spacious 1 bedroom / 1 bath downtown condo in the heart of the Golden Triangle, steps to the canal and Elgin St. (71 Somerset St. West, unit 1606). Professionals and retirees' welcome! 812 square feet with large living and dining room, with a section that can be used as office space. Expansive balcony with panoramic views of downtown and the Parliament buildings. All amenities included (water, heating, cooling), 1 indoor parking space, visitor parking, and a storage locker. Laundry, sauna, and party room on site. Available December 1st, 2024. \$2,175/month all inclusive. Please contact Erin for more information at 613 617 3746 or armstrong_erin@hotmail.com.

POLICY BRIEFING

TRANSPORTATION

Publication date: **Wednesday, November 6** | Advertising deadline: **Thursday, October 31**

The summer and fall have marked a turbulent period in the transportation sector, with work stoppages, strikes, and lockouts disrupting—or threatening to disrupt—Canada’s major ports, railways, and airlines. What have these back-to-back labour disruptions revealed about Canada’s transportation sector, and the country’s reputation for getting people and goods where they need to be?

Following MP Pablo Rodriguez’s Sept. 19 decision to step down from his role as transport minister and the Liberal caucus to run for the leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party, the transportation portfolio is being handled by Minister Anita Anand—who is pulling double duty as president of the Treasury Board. Is Anand’s split portfolio sustainable? Is the transportation file currently receiving the right amount of attention from the Liberal government?

The 2024 federal budget included money for Via Rail to “replace its aging fleet on routes outside the Québec City-Windsor Corridor.” But even as the fleet renewal work is ongoing—ultimately aimed at boosting passenger experience—the company was called before the House Transport Committee on Sept. 19 to explain what Via CEO Mario Péroquin called an “unacceptable” Aug. 31 service disruption that left passengers stranded for hours. As passenger rail evolves in Canada, what is the federal government’s role in keeping things on track?

As of July 1, a federal ban on the use and carriage for use as fuel of heavy fuel oils in Arctic waters came into effect. Although there is an exemption for double-hulled ships until 2029, have there been any noticeable impacts in the wake of these new rules?

Reach the political decision-makers who will receive this report by reserving ad space with us today!



Call 613-688-8841 or email sales@hilltimes.com to reserve your advertising space in The Hill Times’ Transportation policy briefing.

THE HILL TIMES

