

Up in smoke: what will become of the Liberals' legacy on legalized cannabis?

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NEWS



Chrystia Freeland, top left, Jaime Battiste, Karina Gould, Chandra Arya, bottom left, Frank Baylis, Mark Carney. The Hill Times photographs by Andrew Meade, Sam Garcia, and Stuart Benson, and courtesy of Facebook

Changes to Liberal leadership rules 'thin silver lining' amid foreign interference cloud, says national security expert Carvin

Liberal Party organizer and strategist Angelo Bakoulas says restricting the vote to members with permanent residency or citizenship was 'the only choice.'

BY STUART BENSON

Despite changes to the Liberal Party's residency requirements to vote in its upcoming leadership election, former CSIS analyst Stephanie Carvin says Canada is "less prepared than we should be" to defend against attempts at foreign interference in the next election, but in a "better place" than the last one.

Three days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) announced his intention to resign on Jan. 6, the Liberal Party outlined the initial rules of the leadership contest to choose his successor as both leader and prime minister.

Following a meeting of its national board of directors on Jan. 9 and mounting pressure

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NEWS

Hosting G7 summit will be first global test for a new prime minister

BY NEIL MOSS

Canada's G7 presidency is underway, and it could face the reality of entering the Leaders' Summit in the summer with a

recently elected prime minister, transitioning from the most-seasoned G7 head to the greenest.

With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.)

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On your marks?

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Heard on the Hill



By Christina Leadlay

Academic, author, actor: oddsmakers bet on Trudeau's next career move



While working at Tim Hortons is not likely to be Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's next career move, oddsmakers are guessing as to what sort of job he will take after he leaves politics. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

Now that Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** has started the final chapter of his time at helm of the federal Liberal Party and of the nation, folks are wondering what his next career move will be.

Last week, *Casinos.com* oddsmakers and traders compiled hypothetical odds for Trudeau's next job, publishing a list of seven roles—noting their predictions are purely for entertainment purposes.

Based on Trudeau's previous experience as an educator, oddsmakers put "university lecturer or academic role" as the most likely.

"A return to academia, teaching political science or international relations would make sense," commented *Casinos.com* oddsmaker **Alex Murphy**.

The second-most favoured future career step for Trudeau is that of "international diplomat or UN role," followed by "author" in third place. Said Murphy: "Writing a memoir about his political past or leadership/governance could be a natural next step."

Rounding out the list are roles including corporate board member or consultant, environmental advocate or NGO leader, media personality or television host—based on "his charisma and

public speaking skills," said Murphy—and lastly, either an actor or entertainment industry role.

Not on the bookies' list was the prospect of Trudeau joining a law firm, which is a move favoured by University of Ottawa law professor **Adam Dodek**.

"If history is a guide, Trudeau will follow the path of former prime ministers and join a law firm. Trudeau's lack of a law degree will not be an impediment to his prospects," Dodek wrote in an Oct. 13, 2024, opinion piece in *The Hill Times*.

"Law firms aren't looking to send former prime ministers into the courtroom to argue cases. They are usually hired for their ability to 'make rain,' the euphemism for bringing in business."

And Dodek knows what he's talking about, as he's written the 2024 book *Heenan Blaikie: The Making and Unmaking of a Great Canadian Law Firm*. The now-defunct law firm was well known for its stable of retired politicians including **Pierre Trudeau** and **Jean Chrétien**. Of note, when the firm collapsed in 2014, Chrétien joined Dentons, which is where **Stephen Harper** also ended up once his political career ended.

Ex-Alberta premier Notley joins law firm

And here's a timely example of a former Canadian political leader joining a law firm: ex-Alberta NDP premier **Rachel Notley** announced she's joined the Alberta office of Southern Butler Price starting earlier this week.

"I'm thrilled to join Southern Butler Price, an innovative law firm led by a brilliant team of women I deeply admire. SBP shares my passion for fairness, solving tough problems, and supporting positive change," she posted on X on Jan. 13, with a photo of herself sporting a SBP-branded ballcap and showing off her lunchbox



Former Alberta premier Rachel Notley. *Photograph courtesy of X*

featuring a banana, an apple, and an orange.

Notley stepped down from her seat in the province's legislature on Dec. 30, 2024, six months after she was succeeded as Alberta NDP leader by former Calgary mayor **Naheed Nenshi**, who is expected to run in a byelection in Notley's former riding of Edmonton-Strathcona this spring.

Notley was first elected as an MLA in 2008. She became leader of the Alberta NDP in 2014, was provincial premier from 2015 to 2019, then served as official opposition leader from 2019 to June 2024.

NDP taps Joel Harden as Ottawa-Centre candidate



Ontario NDP MPP Joel Harden. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Ontario NDP MPP **Joel Harden** is poised to once again take on now-Liberal MP **Yasir Naqvi** in Ottawa-Centre whenever the next federal election takes place.

Harden won the federal New Democratic Party's nomination in the downtown riding on Jan. 12.

Back in 2018, Harden defeated Naqvi in the provincial version of the riding, besting the then-incumbent Ontario Liberal MPP by more than 8,500 votes. At the time, Naqvi had held the riding since 2007, and was then-premier **Kathleen Wynne's** attorney general.

Harden was re-elected to Queen's Park in 2022. The Ontario NDP

recently confirmed former Ottawa city councillor **Catherine McKenna** as its next candidate.

Ottawa-Centre has been a Liberal-held riding federally since 2015 when **Catherine McKenna** took it from the NDP. She served in various cabinet roles until 2021 when she didn't seek re-election.

Minister Anand seeks neither LPC leadership, nor re-election

Transport Minister **Anita Anand** has announced she will not be seeking re-election.

The two-term MP for Oakville, Ont., made the announcement last weekend, in which she also confirmed she will not be seeking the leadership of the federal Liberal Party.

"Now that the prime minister has made his decision to move to his next chapter, I have determined the time is right for me to do the same, and to return to my prior professional life of teaching, research, and public policy analyses," she said in a Jan. 11 statement.

A lawyer by training, Anand was first elected to the House in 2019, and immediately joined Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** cabinet as minister of public services and procurement. Upon re-election in 2021, she became defence minister, and then was shuffled into the role of Treasury Board president in July 2023. More recently she held two roles—TBS president and transport—following **Pablo Rodriguez's** departure from cabinet in September 2024. In the Dec. 20, 2024, shuffle, Anand retained her transport role and acquired the new title of internal trade minister.



Transport and Internal Trade Minister Anita Anand. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Minister Blair, Gen. Carignan headline 2025 Ottawa Conference



Defence Minister Bill Blair, left, and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Defence Minister **Bill Blair** and Chief of Defence Staff Gen. **Jennie Carignan** are among the headliners at this year's Ottawa Conference taking place March 5-6 at the Château Laurier in Ottawa.

Chief of Communications Security Establishment **Caroline Xavier**; Commander of the Royal Canadian Navy Vice-Admiral **Angus Topshee**; UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide **Alice Wairimu Nderitu**; and Can-

Clark, Axworthy, and Fréchette on Jan. 27 panel

Former prime minister **Joe Clark**, ex-cabinet minister **Lloyd Axworthy**, and former United Nations second-in-command **Louise Fréchette** are set to get together in Ottawa later this month to discuss Canada's relevancy in the world today.

Hosted by the Canadian International Council, the roundtable panel titled "Making Canada Count in an Increasingly Difficult World" is scheduled for Jan. 27 at the Elgin Street offices of KPMG.

Clark was Progressive Conservative prime minister for just nine months from 1979 to 1980, was leader of the official opposition twice, and held a number of roles in then-prime minister **Brian Mulroney's** cabinet in the 1980s.

Axworthy is a former longtime Liberal MP who held cabinet roles under three prime ministers, including **Jean Chrétien**, for whom he served as minister of foreign affairs, of employment and immigration, and of labour.

After a lengthy career in Canada's foreign service including two ambassador postings, Fréchette was the first woman in the role of deputy defence minister. She served as UN deputy secretary-general from 1998 to 2006.

GG to receive five new heads of mission

Governor General **Mary Simon** will welcome five new heads of mission to Canada at a Jan. 15 ceremony at Rideau Hall.

Simon will be accepting letters of credence from: **Mohamed Mayif** of Mauritania, **Muhammad Saleem** of Pakistan, **Egidijus Meilūnas** of Lithuania, **Malehlanye Constantinus Ralejoe** of Lesotho, and **Hanna-Leena Korteniemi** of Finland.

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Israel happy to wait for potential Conservative government, says former Canadian envoy

‘I do hope that some of the policies will change, and the sooner the better,’ Israeli Ambassador to Canada Iddo Moed says of Ottawa’s approach to his country.

BY NEIL MOSS

Israel is content to wait out the Liberal government to welcome a more amenable diplomatic partner in a potential future Conservative government, says a past Canadian ambassador to Israel.

Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) has been an ardent defender of Israel, pledging to defund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to oppose anti-Israel votes at the UN.

“There’s no question where the Poilievre administration is going to go relative to the current administration,” said Jon Allen, a career diplomat who served as Canada’s top diplomat in Israel during the Conservative government of then-prime minister Stephen Harper from 2006-2010.

He compared the situation to the victory of United States president-elect Donald Trump, which was celebrated by the Israeli government.

Asked last month if a change in Canadian government was needed to restore the Canada-Israel relationship, Israeli Ambassador to Canada Iddo Moed declined to comment, but told *The Hill Times* that Israel wants Ottawa to correct policies that he described as “wrong,” insisting that the overall relationship is a good one.

“When we disagree on policy matters, we voice that sometimes in public, sometimes only behind closed doors. And this is how friendly countries, partner countries work together,” he said. “We will continue to see this with this government and any other government in Canada, as long as both countries believe in the same values—the core values that are actually at the core of our societies as free, liberal, and open democracies.”

“I don’t see there’s a big change, but I do hope that some

of the policies will change, and the sooner the better,” he said.

Allen said the current Liberal government has moved further in favour of a “more balanced” position on Israel and Palestine compared to any previous Canadian government.

When Liberal MP Marco Mendicino (Eglinton-Lawrence, Ont.) announced that he would not be running for re-election, he noted his opposition to the government’s position on Israel and Palestine.

“It is no secret that I have disagreed with the current direction of the federal government on our foreign policy vis-à-vis our deteriorated relations with the State of Israel, our inadequate handling of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and our enfeebled role in the Middle East,” he wrote in a Jan. 2 statement.

Allen said he doesn’t anticipate any of the major Liberal leadership hopefuls will “substantially” change the government’s approach on Israel and Palestine.

“I don’t think [Mark] Carney, or [Chrystia] Freeland, or Karina [Gould] are going to walk back where the government is,” he said.

“The big question is: what happens when Poilievre gets in? And when Poilievre gets in, we’ll be back to Harper and even further to the right, I suspect,” he said.

In the meantime, Allen said the Israeli government is “absolutely” waiting for when a more agreeable Canadian government comes to power.

“They would like essentially to go back to Harper, which is

essentially no public criticism, period,” he said.

Historically, Canada has taken the position that a recognition of Palestine could only follow a peace process that led to a two-state solution. That convention developed cracks last May as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) said that a recognition could potentially take place before the end of a peace process.

Moed said recognizing a Palestinian state “at this time” would be “wrong,” arguing that there are no Palestinian leaders who are in favour of a two-state solution.

“We’ve made it clear to all levels of government that it’s a wrong decision in this point at time, and it’s also unhelpful in terms of our bilateral relations,” the Israeli ambassador said.

“If Canada does that, it is only rewarding those who actually changed their reality since Oct. 7 [2023], and those are the terrorists: Hamas, Hezbollah, and all the others, and Iran at the end of the day,” he said.

Liberal MP Chandra Arya (Nepean, Ont.), who was the first caucus member to enter his party’s leadership race following Trudeau’s Jan. 6 announcement of resignation, pledged to “immediately” recognize the State of Palestine as part of a “peaceful two-state solution.”

As part of a study regarding recognizing Palestinian statehood, a senior Global Affairs Canada legal official told the House Foreign Affairs Committee last year that the act of recognizing a state is a political decision.



Israeli Ambassador to Canada Iddo Moed says that he hopes that some ‘wrong’ Canadian policies towards Israel change. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has pledged to implement policies that align with the Israeli government if he becomes prime minister. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

Allen advocated for Canada to recognize the Palestinian state when he appeared before the House committee last October.

With Parliament prorogued, the committee no longer exists and its study will remain unfinished unless a new motion to study the topic is moved.

Allen said he has personal “disappointment” that the study remains incomplete.

“I think it’s a missed opportunity,” he said, but noted that it’s “not the end of the world.”

“Recognizing Palestine at this point is symbolic, and it’s importantly symbolic, but it’s not going to change the situation on the ground. Just because you recognize Palestine, doesn’t mean you’ve got two states,” he said.

Allen said the Conservatives won’t be recognizing a Palestinian state, remarking that if they can control House committees, there won’t be any more discussion on the topic.

Israel and Palestine could become ‘cannon fodder’ for opposition: Holmstrom

Former NDP staffer Cameron Holmstrom, principal at Niipaawi Strategies, said that given the low bar that Liberals have for new members to vote in the leadership campaign, it could pave a pathway for any group to enter in numbers to drive any particular issue.

He said those who are supportive of either Israel or Palestine could see the leadership as an opportunity to influence policy.

“If there is a motivated group that’s organized, they could have an impact,” he said.

Beyond Liberal supporters who are divided on the issue of Israel and Palestine, outsiders who choose to vote in the leadership race in large numbers could also have an outsized influence.

Holmstrom said the Liberals could face attacks on both sides of the issue as candidates are forced to respond.

“This becomes cannon fodder,” he said. “This is material to be used against the Liberal Party going forward.”

He said by starting the conversation, everyone in the field is forced to take a position.

“This is always the danger of a leadership race,” he said. “It runs the risk that you are creating a lot of headlines for other parties to jump on and to say, ‘I’m going to beat you over the head with this.’”

“The worst thing for the Liberals is—unlike in other past situations where you’ve had a change in leadership—the next election is going to come right away,” Holmstrom said, remarking that if Israel and Palestine turn into a wedge issue, supporters of the losing candidate are not going to feel welcome in the party.

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NEWS

Liberals' legacy of legalized cannabis at risk as hopes for tax relief 'slim to none' before next election: industry

The inability to commit to a nationalized excise stamp in the fall economic statement is 'baffling,' says Cannabis Council of Canada president Paul McCarthy.

BY STUART BENSON

The lack of action to support the struggling legal cannabis industry in the recent federal economic statement is "disappointing and baffling," says Cannabis Council of Canada president Paul McCarthy, who warns that if the feds can't find their way to at least commit to a change before the next election, it will leave a "black mark" on the Liberals' legacy of legalization.

In the 2024 fall economic statement (FES) released on Dec. 16, 2024, the federal government announced its "intent to explore a transition" to a single national excise stamp. Currently, cannabis producers must affix unique excise stamps for each province and territory before shipping their products to be sold in those markets.

McCarthy, who served as senior adviser to Liberal veterans affairs ministers from 2016 to 2019, has previously described the current excise stamp requirements as a "logistical and supply chain nightmare."

While McCarthy said changes to the excise tax formula remain the industry's primary issue, changing the excise stamp regime is a close second as it would be "easy to do, and make a big difference overnight."

"There's alignment up and down the supply chain on making this move," McCarthy said. "It would immediately help every licensed producer reduce costs, improve efficiency, save money, and untangle a lot of the unnecessary supply chain problems that exist."

However, he said the FES announcement was profoundly disappointing, and "baffling" as even with all the evidence and agreement supporting the change,

"they couldn't see their way to just do it."

In the absence of more significant changes or relief to the industry, McCarthy has "zero expectation" of any new measures being announced before the next election, but said that doesn't mean he won't keep trying.

Given the current political uncertainty within the Liberals and the potential for an early spring election, the chances of excise tax relief before the government falls are "slim to none," said McCarthy. However, while those changes would need to be included in a new budget, he doesn't believe the same applies to changes to the stamp.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, the Department of Finance explained that any changes to the excise tax regime would require "analysis and consultations with key stakeholders" to ensure the transition would not impair "the administration and enforcement of the excise duty framework."

"The government has closely followed the evolution of the legal cannabis market to ensure the co-ordinated federal-provincial-territorial excise duty framework continues to meet the primary goals of legalization: keeping cannabis out of the hands of youth, and profits out of the hands of criminals," reads the statement, adding that the department "continuously reviews the taxation framework ... to ensure it is as fair, effective, and current as possible."

However, McCarthy challenged that framing, arguing that more than six years after legalization, the federal government continues to ignore the industry's concerns, and the growing evidence and collective recommendations of its reviews of the excise tax regime.

The industry has long called for the formula to be amended to a flat 10-per-cent assessed value rate, and that recommendation has been echoed by the House of Commons Finance Committee, the federal Competition Bureau, and the final report of Health Canada's expert Cannabis Act review panel.

The current federal excise tax regime applied to licensed cannabis products amounts to the greater of \$1 per gram of cannabis sold or 10 per cent of the per-gram price. The majority of that tax—75 per cent—is shared with provinces and territories, except

for Manitoba, which opted out of the federal cannabis excise tax. The remaining 25 per cent goes to the federal government.

That formula was determined based on the per-gram price for medicinal cannabis products in 2018, with the expectation that a similar average wholesale price of \$10 per gram would allow the industry to compete with the illicit market.

However, six years later, and with the price of dried flower products selling for as low as \$3 per gram, McCarthy said that many of the licensed producers that the Cannabis Council of Canada represents are paying an effective excise tax of 34 per cent of the retail price, and anywhere between 20 and 45 per cent of their gross annual profits in 2023 to pay excise taxes.

McCarthy said he isn't surprised that the federal government didn't get everything right when cannabis was legalized in 2018, adding that the desire to take an "overly cautious approach" was understandable.

Yet, he said it was irresponsible to continue ignoring the mounting evidence and recommendations and prevent the industry and Canada from leading the global legal market.

McCarthy said if nothing is done before the Liberals and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) exit office, the current state of the legal industry will leave a "big black mark on the experiment of cannabis legalization as a whole."

"The social experiment has gone well, and the sky didn't fall, but the jury is still out on the economic side," McCarthy explained. "We haven't yet proven that this is a viable sector in the way it's supposed to be."

While changing to a national excise stamp would be helpful, "every piece of evidence" points to changing the federal excise tax formula to make the industry financially viable, McCarthy said.

However, if the Liberals do nothing, that would also open the opportunity for a potential future Conservative government to take action, he said.

"When the Conservatives come in, they can either continue to ignore it, and if it crashes and burns, they can blame the Liberals," McCarthy said. "Or they can choose to do something about it, and say the Liberals didn't get it right and we're fixing their mistakes again."

McCarthy said he can't be sure how a potential government led by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) will deal with the issue, but—at the very least—he doesn't believe re-criminalization is in the "world of possibility."

"What I know about how the Conservatives view this stuff is limited, but I think they would probably take the economic point of view," McCarthy said. "Yes, it's a controlled substance, and we need to tighten the regulations, but it also needs to be a viable sector."

Additionally, McCarthy said that supporting the legal market's viability provides the additional benefit of supporting the government's health and safety objectives, particularly in combatting the illicit market.

"It's laughable to say that you have a properly functioning, properly regulated legal sector where the illicit market or illicit forces control the biggest piece of the pie," McCarthy said. "Conservatively speaking, somewhere to the tune of 25 per cent [of the market] is illicit."

Organigram Holdings holds the largest legal market share, officially becoming Canada's largest licensed cannabis producer with a combined 12.4 per cent market share following its acquisition of Motif Labs Ltd. this past December.

Organigram CEO Beena Goldenberg told *The Hill Times* that her company is an outlier in the industry, growing 22 per cent in the last quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, and credited the company's success to its scale, investment in operational efficiencies, and product innovation.

Recently, Goldenberg said the company had completed a \$3-million clinical study—the largest-ever on recreational cannabis' effects on humans—to test a new brand type of fast-acting edible gummies. She said that kind of innovation has allowed her company to differentiate itself from the rest of the legal market and offer products the illicit one cannot.

However, alongside the tax and stamps, Goldenberg said the regulations governing edibles limiting the amount of THC per package to 10 mg per package also curbs the legal market's competitiveness, since illicit vendors can sell products far above that limit, regardless of

how innovative or fast acting they are.

Goldenberg said that while the excise tax formula is the industry's biggest issue, she would have welcomed a change to any of the three. Although the language isn't as concrete as she would have liked, Goldenberg said the potential change to the stamp signalled in the FES provides "a little bit of hope."

"Whether that's going to happen before a change in government, we'll have to see, but at least something came out that was in favour of this industry, which is a first for us," Goldenberg.

Goldenberg said while cannabis legalization is undoubtedly a positive part of the Liberals' legacy, if nothing is done before the next election, the party will also wear the creation of an unsustainable industry.

"We had a six-year head start, and right now, there are countries worldwide looking to Canada as a cautionary tale," Goldenberg said. "Without addressing their original errors in how the excise tax was put in, they're leaving that door open for the next government to come in and fix it, which would just be another nail in their legacy."

Cannabis legalization a 'wallpaper issue': Nanos

As the industry begins to focus on a potential Poilievre-led future government, pollster Nik Nanos predicts the Conservatives won't be interested in burning any political capital on cannabis until well after the election.

The Nanos Research CEO explained that since its legalization in 2018, cannabis has fallen "off the radar" in his firm's weekly polling of Canadians' top concerns.

"[Cannabis legalization] has kind of faded into being a wallpaper issue," Nanos said, explaining it was an issue Canadians largely approved of, but remained mainly in the background.

"There's no reason for the Conservatives to talk about issues like cannabis because it will be a distraction," Nanos said. "Realistically, they probably don't want to talk about anything other than the Liberals. And if the Conservatives start to wade into other issues, it'll look like they're not focused."

Nanos said he doubts the Conservatives will address the issue until after they are elected, and suggested Poilievre may use the same reason for inaction as the current government.

"The political cover that he has is dialogue with the premiers," Nanos said. "That would probably be a little more politically acceptable than him pronouncing a policy on cannabis, and would also kind of minimize the risk to him."

Neither Poilievre's office nor that of Conservative finance critic Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, Alta.) responded to *The Hill Times'* request for comment by publication deadline.

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Lost federal revenue, property, money jumps to \$649.5-million in 2023-24: Public Accounts



The 2023-24 federal Public Accounts of Canada were tabled in the House of Commons on Dec. 17. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Last year saw a considerable jump in lost federal revenue, from \$14.3-million in 2022-23 to roughly \$252.9-million.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

A massive spike in reported lost federal revenue, combined with reported losses—accidental and otherwise—of public property and money, made 2023-24 a record year for such losses at close to \$649.5-million overall, the highest such total in the last 10 years of federal public accounts.

In 2022-23, losses across these three categories had totalled \$534.2-million.

An annual audited accounting of total federal spending and finances, the most recent Public Accounts of Canada covering the 2023-24 fiscal year were tabled in the House of Commons by then-treasury board president Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) on Dec. 17, 2024—three days before the cabinet shuffle that saw Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe, N.B.) take over the central portfolio.

With the vast majority of damages related to Hurricane Fiona having been reported during the previous fiscal year, public property losses were down considerably in 2023-24 at a total of roughly \$36.5-million, compared to the high of almost \$236.6-million reported the year prior.

But while public property losses were down, losses of both public money and most notably revenue were up—considerably, in the case of the latter.

In 2022-23, the federal books showed \$283.3-million in lost public money for the year, a figure which jumped to roughly \$360-million in the most recent fiscal year. Of that, close to \$87-million has already been recovered, with another \$247.1-million expected to be recovered in the coming years. The remaining \$26-million, however, is not expected to be recovered.

As is typical, the Department of Employment and Social Development led the list for public money losses, the bulk of which was tied to 85,574 cases of fraudulent Employment Insurance benefit claims totalling roughly \$242.6-million. Of that, only \$42,223 is not expected to be recovered, with \$46.6-million already having been reclaimed in 2023-24.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reported the second-highest such losses with 529 cases of fraudulent claims for grants and contributions valued at roughly \$47.7-million. Of that, only \$500,000 has been recovered so far, with about \$15.8-million not expected to be recovered at all.

Asked about the losses, the Crown corporation pointed to its efforts to verify the eligibility of applicants to the COVID-19 relief Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program in 2023-24, which wrapped up in early 2024 and identified 529 cases of payments to applicants “who were later found to be ineligible.” The CMHC said the roughly \$15.8-million marked as not expected to be recovered is tied to 77 cases that “are under further investigation for potential fraud,” and were presented as such “[d]ue to the way Public Accounts are reported.”

The third-highest public money losses were reported by the Department of Public Works and Government Services—a department which includes the Receiver General, the “central treasurer and accountant of the federal government,” as described online. Of the roughly \$44.9-million in lost public money reported by the department overall in 2023-24, \$32.3-million was tied to 12,016 cases of forged or fraudulent endorsement of payment instruments, of which \$32.1-million has already been recovered. Another \$10.2-million was connected to 6,349 cases of misdirected electronic payments, of which about \$5.2-million has already been recovered, though \$3.8-million is expected to remain outstanding.

Meanwhile, lost federal revenue saw a major spike in 2023-24, totalling a little more than \$252.9-million compared to the previous year’s total of just \$14.3-million.

The bulk of this lost revenue is tied to a single case involving the goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax reported by the Canada

Revenue Agency, which is valued at \$234.1-million and is currently before the courts.

The CRA did not respond to questions regarding the details of this case by publication deadline.

Building damage leads public property losses

Of the roughly \$36.5-million in public property losses reported by federal departments and agencies in 2023-24, \$32.2-million was tied to accidental loss or damage, while almost \$4.3-million was due to theft or vandalism. Most of those amounts—or \$34.4-million overall—is not expected to be recovered.

Among the different categories of reported public property losses during the fiscal year, damages to buildings or other real property once again led the pack accounting for roughly \$11.6-million overall.

That’s a steep drop compared to 2022-23 when damages to buildings and other real property soared to \$211.3-million, largely as a result of damaged small craft harbours caused by Hurricane Fiona. Of the \$11.6-million reported in 2023-24, most—\$9.5-million—was attributed to accidental damage to buildings, while almost \$2.1-million was due to vandalism.

While the Department of Fisheries and Oceans led the category in 2022-23, followed by Parks Canada and the Department of National Defence, the most recent fiscal year saw the RCMP report the highest such losses, with 57 cases totalling a little more than \$3.2-million, of which the vast majority—50 cases valued at just under \$3.2-million—involved accidental damage.

The RCMP did not respond to emailed questions regarding this spike by publication

Continued on page 14



Housing, mental health, childcare & conservation.

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LET'S WORK TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS.

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COMMENT

From affordability to accountability: political leaders navigate the Trump era of chaos

While the country finds itself in a moment of crisis, watch for political messaging to start shifting.

Josie Sabatino

Beyond the Headlines



OTTAWA—If events during the first two weeks of the new year have served as a sign of things to come, political chaos is set to be the new normal in 2025. While many Canadians were making their commute to the office for the first time since the holidays on Jan. 6, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took to the lectern at Rideau Cottage to announce he would be resigning as soon as a leadership contest could be held.

The resignation in and of itself was no great surprise, given the caucus pressure Trudeau was facing. What was—and remains—bewildering is the fact the government is now in limbo at one of the most consequential moments in Canada's history. Trudeau is little more than a figurehead,



The shift has already begun in the provinces where premiers like Danielle Smith, left, and Doug Ford are spending significant political capital to fend off a trade war, writes Josie Sabatino. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade



and his cabinet is left with a stale mandate that leaves little room to manoeuvre in a rapidly changing political dynamic increasingly dictated by United States president-elect Donald Trump's social media posts.

The resignation and subsequent weakening of the Trudeau government's negotiating position hasn't gone unnoticed. Just one day after the prime minister's announcement, Trump said at a news conference that he would be willing to use "economic force" to join Canada and the U.S. together.

The incoming president has made no qualms about his tariff agenda, and his plans to kneecap the Canadian economy in light of what he perceives to be a massive trade imbalance. The fact that

Trump has shifted his communications from the broader commitment of implementing global tariffs to singling out a few select countries increasingly foreshadows what will likely be a hostile relationship that presents a real and immediate threat to Canada's economic security.

While our country finds itself in a moment of crisis, and with a federal election expected as early as springtime, watch for political messaging to start shifting. It's already happened in provincial battlegrounds where premiers are spending significant political capital to fend off a trade war.

Take Ontario for example. Ahead of the U.S. election, Premier Doug Ford was focused on introducing cost of living measures—like the \$200 rebate

cheque—as well as hitting back on the federal carbon tax for increasing monthly expenditures for Ontario families.

In the weeks since Trump won, Ford has pivoted from affordability to almost exclusively focusing his communications on protecting jobs and sheltering the provincial economy in the face of tariff threats.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith has also shown her political prowess by appearing as a frequent guest on American news networks the president-elect is known to favour. Over the week-end, she also managed to get an audience with Trump. Her angle? "[Emphasizing] the importance of the U.S.-Canada energy relationship, and specifically, how hundreds of thousands of American jobs are supported by energy exports from Alberta."

While provincial premiers have made a conscious decision to break away from the "Team Canada" playbook to chart their own path forward, Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre has also been strategic in where and how he is using his voice on Canada-U.S. relations.

In response to Trump's latest threat against Canada, Poilievre took to social media to state that Canada won't back down in a fight, and a new government would focus on beefing up our military and take Arctic security seriously.

Notably, Poilievre also married domestic issues in his statement. Canadians aren't generally motivated to head to the polls to vote on defence and security issues, but in an era where cost of living is the dominant political issue, they will head out to vote on pocketbook issues.

While it may have been the plan for Poilievre to stick to a message squarely focused on his four-pillar plan in the lead up to the election, Trump's win flipped the script, and Poilievre's messaging is beginning to reflect this reality.

The leadership vacuum created by Trudeau's resignation has put the spotlight on Canada's dysfunctional parliamentary system and absentee government, but there is a silver lining. Premiers are stepping up and attempting to fill the gaps of federal leadership, and Poilievre is beginning to offer Canadians a vision of what his "Canada First" approach entails. All is not lost in this new era of political chaos.

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

The Hill Times

Drawing the wrong conclusions

The Liberals have mistaken their party as too 'woke' instead of realizing the problem is their policies aren't enough for the working class.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



CALGARY—There is a belief by mainstream Canadian reporters and pundits that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's demise came about because he was too "woke."

Let's talk about the word "woke," which has been siphoned from the Black community, manipulated, and weaponized against us. The word has become a pejorative slur for marginalized communities fighting for their rights against the injustice of a

white supremacist structure. It is the result of a white backlash against the performative shifts in public opinion to maintain the racial hierarchy of power. In other words, the white male power structure feels the need to clamp down on movements where they don't assume control. As I tweeted in the past: "Woke is a term of Black movements and I'm not surprised to see this foundation erased from the word even by well-meaning people. Language is such a huge battlefield in the fight against fascism that we must give credit to the communities from where words and expressions originate." It is a violation; it is an attempt to paper over the truth of white societies' historical and contemporary political, societal, economic, and mental oppression.

It may have begun in Conservative circles, but it has been repeated, normalized, and weaponized by moderates and centrists in the same way. In her article in *Refinery29*, Kathleen Newman-Bremang reminds us that the word can be traced back to Pan-African activist Marcus Garvey in the 1920s, and has been a rallying cry to know your history, and to be aware of how it plays

out today. Today, it's being used by everyone from mainstream media, to Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, to the Liberals to deny racism exists in Canada.

While on Jordan Peterson's podcast, Poilievre claimed that racism was "invented" and "imported" into Canada, and that there's an obsession with race, thereby putting racism as a figment of the BIPOC imagination. It's white liberals' dreams to be able to shirk the yoke of their privilege, and to retain their power in society. This is partially the reason its racial undertones have been championed by small-l and big-L liberals who four years ago championed Black Lives Matter.

This is how the road to fascism is paved by liberals. I could cite the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany as examples. The same is happening today in those same countries. To hold onto power, embattled liberal parties have moved to the right. This is why you hear potential Liberal Party leadership candidate Christy Clark running on the fact that she will scrap the carbon tax without offering an alternative.

This is now what the Liberals are offering the Canadian public:

Conservatives-lite. Like the Democrats in the United States, this is why they'll lose. How can you turn out your base when your campaign has abandoned the policies for which it voted in the past?

What the Liberals are missing is that Poilievre is the only one speaking to the economic pain Canadians are facing. For whatever reason, the Liberal Party has ignored the plight of Canadians facing high prices, overpriced housing, expensive electricity, costly medications, and so much more in their lives. Instead of addressing the middle and working class with effective policies that don't require money upfront that people don't have—tax credits, tax rebates, etc. But what they took from plummeting polls is that the party was too "woke."

No, the problem is their policies aren't enough for the working class, as middle-class economic well-being slides. Had the Liberals taken the affordability issues and attacked them with ferocity, Poilievre wouldn't have been able to—ostensibly—slither his way into power. Instead, all we got are tax-free educational accounts that effectively provide a tax haven for the upper class.

They cannot construct a policy that doesn't elevate the upper class without making the middle and working class poorer. That's their real problem—see: repayment of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit from those who needed it most. Instead, they joined the Conservatives in blaming international students for a housing crisis that materialized a generation ago. It was the Liberals who decided to pull out of non-market housing, which is part of the reason why the working-class is hamstrung with the housing supply crisis.

The Liberal Party is seen as the party of the rich and of corporations—see: SNC Lavalin and WE Charity. They are also seen in Western Canada as constantly capitulating to Quebec at their expense. Whether or not that is true, that is the sentiment. It's not just about oil, it's about not being recognized as a heavy contributor to Ottawa's treasury while being vilified by those to the east.

All Poilievre is doing is lazily applying MAGA language to centrist policies. It's not even his own strategy, it's ripped off from U.S. president-elect Donald Trump. The issue is not racism, it's economic well-being, stupid.

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

The Hill Times

COMMENT



U.S. president-elect Donald Trump's expressed willingness to use force to erase the borders of sovereign countries signals an end to the fundamental principle of international order, writes Les Whittington. *White House photograph by Shealah Craighead*

Two-nation partnership that was a beacon of trust in a fractious world goes down Trump's drain

Trump's expansionist approach may turn out to be highly counterproductive.

Les Whittington



Need to Know

OTTAWA—Donald Trump, who seems intent on economic warfare against Canada, will have a chance to get a few pointers on how to annex a neighbouring country when Russian President Vladimir Putin takes time off from running his invasion of Ukraine to meet with the re-elected United States president.

Efforts to get the two leaders together—a project that was said to be in the planning stage last week—come as Trump has unexpectedly transferred his newfound sense of empowerment onto the world stage.

In a single press conference, the man who is putatively the leader of the western world suddenly revealed his intent to dismiss 75 years of U.S. global leadership. His expressed willingness to use force—military or economic—to erase the borders of sovereign countries signals an end to the fundamental principle of international order that has shaped modern U.S. policy.

Aside from refusing to rule out military action to claim Greenland and the Panama Canal, Trump said he would use “economic force” to compel Canada to give up its sovereignty and become the 51st U.S. state—a threat not heard from any American figure of significance for about a century and a half. This was happening, incidentally, while Canada was sending water bombers, firefighters, and supplies to California to help with the Los Angeles wildfires. But never mind.

Whatever Trump's ultimate aim, it has become abundantly clear in Canada's case

that he intended once re-elected to impose damaging import taxes on this country regardless of how Ottawa responds to his threats to do so. His two main justifications for this, however, are both red herrings. Although the smuggling of drugs and undocumented migrants from Canada into the U.S. is up by historic standards, it's hardly worth talking about in comparison to the huge problems at the U.S.-Mexico border.

And on trade, whether Trump is just trying to appease his “America First” MAGA base, or really has no understanding of bilateral commercial relations with this country, he persistently distorts the issue. In his telling, the U.S. deficit

with Canada is US\$200-billion, double what he said it was last month, and three times the actual amount of \$68-billion. He also seems oblivious to the fact that U.S.-Canada trade is largely balanced or in surplus for the Americans except for imports of Canadian oil. On top of that, this is Canadian oil that—because of quality and landlocked geography—is sold to Americans at a discount, and refined and exported by U.S. companies at a higher price.

In any case, the once and future president's attitude is of course influenced by his dislike of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, with whom he had a dust-up during the G7 summit in Charlevoix, Que.,

in 2018. No doubt Trump also resents Canada's progressive political system, in particular the low priority on defence spending. And the prime minister's friendship with outgoing Democratic President Joe Biden would qualify as another irritant.

Further to the point, ousting Trudeau from power has become a bit of a meme for the MAGA crowd, with at least one right-wing mouthpiece calling for an invasion by the U.S. military. Beyond that, Elon Musk, the billionaire Trump buddy who is using his global influence to cheer for right-wing forces in various countries, has also employed his social media platform to praise Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre and taunt Trudeau.

And keep in mind that Trump, after proposing huge new tariffs on China—whose trade surplus with the U.S. is five times larger than Canada's—seems to have backed off on that move at a time when Musk, whose auto company depends on good relations with Beijing, has solidified his influence in the coming administration.

Whatever the case may be, Trump broke new ground with his talk about using force—military or economic—to infringe on the sovereignty of allied countries. His aides are telling people that his transition from America First to American imperialism should be seen more as a wake-up call than real takeover warnings, and is part of an overall strategy to confront Russian and Chinese expansionism in the global struggle between democracies and ascendant authoritarian powers.

But many pointed out last week that Trump's expansionist approach may turn out to be highly counterproductive. Among other things, it could obviously be seen as a signal that the U.S. is not in fact bothered by Russia's continuing invasion of Ukraine or China's threats against Taiwan. Beyond that, it undermines the credibility of U.S. trade and diplomatic agreements across the world.

“Trump's threats may be bluster or tactical, but they reveal a dark side of power unworthy of any U.S. president,” wrote Daniel Fried, an Atlantic Council fellow and former U.S. ambassador to Poland. “Put into practice, they would reduce the United States to a mere bully that rules through force and fear, assuredly triggering a reaction against it, as well as ending U.S. alliances. That's quite a degeneration from the tradition that Trump inherits.”

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times



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Editorial

Editorial

Did parties learn anything from the foreign interference inquiry?

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's resignation announcement on Jan. 6 was the culmination of many months—if not years—of discussions, foibles, and infighting. For nearly as long, the federal government has been trying to navigate the pressure to air out and act upon interference by foreign governments in Canada's democracy.

Now, those two issues have come to a head with the looming March 9 date to elect a new Liberal leader and prime minister. On Jan. 9, the Liberal Party of Canada announced that its National Board had updated the rules for people looking to become a registered Liberal and vote in the race. While the party is keeping the lowered minimum age of 14, it has moved from only needing members to "ordinarily reside" in Canada to requiring Canadian citizenship, status under the Indian Act, or permanent residency.

"Protecting the integrity of our democratic process, while still engaging as many people as possible, is one of the Liberal Party of Canada's top priorities," the party said in a Jan. 9 press release.

As an extra safeguard, the Privy Council Office announced on Jan. 13 that the Security Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force would monitor the race.

"While leadership campaigns fall under the purview of political parties, all relevant departments and agencies continue to monitor the general environment and work collaboratively to address potential risks of foreign interference," deputy clerk and national security and intelligence adviser Nathalie Drouin said in a press release.

These are objectively good things in today's threat environment. But it's a little disheartening to see that after everything that was unveiled during the public inquiry into foreign interference, Liberal Party functionaries still needed to be pushed in this direction, instead of taking it on proactively.

In the immediate aftermath of Trudeau's announcement, the Liberal Party apparently hadn't taken any of the very prominent lessons to heart. On Jan. 7, CBC News reported that the party "doesn't intend to change or reinterpret rules in its 2016 constitution that Elections Canada has suggested could make the vote be at least as vulnerable to such efforts as previous leadership races."

Political parties have jealously and zealously guarded their dominion when it comes to nomination races and leadership contests, to the detriment of the overall security of our democracy, as has been made plain during the inquiry. In the lead up to the public inquiry into foreign interference being called, much hay was made by the feds and some other objectors about its potential uselessness since classified national security information couldn't be made public. But with the public airing of political party practices, Canadians have become more cognizant, and are now demanding better.

The Liberals were in danger of failing their first test in this new environment, and they barely passed. Let's hope to see some more improvement as we move towards the general election that's sure to quickly follow.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Grit race a chance to address inequality issues: B.C. reader

Re: "He's our best bet": several Liberal MPs urging Finance Minister LeBlanc to rethink decision not to seek Liberal leadership," (*The Hill Times*, Jan. 8). Although the article was insightful, it was missing a few critical points for establishing an effective, Canadian-centred government.

We face multiple crises. It's not a stretch to find culpability in the wealthiest one per cent. While the biggest companies are making unprecedented profits, we pay the price as rent, groceries, and utilities spiral out of control.

The climate crisis is entering a whole new level of madness. In Canada, we grapple with escalating fires, floods, and extreme weather. At the root is the burning

of fossil fuels, of which the world's wealthy are disproportionately responsible.

Occam's razor is a problem-solving principle, suggesting the simplest explanation is usually the most likely to be correct.

The explanation is the avarice of those same players.

Taxing billionaires, Big Oil, and Canada's richest corporations can generate billions of dollars, funding a future that works for all of us. They must pay their fair share. These funds could be used to build desperately needed housing, fund the transition to clean energy, and more. It's the simplest solution.

**Dona Grace-Campbell
 Prince Rupert, B.C.**

An industry fact check on nuclear waste

Re: "Northwestern Ontario nuclear waste site selection raises concerns," (*The Hill Times*, Dec. 12, 2024). Erika Simpson's article identifies some groups that are expressing concern about this landmark Canadian statement on responsible environmental stewardship.

Expressions of concern from NIMBY groups were inevitable. On this occasion, they are being supported by anti-nuclear activists who see this as their last remaining opportunity to curtail nuclear expansion—Canada's only real hope of achieving its net-zero ambitions.

Positive support for the Deep Geological Repository (DGR) from the host communities has made it clear that when people are informed, they are comfortable with the DGR concept. As a result, the NIMBYs and anti-nuclear activists are now trying to scare people who are "downstream" of the repository, or are on the transport route because they know these people are less engaged and so more susceptible to fearmongering.

But should these people be concerned?

The issue of the "watershed" and those who are "downstream" is easily addressed as

there is no one downstream of the repository and no one lives in its watershed. The repository will be 500 metres below the watershed, in dry rock with no stream in it, and the Earth's molten core is the only thing down below it. People will only be downstream of the surface facilities where there is no possibility of any significant incident or contamination. This is easily confirmed.

At the end of the day, the transport issues are similarly clear. Used nuclear fuel is a solid, and is sealed in metal pins, which are then carefully placed in specially engineered containers. The examples Simpson cites of leakage occurring are of completely different wastes in completely different containers.

It is clear that while concerns are being raised, they are not concerns about anything that could actually occur.

**Ian Wigginton
 Co-chair, Canadian Nuclear Society (CNS) Environment, Waste Management & Decommissioning Group; and CNS Governing Council member Mississauga, Ont.**

**Neil Alexander
 Head of communications, Canadian Nuclear Society Wainfleet, Ont.**



COMMENT

New year, new anxieties



Amid the ongoing chaos, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, went to Florida to meet with U.S. president-elect Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort, also joined by Kevin O'Leary. Photograph courtesy of X/ABDanielleSmith

There is being angry, and wanting change to something better—and then there is the place in which we now find ourselves.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—In this second week of 2025, it is hard not to feel anything but uncertainty and anxiety. For some of us, that is our *de facto* position in January anyway, given the cocktail of seasonal affective disorder and the post-holiday blues. But this year, it is more than natural calendar rhythms; it is the moment in history in which we find ourselves.

Justin Trudeau has resigned—albeit likely too late for the good of the country and his own party. While history will probably give the prime minister a more favourable review than he is getting now, he has left the country with a steaming turd. A lame-duck government days before the most concerning American president of our time—Donald Trump—is about to take office.

I'm not sure we can take much comfort—if any—in that Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, whom Trudeau didn't take to Florida when he met the president-elect in November, is on the job and didn't jump into the Liberal leadership race so she could put her full energy into her current role. Trump is unlikely to give her or anyone in the current crippled government the time of day. Why would he? The Trudeau government died when the PM announced his intention to resign.

With the Liberal leadership race set to conclude on March 9 and an election likely to follow, it will be some time in the spring or summer before Canada has a duly elected—by the public—prime minister. Until then, we are vulnerable to Trump's bullying, despite the void the provincial premiers are trying to fill.

Not helping the January mood is the cacophony of carnival barking from south

of the border. The president-elect's constant gabbing about global reshaping is not just about Canada, but also Greenland, Mexico, the Panama Canal, and anything else that captures his fancy. As chaotic as that is, he sounds like an imperialist in the same vein as the Yanks who gave the Brits the bum rush during the American revolution. His language has gone from that of disruption to destabilizing. While it may be part of the chaos theory he loves to employ in negotiating, as we saw with his language around the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol Hill riots, some take his word as gospel and act accordingly.

Carnival barking is not restricted to the former and soon-to-be-again president—also up front huffing and puffing about the global circus is Elon Musk. It is unclear how Musk runs what are apparently successful businesses given the amount of time he spends on social media championing Trump, and running down anyone not in line with him or his political patron. The man who is supposed to make the United States government more efficient comes across as a highly amped-up podcaster who delights in shock and awe—disruption for disruption's sake. An explorer who could care less about a compass or cartography.

And just when we thought we were free of him, he is back: Kevin “Mr. Wonderful” O'Leary. Self-promoters don't come much bigger or more annoying than the former spectacular failure of a political candidate. Like the president-elect, O'Leary's reputation is not without stain. But that makes no difference to O'Leary—he is out there on numerous platforms presenting himself as Canada's consigliere to Trump. No doubt he delighted in images posted this week showing him with Alberta Premier Danielle Smith and the incoming president. If O'Leary is shaping U.S.-Canada relations, we are in for a wild ride, and I don't mean yachting in the Muskokas. Suddenly, Joly speaking for Canada isn't so bad.

There is being angry, wanting change, and cheering for disruption in hopes of something better—and then there is the place in which we now find ourselves. January 2025 is not looking so good.

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

The deck is stacked against Quebec's Anglos

The failure of our leaders to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of anglophone Quebecers is a sign of indifference and intolerance.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



Lawyers representing Attorney General Arif Virani are seeking a motion to dismiss legal action against the federal government in a court fight against Quebec's language law, Bill 96. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

who was previously the leader of the separatist Parti Québécois. His tabloids and electronic media are populated with columnists who regularly scapegoat Quebec's “rich anglophones” as a threat to French.

This despite the fact 80 per cent of Quebec's 1.25 million English-speakers speak French, and the median wage of an anglophone is less than their francophone counterpart. Those who do not speak French are people who need government services the most: the elderly, Indigenous people, visible minorities, rural poor, or physically or mentally challenged residents.

There is clear evidence of the exclusion of contrary opinions in the French media. A recent film on the 1960s battle with Montreal's Italian community over English education received rave reviews in the French media. A rebuttal by a trilingual lawyer in the Italian community who lived that experience was ignored by all French media.

Meanwhile, a Korean company in Montreal was ordered to hire a francophone by a labour tribunal, even though the company operates in English and Korean. This was not reported in the French media.

The Task Force collected more than 100 stories of citizens who were refused government services in English, all ignored by the French media. They also failed to investigate Bill 96's ban on services to half a million “non-historic Anglos”—people not educated in English in Canada. This second-class status includes prominent members of Montreal's Black community, and any Canadian citizen educated in English outside the country.

This failure of our leaders to acknowledge the legitimate grievances of anglophone Quebecers—a community larger than the population of five provinces—is a sign of indifference and intolerance.

English-speaking Quebecers speak French, love Quebec, and choose to live here. Quebec is our home, and we demand people in authority recognize we are not scapegoats, but rather citizens with rights equal to any Quebecer. Who will speak for us?

Whoever is the next leader of the Liberal Party of Canada must answer this critical question. Despite his proclamations of support for Quebec anglophones, Justin Trudeau never did.

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

How is this possible in a free and ostensibly democratic society like Canada? It can be traced to the door of the dominance of ethnocentric Quebec nationalism in the province's politics, supported in the media by Pierre Karl Péladeau, the media baron

COMMENT

Military retention bonuses equal common sense

DND needs to stop the exodus from the ranks, and the answer to stopping short-term retirements is retention bonuses.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—Canada's military, or lack thereof, has been in the international spotlight recently due to some flippant comments by United States president-elect Donald Trump. Along with threatening the use of military force against the sovereign states of Panama and Denmark, Trump continues to float the notion of him somehow annexing Canada into becoming America's 51st state through "economic pressure."

While it is somewhat insulting to patriotic Canadians that we would happily embrace the loss of our national status to become Americans, it is doubly insulting that Trump would not even threaten Canada with military force.

The truth is that in its current state of readiness, the Canadian Armed Forces could offer nothing more than symbolic defiance in the face of a U.S. military occupation.

Those who closely follow the fortunes of the CAF know that successive government neglect by both the Harper Conservatives and the Trudeau Liberals since the end of our commitment in Afghanistan in 2014 have crippled a once-proud institution. Due to a combination of stalled recruiting not keeping pace with those service members seeking to release from the CAF, there is an existential personnel shortfall.

The current authorized strength of the Canadian Forces regular ranks is 71,500, but as of Nov. 15, 2024, the total strength of the CAF regular force was actually at only 63,940. According to Department of National Defence statistics, there is no shortage of Canadians willing to enlist. The recruiting backlog stems from the fact that, due to the personnel shortfall, training establishments can only process a trickle of recruits per year.

With all three branches of the CAF already failing to meet their operational objectives, this conundrum will only be exacerbated in the months to come.

Sure, the CAF can streamline the background security checks on would-be recruits to get them into the training pipeline on an expedited basis. However, once in uniform, these raw recruits need experienced service members to train them.

To this end, DND needs to stop the exodus from the ranks. The promise of better housing, fewer postings, improved health care, and higher compensation may entice a few veterans to stay on.

However, given the fact that "toxic leadership" has been cited as one of the primary causes of service-member discontent, there will be a level of doubt as to the veracity of those promised improvements. The answer to stopping short-term retirements is retention bonuses.

The good news is that the senior leadership of the CAF already know this fact. The bad news is that they have thus far failed to implement it. Back in October 2024, Lt.-Gen. Lise Bourgon, the chief of military personnel, was given a briefing regarding the reconstitution of the CAF.

Under the heading, "additional resources sought," is the recommendation to bring in "Retention Bonus (specific occupations)." At present, the CAF does not have retention bonuses, but in recent years they have offered signing bonuses to recruits with specific professional skill sets.

Both the United Kingdom and American militaries—both of whom also face crippling personnel shortages—have implemented retention bonuses for key tradespeople. The British offer from \$54,000 for aircraft engineers to re-enlist for a minimum of three years, to a \$14,000 bonus for an infantry private wishing to re-enlist for that same timeframe. The U.S. air force is even more generous as they are offering bonuses to 89 key trade qualifications with dollar amounts ranging from \$260,000 to \$520,000.

For those who might think such bonuses seem exorbitant, it should be remembered that there are large costs associated with the training of military personnel. The estimated cost to train a CF-18 Hornet fighter pilot to just a basic level is about \$7.5-million. Offering an experienced pilot \$250,000 to re-enlist for five years would save the CAF a lot of money in the short term.

If you take the cost of properly training a combat infantry soldier, the average investment is more than \$100,000. Therefore, a \$25,000 re-signing bonus for an additional three years of service in the infantry would keep the expertise and experience in uniform, and save the CAF the expense of training a replacement.

Another key point to remember is that those trained personnel in these combat trades have already proven themselves capable of the task. Many would-be recruits will wash out during training, thereby costing the taxpayer money without actually providing a tangible asset to the CAF.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, as the old saying goes. Sometimes a fat retention bonus is the wiser investment.

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

The Hill Times

OPINION

Communities deserve more support as the global economy changes

Most of the current economic development programs take a top-down approach with little local involvement, and that has to change.

Rachel Samson

Opinion



The uncertainty facing Canada's goods and energy producers is dizzying. They were already dealing with daunting challenges from an accelerating energy transition, domestic regulations, and geopolitical conflict. Now, our largest trading partner has threatened to pull the rug out from under them.

The consequences for companies and workers could be significant, but the consequences for communities could be even greater.

Take Estevan, Sask. The small city of almost 11,000 people is home to two of three coal plants that produce one-third of Saskatchewan's power. The region also produces oil and gas, and has two coal mines. The community is caught in a wave of uncertainty about its future with the planned phaseout of coal power, growing demand for access to clean and affordable power, and growing trade tensions with the United States that could affect its oil and gas production.

New opportunities are emerging, too, including solar and geothermal energy developments, and a possible small modular nuclear reactor. But policy and market uncertainty, and the lack of a comprehensive regional plan have led to stress and concern.

Ingersoll, Ont., faces a very different type of challenge, but similar stresses. The auto manufacturing town is home to a General Motors plant that used to produce the Chevy Equinox sport utility vehicle, and now assembles the BrightDrop electric commercial van. On the surface, the transition has been a success. But the road has been bumpy, with repeated temporary layoffs, the need to retrain workers for the newly automated facility, and a lingering uncertainty over the long-term demand for their product.

Communities like Estevan and Ingersoll that depend on export-oriented and high-emitting industries are more susceptible to the cascading effects of workforce disruption that come from the ups and downs of markets or major technological transformations.

When a large proportion of the local workforce is employed in susceptible sectors, everyone from local contractors to restaurant servers to truck drivers passing through could face challenges. Local governments and social service organizations might see a decline in revenue at the same time as growing demand. And the greatest disruption of all would likely be in local

housing markets: large outflows of workers could cause a price collapse, or large inflows could cause a housing shortage.

At the Institute for Research on Public Policy, we've identified 68 communities across Canada that will be susceptible to workforce disruption from the energy transition in the coming decades. Many of these same communities are also susceptible to looming U.S. tariffs, compounding the challenges they already face.

These communities tend to have smaller populations and lower levels of economic diversity. Many were established to produce the goods and energy that have driven Canada's economy for decades. The people living in these communities deserve more support to navigate these uncertain waters.

Experience shows that transformation strategies led by and for community members are more likely to generate lasting and widespread success because they are tailored to unique local challenges and opportunities, and consider the needs and interests of the community beyond just business investment.

But most of Canada's current economic development programs take a top-down approach with little local involvement. Funding for economic diversification is declining. And targeted support for susceptible communities is ad hoc and fleeting.

We could learn from the efforts of other countries. The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, for example, provides a bonus to production and investment tax credits for clean energy and technology manufacturing projects in "energy communities." Australia's Net Zero Economy Authority has a mandate to catalyze investment, support worker transition, ensure policy coherence, and engage with communities.

Here at home, federal and provincial governments could provide a top-up to investment tax credits or other financial incentives that could tip the balance for communities seeking to diversify and gain a foothold in fast-growing markets for clean energy, critical minerals, and data centres.

The federal government could also leverage existing organizations that are well placed to provide on-the-ground support. Community Futures Organizations are based in and around susceptible communities and governed by community members, but are largely federally funded and part of a national network. They can cut across local jurisdictional boundaries and draw lessons from anywhere in the country. But most don't have the financial resources to offer this kind of support, and community-level data, market information, and case studies to support strategy development are lacking.

Canada has an opportunity establish a stronger support framework ahead of what promises to be a turbulent decade.

In a fast-changing world, governments should do a better job of setting communities up to succeed and providing them with the confidence that they will have their backs come what may.

Rachel Samson is vice-president of research at the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

The Hill Times

Feds spent a record \$20.7-billion on outsourcing contracts last fiscal year

The federal government's 2023-24 public accounts show a consistent increase over the \$18.6-billion spent for outsourcing in the previous fiscal year, \$17.5-billion in 2021-22, and \$14.7-billion in 2020-21.

BY IREM KOCA

The federal government spent a record \$20.7-billion on outsourcing contracts last fiscal year, despite calls to cut back on spending, criticism over its reliance on consultants, and flaws in contracting practices.

A *Hill Times* analysis of the government's public accounts for the 2023-24 fiscal year—which ended March 31, 2024—shows that the total spending on professional and special services contracts across federal departments in 2023-24 reached \$20.7-billion. This marks a consistent increase over the \$18.6-billion spent for outsourcing in the previous fiscal year, \$17.5-billion in 2021-22, and \$14.7-billion in 2020-21.

Professional and special services contracts include services for business, management consulting, legal, informatics and engineering, health and protection, interpretation, translation, and education.

The largest spending by federal departments and agencies was on contracts for engineering and architectural services, totalling about \$5-billion. Business services accounted for nearly \$3.8-billion of the federal money spent on contracts, whereas informatics services reached \$2.7-billion. Health and welfare services totalled \$2.6-billion. Comparatively smaller expenses included the approximately \$621-million spent on protection services, \$237-million on interpretation and translation services, and \$683-million on legal services. Other services including research, training, and temporary help brought the total to more than \$20-billion spent on outsourcing contracts.

Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) Yves Giroux told *The Hill Times* in a Jan. 7 email that given the significant increase



Last May, Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos addressed the need for stronger oversight and integrity in federal procurement, especially in professional services. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

in the size of the public service in recent years, total federal government spending on professional and special services in 2023-24 is "substantial." The federal public service expanded by 30 per cent, growing from 282,980 employees in 2010 to 367,772 in 2024.

Once released, the federal government's 2025-26 main estimates and departmental plans will provide an indication of future spending in this area, Giroux explained.

Giroux said spending on professional and special services is "warranted for highly specialized services, such as health services in remote communities or engineering services for a major project, and similar requirements that are temporary in nature."

In a bid to save \$500-million, the federal government's 2023 budget aimed to reduce spending on consulting, professional services, and travel spending by 15 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Those targets were particularly focused on reducing expenses related to management consulting, part of a broader plan to cut \$15.4-billion in government spending over five years. According to the PBO, whether or not the government met that target cannot be solely established from the public accounts document as that determination relies on the government's own reporting. In late 2023, the Treasury Board released a *Manager's Guide* with the stated aim of helping department managers in deciding when to contract external professional services instead of using internal resources, and ensuring better value for money.

Public accounts also show that departments and agencies spent \$837.84-million in total for management consulting services in the 2023-24 fiscal year. Records show that federal spending on consultants exceeded \$811-million in 2021-22, nearly doubling the \$416-million spent six years earlier.

Employment and Social Development Canada led federal spending on management consulting services with \$234-million in the 2023-24 fiscal year, followed by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) at \$140-million. National Defence ranked third with \$83-million spent on management consulting contracts. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and Environment and Climate Change spent \$22-million and \$12-million, respectively.

The Canada Border Services Agency spent \$8.9-million on management consulting, followed by the RCMP at \$7.3-million. Other notable expenditures include nearly \$5.5-million for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, \$3.3-million by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and \$2.7-million by Correctional Service Canada. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission also spent \$1.8-million on management consulting during the same period.

The House of Commons, meanwhile, spent \$996,000 on management consulting, while the Senate spent \$457,000, and the Privy Council Office \$259,000.

Critics have long argued that outsourcing professional services can lead to higher costs in government projects, reduced transparency, and a loss of institutional

knowledge within the public service. The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), which represents thousands of federal employees, has highlighted that the real costs of outsourcing are too high, leading to wasted money, poor hiring practices, eroded capacity, and safety concerns.

According to PIPSC's analysis of the budgetary expenditures, which shows that departments and agencies spent \$19.5-billion on professional services in 2023-24, the amount spent is "significantly higher than historical norms." The union notes that spending has nearly doubled since 2014-15, and remains about 43 per cent—or \$6-billion—higher than before the pandemic.

PIPSC president Sean O'Reilly said years of outsourcing have created a shadow public service of consultants and temporary staff, and it's time to end the practice. He said PIPSC is demanding better hiring policies for government jobs that create efficient timelines, so that it's more difficult for managers to just hire consultants.

O'Reilly highlighted the Phoenix pay system as a glaring example of failed outsourcing projects. The IBM-made payroll system—which was intended to save the government \$70-million—has cost the federal government more than \$3.5-billion.

"The real costs of outsourcing are too high—wasted money, poor hiring practices, eroded capacity, and safety concerns," he said in a statement to *The Hill Times*.

Issues in outsourcing

The biggest earners of government contracts in 2023-24

include Deloitte, McKinsey and Company, IBM, DH Corporation, Accenture, PricewaterhouseCoopers, MNP, SI Systems, and Microsoft Canada.

The federal government has been embroiled in controversies surrounding its contracting practices over the past few years with the ArriveCan saga at the centre of intense scrutiny. A scathing auditor general's report released in February 2024 exposed serious management failures in the approximately \$59.5-million development of the app. A dozen subsequent investigations on the matter revealed that the government heavily depended on numerous external contractors and subcontractors for the development and maintenance of the app, escalating the costs while weakening the government's oversight. The Office of the Procurement Ombudsman also uncovered that companies involved in ArriveCan's development—such as GC Strategies—had listed subcontractors who did not perform any work, raising concerns about procurement integrity.

Experts and observers have previously told *The Hill Times* that gaps in project management expertise in the public service are a major part of what has led to the government's contracting woes.

In March 2024, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat announced new measures to enhance the management and oversight of government procurement. The government created the Office of Supplier Integrity and Compliance in May 2024, replacing the existing Integrity Regime to better address risks of misconduct and fraud in federal procurement.

In April 2024, Procurement Ombud Alexander Jeglic released a report revealing that federal departments changed procurement strategies so that McKinsey and Company—a multinational management consulting firm—would be eligible to win millions of dollars' worth of contracts, which he said created a "strong perception of favouritism" towards the firm.

According to the 2023-24 public accounts, McKinsey had two management consulting contracts with the federal government—one with PSPC, and the other with Employment and Social Development Canada—totalling \$1.4-million.

The ombud's annual report emphasized the need for immediate action to address persistent issues in federal procurement.

Public Services and Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos (Québec, Que.) acknowledged the necessity for improved oversight and integrity—particularly concerning professional services—in his May 2024 appearance before the House Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

By November 2024, PSPC referred seven cases of fraudulent overbilling related to federal contracts to the RCMP for criminal investigation.

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NEWS

Hosting G7 summit will be first global test for a new prime minister

A new government could bring 'meaningful, but not massive' changes in Canada's G7 agenda, says G7 Research Group director John Kirton.

Continued from page 1

looming departure, Canada will have a new face at the G7 table for the first time since 2015—whether it be the winner of the Liberal leadership race or the next federal election.

Canada is set to host the G7 Leaders' Summit in June 2025 in Kananaskis, Alta.

"I think it's very likely that there will be a Canadian federal general election before the summit and that the leader of the party that wins will have about a month to prepare for the Kananaskis summit," said John Kirton, founder and director of the G7 Research Group.

It will be the first time that a Canadian prime minister has hosted the G7 summit in the early days of their governance. The political calendar will likely mean that the leader won't be able to perform the traditional visits to G7 national capitals to gauge their counterparts' priorities for the summit.

Kirton said previous recently elected leaders from other G7 nations have performed well when hosting the summit.

"In Canada's case, we have an extremely experienced and highly skilled set of professional civil servants in the summit team who actually could get the Canadian prime minister through it rather well," he said. "The only question is would that Canadian prime minister actually listen to them? I think the answer is yes."

Canada's summit team is led by sherpa Cindy Termorshuizen.

Kirton said that when Trudeau was first elevated to the Prime Minister's Office in October 2015, he had less than a month to prepare before jet-setting on a whirlwind trip, which included the G20 and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summits in November 2015.

Kirton said that even with a change in government, he would expect the agenda to stay



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is the longest-serving world leader in the G7, having participated in eight summits. PMO photograph by Adam Scotti

relatively similar, with some key policy differences.

In the event Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) takes power, policy changes would be "meaningful, but not massive," Kirton said, suggesting a focus on climate change could shift to energy security.

He said other areas likely to be locked on are the threats from China and Iran, as well as the crises in Haiti and Venezuela.

The most recent G7 statement denounced the inauguration of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and its "lack of democratic legitimacy" following an election which pointed to a win by opposition candidate Edmundo González Urrutia.

Kirton said that if Poilievre were to form government, his lack of leadership experience on the world stage will be supplemented by his likely substantial mandate. Polls suggest that the Conservatives would win a large majority Parliament if the election were held today.

"I think that the sources of domestic political control and support will be more important than the actual experience," he said.

Expectations for summit should be 'managed' due to Trump effect: Chapnick

Royal Military College professor Adam Chapnick, an expert on Canadian foreign policy, said as long as a new prime minister doesn't disrupt the work of the sherpa, there would be little impact from a lack of experience on the global stage.

"A prudent prime minister coming into an international conference for which they don't have a lot of experience, they would probably keep the sherpa because you want to have some expertise by your side," he said.

"The key to how these summits tend to run is the work of the sherpas in advance," he said. "As long as the sherpa is there, I don't

have any significant concerns. If the sherpa were to be replaced just prior to the conference, then I would be more concerned."

Chapnick said the lack of experience comes with the territory of hosting a summit, as few leaders get to do it twice.

He said that a potential Conservative government may emphasize some policy positions as part of Canada's G7 agenda and de-emphasize others. But he noted that regardless of the party in power, policies around climate change and the environment were always likely to have a lower profile because of the return of United States president-elect Donald Trump to the White House.

Chapnick said expectations for the success of the summit will have to be "managed" due to Trump's animus towards multilateralism.

"The goals of the summit from a Canadian point of view should be potentially ratcheted down vis-à-vis what the goals would have been had there been a [Kamala] Harris administration in place," he said.

"If the summit can run smoothly, if there can be a consensus statement at the end, that would

be relatively successful," he said. "If the Canadian government tries to hype up the potential for this summit, my best guess is that everyone would be disappointed. We have to be reasonable and prudent about what can be achieved when you have an American administration that is not a strong supporter of multilateralism."

The last Canada-hosted G7 summit in 2018 featured testy scenes between Trump and other leaders. Trump left the summit early, and retracted his support of the group's joint statement, calling Trudeau "meek and mild" and "very dishonest and weak" at the time.

Canada also is next in line to host the North American Leaders' Summit, but a date has yet to be scheduled. The summit wasn't held during the previous Trump administration, but the practice was restored when U.S. President Joe Biden took control of the White House.

Will Trump attend?

Kirton said the G7 summit holds special significance for Canada as it occurs as the BRICS bloc is gaining prominence, surpassing the G7's global purchasing power with the recent addition of Indonesia to the group that consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

He said there is added significance with Trump's return, as well as 2025 being the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Group of Seven.

It is an open question as to whether Trump will travel to attend the G7 in Canada, Kirton said.

"There's a great drama over whether he will even come to Kananaskis. If he doesn't, will all the other G7 leaders come?" he questioned. "They could just say, 'What's the point?' if the leader of the most powerful in the G7 isn't there. The G6 just doesn't have the capacity to solve the problems of the world."

Chapnick said he is assuming that the U.S. will participate in the summit.

"If they don't, then this is an extraordinarily significant summit because it could signal a profound decline in the importance of the G7, which would be terrible for Canada," he said. "My hope and expectation is that the Americans do participate, and that president-elect Trump does appear for however little amount of time he chooses to."

Chapnick said one important issue will be Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine.

"The G7 has been doing a lot of work on Ukraine. The situation in Ukraine in June will have a lot of effect on what this summit does or doesn't do that we can't be certain of right now," he said.

Former diplomat Colin Robertson, a Canadian Global Affairs Institute senior adviser, said issues that should be spotlighted by the leaders include tariff and industrial policy, energy and food security, and mitigation of economic and climate-related migration, as well as a look at the Arctic.

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Cindy Termorshuizen, pictured left with former national security and intelligence adviser Jody Thomas on March 1, 2023, is the prime minister's representative to the G7. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Changes to Liberal leadership rules ‘thin silver lining’ amid foreign interference cloud, says national security expert Carvin

Liberal Party organizer and strategist Angelo Bakoulas says restricting the vote to members with permanent residency or citizenship was ‘the only choice.’

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over concerns of potential foreign interference, the party announced it would restrict voting eligibility to members with Canadian citizenship, permanent residency, or status under the Indian Act.

While the Liberals will still allow members as young as 14 years old to vote, in previous leadership and internal nomination contests, the party only required members to “ordinarily reside in Canada.”

Those rules have come under scrutiny due to revelations from the ongoing Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference, as well as the National Security Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP), both of which have undertaken investigations into allegations of foreign interference during the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.

In the commission’s preliminary report released on May 3, 2024, Justice Marie-Josée Hogue said the inquiry had found that nomination processes are a “gateway” for foreign interference.

“The eligibility criteria for voting in nomination contests do not seem very stringent, and the control measures in place do not seem very robust,” wrote Hogue.

However, despite the “troubling events that occurred in a handful of ridings” in both elections—particularly in the 2019 Liberal nomination of now-Independent MP Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ont.), and the 2021 general election in then-Conservative candidate Kenny Chiu’s riding of Steveston-Richmond East, B.C.—Hogue said it is impossible to determine whether those events had any impact on those ridings’ elections results, “given the multitude of factors” affecting how voters decided to cast their ballot as well as the secrecy of those ballots.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a press conference outside his home at Rideau Cottage on Jan. 6, 2025, to announce his resignation as prime minister and leader of the Liberal Party. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The inquiry’s final report is slated to be released on Jan. 31 after Hogue received approval to delay its release by one month.

In a statement to *The Hill Times*, Michael Tansey, the inquiry’s senior communications adviser, confirmed that the current prorogation of Parliament will have “no impact” on the report, nor its new deadline as the report is not required to be tabled in the House of Commons.

The NSICOP report also identified nomination processes and leadership contests as weak links in Canada’s defence against foreign interference.

During an appearance before the Senate National Security Committee on June 10, 2024, now-Public Safety Minister David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Ont.) who was then chair of NSICOP, said the committee examined “troubling intelligence suggesting that nomination processes and leadership races are particularly vulnerable to foreign interference.”

In its report, NSICOP also found two instances of foreign interference by officials linked to the People’s Republic of China allegedly attempting to interfere in the Conservative Party’s leadership races, and other instances of interference by the Indian government. However, much of the details regarding the allegations in the report have been redacted.

Ahead of the party’s caucus meeting on Jan. 8, McGuinty and several other Liberal MPs expressed concern over those findings and urged the party board to consider changes, partic-

ularly on amending the citizenship requirements.

McGuinty told reporters he expected the board to “examine all these questions,” including the recommendations in the NSICOP report.

While Liberal Party officials initially resisted calls to restrict voting to permanent residents and citizens, the rest of the government and Canada are in a “much better place” to respond to any foreign government’s attempt to interfere, regardless of Liberal Party rules, said Carvin, now an associate professor at Carleton University’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs.

“The good news is that one of the best defences against foreign interference is a better public understanding of what it is and what that looks like, and we’re definitely there,” Carvin explained. “More people understand it, and more people can recognize it and recognize that it’s a problem, and that’s a good thing.”

Alongside that heightened awareness, Carvin pointed to Bill C-70, which she said will make it easier for Canada’s intelligence agencies to share information with Liberal Party officials if any attempts to interfere are identified. The Security Intelligence Threats to Elections (SITE) Task Force—established before the 2019 election—would provide additional oversight to catch interference by foreign governments or non-state actors, Carvin said.

On Jan. 13, Nathalie Drouin, Trudeau’s national security and intelligence adviser and dep-

uty clerk of the Privy Council, announced that the SITE Task Force would monitor the upcoming leadership campaign for possible foreign interference and provide regular updates to the Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Intelligence Action to ensure “any threats to electoral integrity are addressed swiftly and effectively.”

“While leadership campaigns fall under the purview of political parties, all relevant departments and agencies continue to monitor the general environment and work collaboratively to address potential risks of foreign interference,” Drouin said in a press release.

However, Carvin said all those measures and rule changes are a “thin silver lining to a series of much larger problems.”

“We’re going to have a range of different actors that are going to want to interfere in this election,” Carvin said, including the governments of China, India, and Russia, the latter of whom she said would be more interested in “causing chaos” than any specific outcome.

Similarly, Carvin said the perception of foreign interference—even where none exists—will provide ample opportunity for exploitation unless the Liberal Party can demonstrate it is taking the problem seriously, and, most importantly, the steps needed to address it.

While the party has since changed its rules, its initial resistance demonstrated all of the wrong instincts, Carvin said.

“Given everything we’ve learned over the last two years, it makes them vulnerable to those

doubts,” Carvin explained. “To walk away from the Han Dong nomination without tightening those rules is to deliberately ignore the lessons of the past two years.”

Given the change, Carvin said the Liberals have taken a small step toward instilling more confidence in their process.

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 he generally supports the party’s membership rules, given the political circumstances, changing the voting criteria “made the most sense.”

Bakoulas said that given the concerns over potential foreign interference, the general public will scrutinize and press the party to demonstrate that it “isn’t taking the issue lightly.”

Yet, even beyond the threat of foreign interference, Bakoulas said tightening the rules was the right thing to do since members will be voting to directly elect a prime minister, not just a party leader.

As for those pre-existing members of the Liberal Party, or those who had hoped to join to participate in the contest and will no longer be able to do so, Bakoulas encouraged them to consider the greater context.

“I think anyone should be able to recognize that the party had to have some limitations to preserve the process’s authenticity and safeguard it as much as possible,” Bakoulas explained. “We’re living through a process that has not happened—potentially ever—under any party in such a short time frame, and with such intense scrutiny. It was the only choice.”

As of publication deadline, Liberal MP Chandra Arya (Nepean, Ont.) and former Grit MP Frank Baylis have officially declared their candidacy in the leadership race. On Jan. 13, Liberal MP Jaime Battiste (Sydney-Victoria, N.S.), announced he is “laying the ground work for an exploratory team” to launch “the first campaign by an Indigenous candidate” to become Liberal Party leader.

Former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney is expected to announce his candidacy later this week, as is former finance minister and deputy prime minister Chrystia Freeland (University-Rosedale, Ont.) and Government House Leader Karina Gould (Burlington, Ont.). On Jan. 14, former B.C. premier Christy Clark and Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne (Saint-Maurice-Champlain, Que.) both announced they would not seek the party’s leadership.

Contestants hoping to claim the Liberals’ and the country’s top spot will have until Jan. 23 to register and cough up a \$350,000 entry fee, a significant increase from the \$75,000 set out in the party’s constitution. With the final vote set for March 9, those hoping to become a member will have just four extra days—until Jan. 27—to register and be eligible to participate.

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NEWS

Lost federal revenue, property, money jumps to \$649.5-million in 2023-24: Public Accounts

Continued from page 5

deadline. In 2022-23, it had reported 38 cases of accidental damage to buildings or other real property totalling \$452,008.

Fisheries and Oceans reported the second-highest losses tied to building damage in 2023-24, all but \$10 of which was connected to 58 cases of accidental damage altogether valued at roughly \$2.7-million. Among those cases, roughly \$1-million was due to damage to floating docks in Grosse-Île, Que., due to Hurricane Fiona that was reported in 2023-24, while another \$500,000 and \$89,950 were connected to floating docks damaged by storms in Sambro, N.S. and Beaver Harbour, N.B., respectively.

Coming in third in this category in 2023-24 was Public Works and Government Services, which is described as “custodian of the government’s second-largest real estate portfolio” of federal office buildings and other properties, including the Parliamentary Precinct. In all, Public Works reported 56 cases of damage to buildings and other real property totalling roughly \$2.5-million. While seven cases valued at a combined total of \$956,801 were attributed to accidental damage, another 49 cases valued at a little more than \$1.5-million were due to vandalism. The department did not provide a response to emailed questions regarding these cases by filing deadline. In 2022-23, Public Works ranked fifth among departments that reported building damages at a total of \$553,405.

After damage to buildings, losses related to machinery, equipment, furniture, and furnishings was the next highest category of reported public property losses in 2023-24, with a combined total of \$9.7-million for the year. The year prior, this category had ranked sixth highest.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) topped the list for such losses with 2,038 cases of accidental losses or damage valued at almost \$7.6-million—and no reported cases of theft or vandalism.

According to the agency, these losses were wholly tied to a fire at one of its facilities in Ontario, and

included “various types of laboratory and medical equipment, as well as office furniture such as tables and desks.”

PHAC was followed by the Correctional Service of Canada, which reported 2,303 cases involving machinery, equipment, furniture, and furnishings valued at \$616,382 overall. Of that, 1,963 cases totalling \$165,057 were due to theft or vandalism, while 340 cases totalling \$451,325 were due to lost or damaged such items. By comparison, only 675 overall cases valued at \$264,684 were reported by the CSC under this category in 2022-23.

Noting the “complex population of people” for whom it is responsible, the CSC said that 1,735—or about 88.4 per cent—of the cases of reported theft or vandalism were individual kitchen trays that were broken throughout the year. The agency also flagged an “asset verification exercise” that it said took place in 2023-24 and contributed some \$350,011 to the bottom line.

“Although the purchase dates of the missing equipment span different fiscal years, the losses were presented together in fiscal year 2023-2024 when the equipment was confirmed lost and when the corresponding asset records were adjusted,” explained the CSC by email.

“While we work to prevent incidents such as vandalism and theft at our institutions, they do occur from time to time.”

Public property losses related to Crown vehicles and other transportation equipment came third among the different categories, with 1,735 cases valued at roughly \$9.5-million in 2023-24. Of those, 1,473 cases totalling roughly \$8.3-million were due to accidental loss or damage. These numbers are an improvement over 2022-23, when losses tied to Crown vehicles reached \$20.6-million and ranked second overall.

The RCMP once again reported the highest such losses, with 1,263 cases valued at \$7.3-million, of which 1,130—valued at almost \$6.6-million—were due to accidental loss or damage to Crown vehicles and other transport.

New to the list of departments reporting such losses in 2023-24 was the Office of the Auditor General, which reported one case

of vehicle theft valued at \$50,288. According to the office, that case is tied to a 2021 Toyota Highlander Hybrid that was stolen from a parking lot in Montreal on Oct. 22, 2023. While the office has no full-time driver on staff, two of

its employees’ job descriptions include driving in addition to other duties, and the auditor general is “also an authorized user of the executive vehicle,” the personal use of which “is a taxable benefit for the AG,” according to the office.

“A police report was filed the same day, but the vehicle was not recovered. The loss was fully covered by insurance,” read its emailed response.

tryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

2015-2024 Public Accounts

This table lists the total revenue, public money, and public property reported as lost by federal departments and agencies between 2014-15 and 2023-35.

Fiscal Year	Lost revenue	Lost public money (accidents and offences)	Lost public property (accidents and offences)	Total
2014-15	\$121,612,992	\$121,397,357	\$10,937,567	\$253,947,916
2015-16	\$101,569,133	\$140,437,407	\$12,734,955	\$254,741,495
2016-17	\$73,873,127	\$209,282,226	\$31,011,787	\$314,167,140
2017-18	\$52,765,429	\$195,826,706	\$18,378,018	\$266,970,153
2018-19	\$110,433,862	\$186,455,970	\$24,187,131	\$321,076,963
2019-20	\$36,967,723	\$168,909,719	\$36,237,061	\$242,114,503
2020-21	\$37,451,486	\$179,356,721	\$109,258,795	\$326,067,002
2021-22	\$39,722,059	\$124,891,850	\$62,498,051	\$227,111,960
2022-23	\$14,294,254	\$283,315,776	\$236,572,447	\$534,182,477
2023-24	\$252,938,916	\$360,013,413	\$36,509,945	\$649,462,274

Source: Public Accounts of Canada.

Lost/stolen public property, 2018-2024

This table lists the total public property losses reported by federal departments and agencies in the Public Accounts between 2018-19 and 2023-24, broken down by type.

Fiscal year	Total # Stolen/Vandalized	Total \$ Stolen/Vandalized	Total # Lost/Damaged	Total \$ Lost/Damaged	Overall Total #	Overall Total \$
2018-19	1,635	\$12,059,232	11,126	\$12,127,899	12,761	\$24,187,131
2019-20	3,616	\$1,623,768	14,951	\$34,613,293	18,567	\$36,237,061
2020-21	5,018	\$3,341,950	9,146	\$105,916,845	14,164	\$109,258,795
2021-22	3,627	\$3,545,429	14,847	\$58,952,622	18,474	\$62,498,051
2022-23	2,934	\$2,026,088	14,453	\$234,546,359	17,400	\$236,572,447
2023-24	4,658	\$4,289,403	18,112	\$32,220,542	22,770	\$36,509,945

Source: Public Accounts of Canada.

2024 Public Accounts—Lost Property, totals by category

This table breaks down the total number of cases and dollar values attached to public property that was reported as stolen or vandalized, or accidentally lost or damaged by federal departments and agencies during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Category	# Stolen/Vandalized	\$ Stolen/Vandalized	# Lost/Damaged	\$ Lost/Damaged	Overall Total #	Overall Total \$
Materials, tools, supplies	238	\$167,815	3,849	\$849,186	4,087	\$1,017,001
Crown vehicles & other transport	262	\$1,241,833	1,473	\$8,305,198	1,735	\$9,547,031
Computers, tablets, laptops	196	\$278,406	1,263	\$1,477,501	1,459	\$1,755,907
Cell phones	131	\$137,395	1,186	\$1,270,884	1,317	\$1,408,279
Other telecommunications, informatics, electronic equipment	169	\$72,919	1,489	\$1,141,912	1,658	\$1,214,831
Machinery, equipment, furniture, furnishings	2,033	\$280,339	4,747	\$9,435,926	6,780	\$9,716,265
Access card or security badge	78	\$1,084	1,865	\$26,669	1,943	\$27,753
Buildings or real property	1,525	\$2,084,567	231	\$9,530,554	1,756	\$11,615,121
Weapons and accessories	8	\$11,957	139	\$16,940	147	\$28,897
Uniforms	15	\$7,005	251	\$30,865	266	\$37,870
Combat outfits	1	\$5,426	1,619	\$134,907	1,620	\$140,333
Taxi Vouchers	1	\$100	—	—	1	\$100
Rental Vehicle	1	\$557	—	—	1	\$557
TOTAL	4,658	\$4,289,403	18,112	\$32,220,542	22,770	\$36,509,945

Source: Public Accounts of Canada.

Hill Climbers



By Laura Ryckewaert

Minister MacAulay's longtime chief of staff exits, new one named



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

Plus, Jason MacDonald has joined the agriculture minister's team as an Ontario regional adviser and assistant to the parliamentary secretary.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister **Lawrence MacAulay** is entering the new year with a new chief of staff in his office, with his longtime aide **Matthew Mann** having recently announced his decision to leave.

Until officially making his exit as of Jan. 3, Mann had spent close to 15 years working in various capacities for MacAulay, starting in 2010 during the Liberals' days in opposition as assistant to MacAulay as the MP for Cardigan, P.E.I.

After the Trudeau Liberals were first elected to form government in 2015 and MacAulay was subsequently named as agriculture minister for the first time, Mann was quick to land a role as director of parliamentary affairs to the newly re-minted minister.

Similarly hailing from Canada's smallest Maritime province, Mann continued as MacAulay's parliamentary affairs lead after the minister was shuffled into the veterans affairs portfolio in March 2019. Almost four years later, at the



Matthew Mann left Minister MacAulay's office as of Jan. 3. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

start of 2023, Mann was promoted to lead the office as chief of staff, a role he continued in after MacAulay was shuffled back into the agriculture portfolio later that year.

Mann addressed his decision to leave the Hill in a recent LinkedIn post, writing: "Nearly fifteen years ago I came into Lawrence MacAulay's office on Parliament Hill for a job interview and never left."

"It's been an incredible ride filled with experiences and people I'll never forget, and so many files that matter for my province, my country, and especially for Canadian Veterans and Canadian farmers," he continued. "To spend this amount of my life working for someone who's such a great man, a fantastic boss, a friend, and a mentor is something I can never be grateful enough for."

Mann credited MacAulay for honing his "political instincts," and called his time as chief of staff to the federal agriculture minister his "dream job," writing that he's finished his career on the Hill "with a dream team around me." He

noted the "bittersweet emotions" wrapped up in reflecting on "an extraordinary career that I never could have dreamed of."

"Looking forward to taking some time to decompress before moving on to the next chapter," he concluded.

With Mann's exit, director of operations **Maria Morley** has been promoted to serve as MacAulay's new chief of staff.

Morley is comparatively newer to MacAulay's employ, having joined the minister's team in October 2023. Before then, she'd been an Atlantic regional affairs

adviser in Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** office.

Morley previously also spent roughly two years in all as an Atlantic adviser to then-employment, workforce development, and disability inclusion minister **Carla Qualtrough**, and has covered the regional desk in the Liberal research bureau.

In other office news, back in December, **Jason MacDonald** joined the agriculture team as an Ontario regional affairs adviser and assistant to the minister's parliamentary secretary, currently Liberal MP **Francis Drouin**.

MacDonald marked his first day in MacAulay's office on Dec. 16. He most recently spent roughly a year in all, ending late last year, as an assistant to Rural Economic Development Minister **Gudie Hutchings** as the MP for Long Range Mountains, N.L.

Hutchings recently announced that she will not seek re-election.

MacDonald is currently also serving as chief financial officer and community engagement officer for the provincial Liberal riding association for Ottawa Centre, Ont. Amongst other past experience, he's a former infantry reservist with the Canadian Armed Forces.

In the agriculture office, MacDonald fills a role left vacant by **Patrick Mangan's** departure last June. According to his LinkedIn profile, Mangan is now a senior policy analyst with Farmers for Climate Solutions.



Jason MacDonald has joined Minister MacAulay's team. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Otherwise currently working for MacAulay are: **Hilary Peirce**, director of policy; policy advisers **Arianna Myers** and **Jeremy Keats**; **Bradley Henstock**, director of parliamentary affairs; **George Williams**, special assistant for issues management and parliamentary affairs; **Alison Porter**, director of regional affairs; **Michael Ferguson**, senior special assistant for Atlantic regional affairs; **Annie Cullinan**, director of communications; **Axandre Lemours**, communications adviser; **Annabel Da Silva**, executive assistant to the minister and chief of staff; and **Nick Mamo**, ministerial driver.

Beyond MacAulay's office, much is in flux for cabinet staffing on the Hill following the Dec. 20 shuffle that affected 11 existing ministerial teams.

Treasury Board rules set out a 30-calendar-day timeline for ministers affected by a shuffle to solidify their new teams, and for staff to likewise make their own decisions regarding whether to stay or leave before they're officially deemed to be unemployed. In this case, that clock will run out on Jan. 19.

With the winter holidays having only recently wrapped up and many staffers still away on pre-arranged breaks, there was little word of confirmed staffing decisions last week, but stay tuned to **Hill Climbers** for updates.

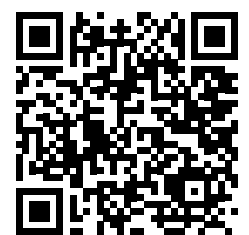
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Parliamentary Calendar

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

UofT hosts launch for Catherine Tsalikis' new book on Chrystia Freeland on Jan. 21



The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts the launch of Catherine Tsalikis' new book, *Chrystia*, tracing the journey for former deputy PM and finance minister Chrystia Freeland on Jan. 21. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 15

Parliament Prorogued—Parliament has been prorogued until Monday, March 24.

Conservative Leader to Attend Fundraiser—Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre will attend a party fundraiser. Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 4 p.m. PT at the Paradox Hotel in Vancouver, B.C. Details: conservative.ca/events.

THURSDAY, JAN. 16

Hybrid Lecture: 'Unpredictable America'—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts a hybrid lecture titled "Unpredictable America: Donald Trump and the Future of American Foreign Policy" featuring political science professor Thomas A. Schwartz from Vanderbilt University. Thursday, Jan. 16, at 4 p.m. ET via Zoom and in person at the Campbell Conference Facility, 1 Devonshire Place, Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

'Communicating with Elected Officials'—CPRS Ottawa-Gatineau hosts "Politically Speaking: Communicating with Elected Officials" featuring Ashton Arsenault, partner at Crestview Strategy. Thursday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m. ET at The Bridge Public House, 1 Donald St. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JAN. 20

U.S. Presidential Inauguration—Donald Trump will be sworn in as the 47th president of the United States on Monday, Jan. 20, at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

MONDAY, JAN. 20—FRIDAY, JAN. 24

World Economic Forum—The annual meeting of World Economic Forum will take place in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, from Monday, Jan. 20 to Friday, Jan. 24. This year's theme is "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age." Details: weforum.org.

TUESDAY, JAN. 21

Dr. Tam to Take Part in Panel—Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam will take part in a panel discussion on "How healthy is Canada's information environment? Action in the face of misinformation" hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Chrystia Book Launch—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts the launch of Catherine Tsalikis' new book, *Chrystia*, tracing Liberal MP Chrystia Freeland's journey from Peace River, Alta., to the halls of Parliament Hill. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 4 p.m. ET both online and in person at the Campbell Conference Facility, Munk School, 1 Devonshire Pl., Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

South African Envoy to Deliver Remarks—Carleton University presents the third event of the Ambassadors Speaker Series featuring the High Commissioner of South Africa Rieaz Shaik on the topic: "Quo Vadis South Africa? The 'Formestic' Imperative." Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 5:30 p.m. ET at The Westin Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: events.carleton.ca.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 22

Hybrid Event: 'The Quest for Medicare in Canada'—The Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History hosts the hybrid launch of the new book, *Tommy Douglas and the Quest for Medicare in Canada*, by Gregory P. Marchildon. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 4 p.m. ET via Zoom and in person at the Munk School's Boardroom and Library, 315 Bloor St. West, Toronto. Details: billgrahamcentre.utoronto.ca.

Fireside Chat with Carol Off—World Press Freedom Canada is hosting a fireside chat with CBC journalist and author Carol Off about her new book, *A Loss for Words: Conversation in an Age of Rage*. Join us for a discussion and Q&A about one of the most important press freedom issues today. Wednesday, Jan. 22, 5:30-7:30 p.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., 15th Floor. To register, visit worldpressfreedomcanada.ca.

Panel: 'Big Stories of 2025 that will Shape Canada'—The Empire Club hosts a panel discussion, "The Journalists' Forecast: Big Stories of 2025 that will Shape Canada" featuring. Participants include Robert Benzie, *The Toronto Star's* Queen's Park bureau chief; Adrienne Batra, editor-in-chief, *Toronto Sun*; and Marieke Walsh, senior political reporter in Ottawa for *The Globe and Mail*. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 5:30 p.m. ET at Simpson Tower, 8th Floor, 401 Bay St., Toronto. Details: empireclubofcanada.com.

Book Launch: *Burnt by Democracy*—The Centre for Urban Youth Research hosts the launch of Carleton

University professor Jacqueline Kennelly's new book, *Burnt by Democracy: Youth, Inequality, and the Erosion of Civic Life*, which traces the political ascendance of neoliberalism and its effects on youth living in five liberal democracies: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. ET at Irene's Pub, 885 Bank St. Details via Eventbrite.

Webinar: 'Mackenzie King and His Ruins'—Heritage Ottawa hosts a webinar, "The Abbot of Kingsmere: Mackenzie King and His Ruins." Architectural historian and Carleton University professor Peter Coffman explores the long imaginative tradition in which former prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's ruins are situated, how that tradition came to Canada, and the seminal moments which intersected with King's life. Wednesday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. ET happening online: heritageottawa.org.

THURSDAY, JAN. 23

Deadline to Join Liberal Leadership Race—Today is the last day for contestants to declare their participation in the race to replace Justin Trudeau as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. The entrance fee is \$350,000. Details: lpc.ca/2025leadership.

The Dance for Her—Members of Ottawa's Parliamentary and business community are invited to a night in support of ovarian cancer research featuring an open bar, a DJ, and dancing. Thursday, Jan. 23, at 7:30 p.m. ET at the Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

MONDAY, JAN. 27

Panel with Joe Clark, Lloyd Axworthy, and Louise Fréchette—The Canadian International Council hosts a discussion, "Making Canada Count in an Increasingly Difficult World," featuring former prime minister Joe Clark, former Liberal cabinet minister Lloyd Axworthy, and former Canadian public servant, ambassador and deputy UN secretary-general Louise Fréchette. Monday, Jan. 27, at 5:30 p.m. ET at KPMG, 150 Elgin St., Suite 1800. Details: thecic.org.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29—THURSDAY, JAN. 30

Crown Corporate Governance Conference—Ethics Commissioner Konrad

von Finckenstein is among the speakers at a two-day conference on "Crown Corporate Governance" hosted by the Canadian Institute. Wednesday, Jan. 29 to Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Hilton Garden Inn, downtown Ottawa. Details: canadianinstitute.com.

THURSDAY, JAN. 30

Mayor Sutcliffe to Deliver Remarks—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a lunch event featuring Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe who will speak on "Innovation in Infrastructure: Building More, More Sustainably," exploring the challenges and opportunities facing infrastructure projects in Canada's national capital. Thursday, Jan. 30, at 12 p.m. ET at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

FRIDAY, JAN. 31

Foreign Interference Commission Reports—The Foreign Interference Commission's final report has been granted an extension, and will be released no later than Friday, Jan. 31. Details: foreigninterferencecommission.ca.

SATURDAY, FEB. 1

Senator Hartling's Retirement—Today is New Brunswick ISG Senator Nancy Hartling's 75th birthday, which means her mandatory retirement from the Senate.

SUNDAY, FEB. 2

Senator Dagenais' Retirement—Today is Quebec CSG Senator Jean-Guy Dagenais' 75th birthday, which means his mandatory retirement from the Senate.

TUESDAY, FEB. 4

Chief of Defence Staff to Deliver Remarks—Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Jennie Carignan will join NORAD's deputy commander Lt.-Gen. Blaise Frawley at a bilingual lunch event hosted by the Montreal Council on Foreign Relations. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 11:30 a.m. ET in Montreal. Details: corim.qc.ca.

'Affordability of Cancer Care in Canada'—The Economic Club of Canada hosts an event on World Cancer Day exploring newly published data on the affordability crisis for people with cancer in Canada. Tuesday, Feb. 4,

at 11:45 a.m. ET in Toronto. Details: economicclub.ca.

Deputy Trade Minister Morrison to Deliver Remarks—David Morrison, deputy minister of international trade, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

TUESDAY, FEB. 4—WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5

National Forum on UNDRIP Act—The Assembly of First Nations hosts a national forum on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Tuesday, Feb. 4, to Wednesday, Feb. 5, at the Westin Bayshore, in Vancouver, B.C. Details: afn.ca.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5

Canadian Chamber of Commerce CEO to Deliver Remarks—Candace Laing, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, will deliver remarks at the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 7:30 a.m. CT, at 2 Lombard Pl., Winnipeg. Details: business.mbchamber.mb.ca.

Stephen Poloz to Deliver Remarks—Former Bank of Canada governor Stephen Poloz will deliver remarks titled "How do we get Canada's economy back on track? Stephen Poloz discusses the path forward" at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Adam Chapnick to Discuss His New Book—The University of Ottawa hosts professor and author Adam Chapnick who will discuss his new book, *Canada First, Not Canada Alone: The Past, Present, and Future of Canadian Foreign Policy*, along with professor Roland Paris. Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 3:30 p.m. ET at the University of Ottawa, FSS 4004, 120 University Priv. Details: cips-cepi.ca.

TUESDAY, FEB. 11

Food and Beverage Canada's Policy Breakfast—Food and Beverage Canada hosts its annual policy breakfast to kickoff Canadian Ag Day featuring a panel discussion titled "Boosting Competitiveness and Productivity in Food and Beverage Manufacturing" on this industry's critical needs to thrive, compete, and lead both domestically and globally. Confirmed speakers include former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul, and Canadian Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Candace Laing. Full agenda to follow. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 a.m. ET at the Rogers Centre Ottawa, 55 Colonel By Dr. Contact admin@fbc-abc.com.

Lunch: Responding to Impending Trade Tariffs—The C.D. Howe Institute hosts a lunch on "How Can Canada Respond to Impending Trade Tariffs" featuring Canada's former chief trade negotiator Steve Verheul, now principal at GT & Co. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12

Canada's Premiers to Washington, D.C.—Ontario Premier Doug Ford, as chair of the Council of the Federation, will lead a joint mission of Canada's premiers to Washington, D.C. to meet with key members of the new White House administration, Congress, and business leaders. Details: canadaspremiers.ca.

TUESDAY, FEB. 25

The Future of Money and Decentralized Finance—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a lunch event, "The Future of Money and Decentralized Finance: Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges for 2025." Panellists will explore how blockchain and decentralized solutions are transforming the financial landscape, and what does an effective regulatory framework look like. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 12 p.m. ET at the Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.