

TRANSPORTATION POLICY BRIEFING

ATIP of the iceberg: DND grows its access- to-info backlog

LET UKRAINE STRIKE BACK KUTCHER & DASKO

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CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

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NEWS

Difficult deliberations ahead as MPs look to avoid 'watered- down' harassment policy

Despite recommending against adopting a formal policy, Tory MP Michelle Rempel Garner says 'that doesn't mean ... that we shouldn't have something.'

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

The Procedure and House Affairs Committee is getting to work on drafting a report following its study on MP harassment—looking at both the impacts of abuse parliamentarians face, and the possible creation of a policy to address MP-to-MP conflicts—and NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen says she's hopeful that this time, the

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'I don't want to wait another 10 years,' says NDP MP Lindsay Mathysen of creating a policy that covers MP-to-MP harassment. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

NEWS

Conservative fundraising machine on track to smash 2023's historic \$35.2M record as Grits play ad-buy catch-up

BY STUART BENSON

The Conservatives' fundraising machine is expected to smash through its all-time record for the second year in a row, outpacing all other federal parties com-

binated this year to the tune of more than \$12-million. Meanwhile, the governing Liberals continue to hold steady toward surpassing the party's own previous

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NEWS

Housing advocates wary of funding plan after praising Poilievre's GST pledge

BY STUART BENSON

While housing advocates have welcomed Conservative Leader Pierre

Poilievre's proposal to axe the goods and services tax on newly built homes, his

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Christina Leadlay

Heard On The Hill

Ex-senator Murray Sinclair remembered as ‘a giant,’ ‘brilliant,’ and ‘a national treasure’



Former judge, Truth and Reconciliation Commission chair, and retired senator Murray Sinclair died on Nov. 4. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Parliamentarians present and past, and many others in Canada’s political sphere shared their condolences and memories of **Murray Sinclair** on Nov. 4 following news of his death earlier that day.

The retired senator, former provincial judge, and past chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission died on Nov. 4 “peacefully and surrounded by love” in Winnipeg, according to a statement from his family. He was 73 years old.

“**Mazina Giizhik** (the One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky) committed his life in service to the people: creating change, revealing truth, and leading with fairness throughout his career. The impact of our dad’s work reached far across the country and the world,” reads the statement, referring to Sinclair by his Indigenous name.

Sinclair’s five children had posted on social media in October that their father had been in hospital for the past few months, and that he had been admitted to “the ICU after seeing a significant decline in his health,” according to *Winnipeg Classic 107* news Oct. 26.

Born in 1951, Sinclair was a member of Peguis First Nation who was raised on a reserve in Winnipeg. He was called to the Manitoba bar in 1980, and also taught at the University of Manitoba. He became the province’s first Indigenous judge in 1988, was involved in numerous inquiries, and accepted the role of chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2009. He retired from the bar and from public life in 2015, but was appointed to the Senate in 2016 where he served in the Independent Senators Group until he retired in 2021. He published

his autobiography, *Who We Are*, earlier this year.

Governor General **Mary Simon** recalled Sinclair as “a kind, wise, and generous soul,” whom she’d invested into the Order of Canada two years ago, while Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** said Sinclair had “challenged us to confront the darkest parts of our history—because he believed we could learn from them, and be better for it,” he posted on X.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, and former Senator Murray Sinclair in 2022. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

“With his passing, Canada has lost a giant—a brilliant legal mind, a champion of Indigenous rights, and a trusted leader on our journey of Reconciliation,” wrote Trudeau.

Senators including **Jane Cordy**, **Marty Klyne**, and **Don Plett** shared their condolences for their former colleague: “His lifelong career in public life, as the first Indigenous judge in Manitoba, former Senator and former Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, has left an important impact on our country,” posted Plett, who’s also from Manitoba.

Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister **Gary Anandasangaree** said Sinclair’s “work for residential school Survivors and Indigenous communities will forever be remembered.”

Liberal MP **Nathaniel Erskine-Smith** posted: “When he spoke, the country listened.”

Conservative MP **Eric Melillo** said he was heartbroken at the news of Sinclair’s passing, adding Sinclair “was instrumental in the advancement of reconciliation and will be missed by Canadians across the country.”

“As a country, we owe him an unpayable debt for his work as a judge, senator, and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, helping lead Canada toward genuine and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples,” Ontario Premier **Doug Ford** posted on X. “I hope that we will all be guided Murray Sinclair’s legacy of respect, understanding and honesty.”

Ontario NDP MPP **Joel Harden** called Sinclair “a national treasure”; former MP **Jody Wilson-Raybould** said he was her “mentor, friend, and colleague—I will always cherish his wisdom & celebrate his distinct contributions to Indigenous peoples and to Canada”; and child welfare advocate **Cindy Blackstock** memorialized Sinclair as someone who “always walked into dark places with a flashlight so that we can safely follow. A beam of light that cut through injustice and shows the way to hope.”

In their statement, the Sinclair family asked for donations to the Murray Sinclair Memorial Fund at the Winnipeg Foundation in lieu of flowers, invited the public to bring offerings of tobacco to a

sacred fire that’s been lit outside the Manitoba Legislative Building, and noted that news about a public memorial will be announced “in the coming days.”

MPs Gazan, Ildout, and Desjarlais call for Survivors’ pin



NDP MPs Leah Gazan, left, Blake Desjarlais, and Lori Ildout. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade and Sam Garcia

A trio of New Democrat MPs has written to the Governor General asking for her support for an Order of Canada-type pin for residential school survivors.

“With an increase in residential school denialism, survivors must be protected. Their gift of stories allowed Canadians to learn the true history of Canada,” wrote **Leah Gazan**, **Lori Ildout**, and **Blake Desjarlais** to **Mary Simon** on Oct. 30.

“Survivors’ pins could help raise further awareness about the history of the Indian Residential School system and ensure survivors are treated with the utmost respect and dignity by the public,” they wrote, noting such pins would signal the need to show a bit of extra compassion and caring for those who wear them “for what might be going on in their spirit.”

A public education campaign would also be needed to teach Canadians about the pins’ significance, “and on how to ensure survivors are treated in a trauma-informed and kind manner,” the trio wrote, adding that they look forward to discussing this initiative with Simon.

The next day, Gazan tabled Bill C-413 to address residential school denialism, which was the same day that **Kimberley Murray**—the special interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools—presented her final report, which is also calling on the government to add residential school denialism to the Criminal Code.

Callan is Canada’s new envoy to Trinidad and Tobago

Foreign Affairs minister **Mélanie Joly** announced on Oct. 30 that **Michael Callan** will replace **Arif Keshani** as Canada’s high commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago. Highlights from Callan’s CV include working for the federal

international development agency, the Aga Khan Foundation in Bangladesh, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow, and being Canada’s first civilian deployed to Kandahar. He’s also worked in Khartoum, Sudan; Cairo, Egypt; and Amman, Jordan; in the Privy Council Office; and did a fellowship at Harvard University. He’s been Canada’s ambassador to Algeria since 2021.

HealthCareCAN’s chief retires



Paul-Emile Cloutier. Photograph courtesy Paul-Emile Cloutier

Paul-Emile Cloutier, head of the non-profit HealthCareCAN, retired on Nov. 5. After 25 years in the industry, “I feel the time is right for me to embrace some form of retirement or new ventures,” Cloutier told *Heard on the Hill* on Oct. 25.

Cloutier joined HealthCareCAN in June 2017, and previously worked at Genome Canada, and the Canadian Medical Association. HealthCareCAN is currently accepting applications for his successor.

Veteran press gallery reporter Courtney George Tower has died

Longtime Parliamentary Press Gallery member **Courtney George Tower** died on Oct. 24 in Ottawa.

Born in 1932 in Norquay, Sask., Tower came to Ottawa to study journalism at what was then known as Carleton College when he was 16 years old, according to his obituary.

Tower “was a print journalist his entire life, with periods in various associated government portfolios including assistant and press secretaries to then-prime minister **Pierre Elliott Trudeau**. He worked almost until his dying day, volunteering for his community’s newspaper *Vistas*,” reads the obituary.

Tower was predeceased by his wife **Celine**, and is survived by children **Amanda** and **Courtney (C.P.)**, and granddaughter **Samara**.

A funeral mass will take place Nov. 7, at 1 p.m. at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 1758 Alta Vista Dr.

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Government

News

DND access-to-info woes persist as compliance with law drops, backlog grows

For the third straight year, the Department of National Defence is going the wrong way when it comes to respecting access-to-information laws and timelines.

BY NEIL MOSS

Compliance by the Department of National Defence with the Access to Information Act decreased in the last fiscal year as its backlog of active requests beyond its legislated timeline grew by more than 15 per cent, according to a recent report tabled in Parliament.

That came during the same reporting period when Defence Minister Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.) told a House committee that his department—which has increasingly come under the information commissioner’s microscope—was treating failures to meet its statutory requirements seriously.

During an appearance at the House Defence Committee on Feb. 12, Blair claimed that his department’s performance was improving.

“During fiscal year 2022-23, National Defence received 2,241 new ATI requests. Over that same period, they closed 2,242, with 61.73 per cent of requests closed within the legislated timelines. Last year’s rates represent an increase from last year and are part of a general upward trend,” he said at the time.

However, he remarked that DND “needs to do better,” and



Defence Minister Bill Blair, pictured left with Chief of Defence Staff Jennie Carignan, told the House Defence Committee in February that DND’s ATIP compliance was on an upward trajectory. But the reverse is true. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

declared that “there is never an excuse for failing to meet our legal requirements.”

“DND and CAF [Canadian Armed Forces] have introduced new programs and initiatives to ensure that the new rules are being met, and that the departmental processes are improving overall,” Blair told the committee at the time, trumpeting technological improvements to DND’s information request (ATIP) regime, and that senior leaders were reinforced about the need to ensure they are committed to complying with the law.

In fact, in 2022-23, compliance rates were not up. They had decreased by 5.6 per cent to 61.7 per cent compared to 67.3 per cent in 2021-22—a fiscal year in which the department received 2,523 new ATIPs and closed 2,156.

In the same reporting period when Blair was appearing before the House committee, compliance was getting worse. The annual report on DND’s administration of the Access to Information Act shows that compliance dropped another 4.5 per cent in 2023-24.

The report, which was tabled in the House of Commons on Oct. 7, has yet to be posted on the department’s reports and publications webpage, which include previous ATIP annual reports.

Under the Access to Information Act, requests must be responded to within 30 days, but the legislative timeline to respond can be extended for “a reasonable period of time,” which includes if the request would “unreasonably interfere with the operations of the government,” and if consultations are required that “cannot reasonably be completed within the original time limit.”

DND’S ON-TIME COMPLIANCE WITHIN LEGISLATED TIMELINE	
2018-19	61%
2019-20	66%
2020-21	53%
2021-22	67%
2022-23	61%
2023-24	57%

Department of National Defence

BACKLOG OF OUTSTANDING ATIP REQUESTS OUTSIDE OF LEGISLATED TIMELINE PER REPORTING PERIOD	
2021-22	1,546
2022-23	1,593
2023-24	1,852

Department of National Defence

The 2023-24 annual report also shows that the backlog of requests that are already beyond the required statutory response date grew by 16 per cent, from 1,593 in 2022-23 to 1,852 in 2023-24, as of March 31, 2024. Only 177 active requests were within legislated timelines.

While ATIPs to DND increased from 2,241 requests in 2022-23 to 2,347 requests in 2023-24, time spent on processing them dropped by 38 per cent from 107 “person years dedicated to access to information activities” in 2022-23 to 66.5 in 2023-24.

Active complaints to Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard are also on the rise compared to the previous year. As of the end of this past March, there were 80 active complaints, compared to 71 by the end of the 2022-23 fiscal year, as outlined in the previous annual report.

Earlier this year, Maynard took the rare step of taking DND to Federal Court to get the department to follow her orders. There were three applications

during the 2023-24 fiscal year for a court order, but DND’s annual report only notes two of those. Two of the cases have since been discontinued.

Maynard told the House Defence Committee in February that the “extraordinary recourse” should not be required, remarking that it “raises doubts about my authority, but more important, the credibility of the access to information of the federal government.”

The committee has been undertaking a study on transparency within DND and the Armed Forces, holding nine meetings since the beginning of February. In a closed-door meeting on Oct. 8, committee members agreed to adopt the draft report, titled: *Rebuilding Trust: Transparency and Accountability in the Department of National Defence*. That

report was tabled in the House on Nov. 5.

Speaking to the committee in May, then-chief of the defence staff Gen. Wayne Eyre highlighted that changes were being made to improve the ATIP regime.

“We must do better. There are a number of lines of effort that we are working on the department side to speed things up, whether from a technological and information management perspective or from a process and personnel capacity perspective,” he said.

No real consequences for flouting ATIP laws, says Beeby

Ottawa journalist Dean Beeby, who specializes in access-to-information matters, said the poor performance at DND stems from the lack of consequences that it faces.

“All we really have is the court of public opinion and embarrassment in news stories,” he said. “There’s no actual hard penalties for them not pulling up their socks and doing a proper job.”

He said that the department has been talking about initiatives to improve their performance for decades, without any results.

“DND has been a long-term bad performer,” he said, remarking that anytime the department is confronted about its poor performance, it points to changes it will make.

“It’s all without any real consequences to them—it’s just all words,” he said. “It’s really frustrating to hear this over and over again, year after year.”

Beeby said that DND is “one of the worst” federal departments that has forced the “extraordinary step” of legal actions taken by Maynard.

He said the Federal Court actions will get DND’s attention, and it will help move individual files along, but remarked that it won’t solve the systemic problems.

“It’s going to persist unless there’s some kind of wholesale change, like some kind of penalty or some kind of real consequence [for] failing to live up to the law,” he said. “There are legislated

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The House Defence Committee, chaired by Liberal MP John McKay, released its report on transparency at DND on Nov. 5. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM
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News

Doubt grows that feds' promise to boost forced labour ban will materialize as House committee deplures 'inaction'

A bill to strengthen the forced labour import ban was proposed in successive Liberal budgets.

BY NEIL MOSS

The Liberal inaction on a budget pledge to strengthen the forced labour import ban is "deplorable," according to members of a House committee.

In the 2023 budget, the government promised to introduce legislation by 2024 to "eradicate forced labour from Canadian supply chains to strengthen the import ban on goods produced using forced labour." The 2024 budget stated that the government "reaffirms" that commitment, giving itself by the end of the year to introduce a bill.

With five weeks remaining in this year's sitting calendar, doubt has grown over whether the commitment will be kept.

The House International Trade Committee tabled a report in the Chamber on Oct. 30—citing the budget commitments in 2023 and 2024—expressing that "recourse to these practices, which undermine the fundamental rights of workers, vulnerable people and children, is totally unacceptable, and that it finds the government's inaction deplorable."



The House Committee on International Trade, chaired by Liberal MP Judy Sgro, tabled a report in the Commons on Oct. 30, criticizing the lack of follow through on the 2023 and 2024 budget promises to introduce a bill to strengthen the forced labour ban. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



The office of International Trade Minister Mary Ng is mum on whether she will introduce the promised bill. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

The report passed with the support of all opposition parties on the committee, as Liberal MPs voted against it.

A spokesperson for International Trade Minister Mary Ng (Markham-Thornhill, Ont.) didn't respond by publication deadline to questions regarding whether the government would introduce the promised bill by the end of the year.

Pressure for the government to bolster its regime strengthening its forced labour ban is not only coming from the opposition benches, but also south of the border.

This past summer, United States Democratic Senator Jeff Merkley said Canada has failed to act on its 2020 ban on imports made with forced labour, according to a June CBC report. That was followed by a letter to Ng—as well as U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Mexican Economy Secretary Raquel Buenrostro—from a bipartisan group of four American lawmakers in the Senate and the House of Representatives in September calling for more to be done to strengthen the ban. The letter also tied the issue to the looming review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) in 2026, as the CBC reported in September.

When CUSMA was ratified in 2020, it included a provision to ban all forced labour imports, including child labour. However, Canada has yet to stop any shipments of goods suspected of being manufactured with forced labour.

Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project executive director Mehmet Tohti

said "frustration" has built due to the long wait for the promised bill.

"We do not see any legislation tabled before the House, and so it is more than frustration," he said. "I don't know how realistic it is to expect the government—at this point—to table a bill."

Tohti said he doesn't feel a bill is likely to be tabled soon as the government only recently announced public consultations on measures to strengthen the forced labour ban. The consultations, which started on Oct. 17, will wrap up on Nov. 15.

"I took it as a delay enacted by the government," he said. "The reason is that if public consultations are needed, why did they not start in 2023? Or, why did they not start in early 2024?"

He said he hasn't seen any indication that the government will table the promised bill.

"Realistically, it would be a big surprise for me if the government would be able to table the bill in November," he said.

Tohti has pushed for a bill that mirrors the 2021 U.S. Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, as *The Hill Times* reported in May. The American law treats all goods manufactured in Xinjiang as being made with forced labour, and puts the onus on exporting companies to prove their products aren't made with forced labour.

In November 2021, Conservative Senator Leo Housakos (Wellington, Que.) introduced Bill S-204, which would copy the American approach. The bill hasn't come up for debate since

May 2022, and is currently at second reading in the Senate.

Work on implementing existing laws, say Bill S-211 sponsors

The budget promise to introduce a stronger forced labour ban was built on the idea of adding teeth to reporting obligations that were created when Bill S-211 became law in 2023.

The Senate and House sponsors of that bill—Independent Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne (Inkerman, Que.) and Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough-Guildwood, Ont.)—say the focus should be on the implementation of existing laws.

"I don't know what's to be gained by introducing something where there's a very modest chance that it will become the law in the land," said McKay. "So, my attitude is work with the tools that you've got, and I would start with the bill that we passed, S-211."

He said there should be a more in-depth public analysis of the filings from the law's first annual report, which was released earlier this fall.

"More than 6,000 entities have filed. That's a dataset that needs to be examined to see whether you do in fact need legislation that's being proposed," McKay said. "That's where I would start."

He said the government should better assess the overall picture and then decide if additional legislation is needed.

"S-211 is transparency on steroids," he said. "It does have enforcement mechanisms. It does

have powers to compel the production of documents. And it does have the ability to force compliance."

He said the chance that a follow-on bill would achieve royal assent is "quite modest."

"We haven't done anything for five weeks, and the government clearly has other priorities, or higher priorities," McKay said.

Miville-Dechêne said she has always been skeptical that a follow-up to Bill S-211 could be passed so quickly.

"The bill was a first step in the battle against modern slavery. We are at the first stage of implementation," she said. "The bill is being implemented, and it's really just the start."

"I was not personally optimistic that the government could do another bill much more ambitious in so little time, without even implementing fully this bill because it's just the first year," she said, remarking that it is a "trial year" for S-211.

Miville-Dechêne said action is needed quickly at the border, but that it can be done by acting on Canada's existing ban on goods made with forced labour.

"We have a law there [in CUSMA] that almost is not implemented," she said. "This is where the problem is. It's very good and well to pass all kinds of new laws, but they have to be implemented."

"It's a question of putting the resources and priority at the border, so we can stop shipments containing forced labour or child labour," she said.

Promised bill needs to go beyond forced labour, says advocate

Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) director Shane Moffatt said a focus on forced labour alone won't be enough.

"Our overarching concern at this juncture is that it will be narrowly focused on forced labour alone," he said, remarking that would be a "missed opportunity" to provide justice for communities around the world that are impacted by Canadian corporations.

"From a human rights perspective, rights are indivisible and they can't be approached piecemeal on this basis," he said. "When we try to divide human rights in these categories, we are failing to address the system of abuses that is currently taking place and is being committed by Canadian corporations overseas."

CNCA has advocated for due diligence legislation that would impose requirements on corporations to ensure their work doesn't have adverse human rights and environmental impacts.

NDP MP Peter Julian (New Westminster-Burnaby, B.C.) has sponsored a bill to do just that. Bill C-262 is outside the order of precedence after being introduced in March 2022.

"At the end of the day, this is about preventing Canadian corporations from being able to harm people around the world," Moffatt said. "Fundamentally, that has strong public support, and I think the government really does have a responsibility to act."

nmoos@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



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Editorial

Reminder to MPs: change starts with you

Members of the Procedure and House Affairs Committee are drafting a report on the effects of harassment faced by parliamentarians, and the possible creation of a policy to address MP-to-MP harassment.

While Senators are covered by a harassment and violence prevention policy, the House has no equivalent for MPs. When it comes to MP-to-MP relations, only a sexual harassment policy—introduced in 2015—exists as an appendix to the Standing Orders.

MPs passed on the opportunity to introduce a general harassment policy during the 41st Parliament, but the matter is now getting a second look.

And it's high time.

Inter-caucus dynamics in the House are at a low as hyper-partisanship reigns supreme, and multiple points of order regarding language used in proceedings have been raised since the House returned in September.

How MPs treat each other in the Chamber or in committee has influence beyond those spaces. At PROC, Liberal MPs Pam Damoff and Iqra Khalid tied some of the public harassment they've faced to the words and actions of MPs across the aisle.

The House of Commons is a unique workplace, presenting a plethora of unique challenges, not least of which are the historic parliamentary privileges that are seen as fundamental to enabling

an MP to carry out their work. Those privileges include freedom of speech, giving MPs immunity from prosecution or civil liability for things they say during official proceedings.

Conservatives at PROC have appeared reticent to endorse creation of a formal policy to address MP-to-MP harassment, with MP Michelle Rempel Garner recently warning that any such policy embedded within House rules would be politicized and used to score cheap political points.

Such concern is not unreasonable given most everything in the House today seems to be based on how best to secure a partisan win.

But, as Rempel Garner herself said, that doesn't mean nothing should be done.

PROC members determined to see creation of an MP harassment policy face a tough task in landing on a process that can improve circumstances without impeding MPs' rights, or becoming another weapon in the partisan toolkit.

Whatever shape it takes, the opportunity to make changes to better protect MPs should not be passed up again.

But beyond a formal policy, there's one clear solution MPs appear reluctant to put into practice: honestly reflecting on their own words and actions—including those fed from the party pipeline—and doing better.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor



Setting the record straight on Bill C-282 and what it means for Canada

Canada is an attractive trading partner for many nations. Arguing that countries would abandon trade talks simply because we aim to protect our domestic dairy, poultry, and egg sectors is unsupported rhetoric. Comprehensive trade deals are just that: comprehensive. Turning supply management—and the livelihoods of our farmers and rural communities—into a scapegoat does our nation a great disservice.

Trade laws and policies are in place to balance the needs of all sectors, and this is precisely what Bill C-282 aims to accomplish. Canada has negotiated 15 trade deals, and only the last three agreements have required negotiators to concede market access on our domestic supply-managed sectors. This track record demonstrates that safeguarding supply management does not hinder Canada's ability to secure beneficial trade deals, nor does it imply that Bill C-282 would hold the entire Canadian economy hostage. Instead, this important bill provides a clear negotiating stance that can expedite other trade talks and yield positive results for a broad range of Canadian sectors.

With geopolitical tensions growing and international supply chain vulnerability fresh in our minds, it is even more important today to shore up Canada's access to essential food items to feed our growing population, and this is central to the mission of the supply-managed sectors. Internationally, there is growing recognition that countries must take into account their national circumstances and the need for measures that support farmers and their domestic rural communities. In fact, the World Farmers' Organization, which brings together farmers' organizations and agricultural co-operatives from all over the world, recognizes the role

of orderly marketing and supply management in their trade policy. To put that into perspective, farmers from all over the world have agreed that the optimal trade outcomes are achieved by keeping a balance between export-oriented and domestic sectors.

Outside of providing a steady stream of high-quality food, the supply-managed sectors create the equivalent of 339,000 full-time jobs across Canada, and contribute \$30.1-billion to our GDP, as well as \$5.95-billion per year in tax revenues. This economic impact is good for everyone. And with the vast majority of Canada's nearly 15,000 farms being family-run businesses set in rural locations—versus the large farms we see more and more in the United States—protecting supply management with Bill C-282 is also a direct way to preserve the Canadian way of life.

Farmers believe that all individuals and families should have reliable access to safe and nutritious food. Supply management ensures that Canadians have access to a steady supply of high-quality, locally produced dairy, poultry, and egg products, produced right here within our borders by Canadian farmers that follow rigorous standards in animal welfare and food safety.

Let's keep putting Canadian self-sufficiency first and take supply management off the table.

David Wiens,
 President, Dairy Farmers of Canada
Roger Pelissero,
 Chair, Egg Farmers of Canada
Tim Klompmaker,
 Chair, Chicken Farmers of Canada
Darren Ference,
 Chair, Turkey Farmers of Canada
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NEWS REPORTERS Stuart Benson, Jesse Cnockaert, Sophall Duch, Riddhi Kachhela, Irem Koca, and Neil Moss
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 LOYALTY AND SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER Melanie Grant
 OFFICE AND CIRCULATION MANAGER Irma Guameros
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Passing the supply management law would only maintain inflated dairy prices

If passed, Bill C-282 would further tie the government's hands in negotiating future free trade agreements.

Jerome Gessaroli

Opinion



Many Canadians today face an unsettling reality. While Canada has long been known as a land of plenty, rising living costs and food insecurity are becoming increasingly common concerns. And a piece of federal legislation—which may soon become law—threatens to make the situation even worse.

According to Statistics Canada, rising prices are now “greatly affecting” nearly half of Canadians who are subsequently struggling to cover basic living costs. Even more alarming, 53 per cent are worried about feeding

their families. For policymakers, few national priorities are more pressing than the ability of Canadians to feed themselves.

Between 2020 and 2023, food prices surged by 24 per cent, outpacing the overall inflation rate of 15 per cent. Over the past year, more than one million people visited Ontario food banks—a 25 per cent increase from the previous year.

Amid this crisis, a recent academic report highlighted an unforgivable waste. Since 2012, Canada's dairy system has discarded 6.8 billion litres of milk—worth about \$15-billion. This is not just mismanagement, it's a policy failure. And inexcusably, the federal government knows how to address rising prices on key food staples, but instead turns a blind eye.

Canada's dairy sector operates under a “supply management” system that controls production through quotas and restricts imports via tariffs. Marketing boards work within this system to manage distribution and set the prices farmers receive. Together, these mechanisms effectively limit competition from both domestic and foreign producers.

This rigid regulated system suppresses competition and

efficiency—both are essential for lower prices. Hardest hit are low-income Canadians as they spend a greater share of their income on essentials such as groceries. One estimate ranks Canada as having the sixth-highest milk prices worldwide.

The price gap between the United States and Canada for one litre of milk is around \$1.57. A simple calculation shows that if we could reduce the price gap by half—to \$0.79—Canadians would save nearly \$1.9-billion annually. And eliminating the price gap would save a family of four \$360 a year. There would be further savings if the government also liberalized markets for other dairy products such as cheese, butter, and yogurt. These lower costs would make a real difference for millions of Canadians.

Which brings us back to the legislation pending on Parliament Hill. Instead of addressing the high food costs, Ottawa is moving in the opposite direction. Bill C-282—sponsored by the Bloc Québécois—has passed the House of Commons and is now before the Senate. If enacted, it would stop Canadian trade negotiators from letting other

countries sell more supply-managed products in Canada as part of any future trade deal, effectively increasing protection for our domestic industries, and creating another legal barrier to reform. While the governing Liberals hold ultimate responsibility for this bill, all parties to some degree support it.

Supply management is already causing trade friction. The U.S. and New Zealand have filed disputes—under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership—accusing Canada of failing to meet its commitments on dairy products. If Canada is found in violation, we could face tariffs or other trade restrictions in unrelated sectors. Dairy was also a sticking point in negotiations with the United Kingdom, contributing to the British suspending talks on a free trade deal. The costs of defending supply management could ripple farther than agriculture, hurting other Canadian businesses and driving up consumer costs.

Dairy farmers, of course, have invested heavily in the system, and change could be financially painful. Industry groups

including the Dairy Farmers of Canada carry significant political influence, especially in Ontario and Quebec, making it politically costly for any party to propose reforms. The concerns of farmers are valid and must be addressed—but they should not stand in the way of opening up these heavily regulated agricultural sectors. With reasonable financial assistance, a gradual transition could ease the burden. After all, New Zealand, with just five million people, managed to deregulate its dairy sector and now exports 95 per cent of its milk to 130 countries. There's no reason Canada could not do something similar.

Bill C-282 is a flawed piece of legislation. Supply management already hurts the most vulnerable Canadians, and is the root cause of two trade disputes that threaten harm to other domestic industries. If passed, this law would further tie the government's hands in negotiating future free trade agreements. So, who benefits from it? Certainly not Canadians struggling with food insecurity. The government's refusal to modernize an outdated, inefficient system forces Canadians to pay more for basic food staples. If we continue down this path, the economic damage could spread to other sectors, leaving Canadians to bear an ever-increasing financial burden.

Jerome Gessaroli is the lead Canadian co-author of the finance textbook, *Financial Management Theory and Practice*, 4th Canadian edition, and leads the *Sound Economic Policy Project* at the B.C. Institute of Technology. *The Hill Times*

Comment

Information blackout still shrouds investigation of shocking murder of Ontario resto owner

Fourteen months later, Owen Sound citizens continue to deal with a troubling lack of information about a murder that cast a cloud of anxiety over the city.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—On a warm summer night in August 2023, three white men went into The Curry House restaurant in downtown Owen Sound, Ont., a small city about two hours' drive north of Toronto at the base of the Bruce Peninsula.

At about 9 p.m. that evening, Sharif Rahman, 44, the well-liked, community-minded owner of the restaurant, got into an altercation with the three men—apparently over their unpaid bill—and was assaulted outside on the street, and later died.

It was a horrible, tragic, and senseless crime that still reverberates through a community where murder has traditionally been a rarity. The incident sparked a prolonged and heartfelt outpouring of appreciation for Rahman and

support for the wife and young daughter he left behind.

But, 14 months later, Owen Sound and its 21,000 citizens continue to deal with a troubling lack of information about a murder that cast a cloud of anxiety over the city. In fact, exactly how this dreadful incident happened and who did it remains a mystery to this day.

Initially, the homicide investigation appeared to be slowed by a lack of useful evidence. The security camera photos released by the police showed only the backs of two youngish-looking male suspects running down the street away from the restaurant, as well as a photo of a nondescript car with no licence plate visible. Police appealed to the public for help.

Other than speculating early on in the investigation that it was a dine-and-dash incident believed to have been committed by non-locals, authorities have been strangely reluctant to provide any information on the case.

It was assumed that more details would finally be forthcoming when on Aug. 15, to everyone's relief, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Owen Sound Police Service (OSPS) announced arrests in the case. In fact, the police revealed arrests had been carried out on July 30. But, beyond that, there were no details on the identity of those arrested, what charges if any were laid, or how many people had been apprehended.

“Due to the complexity of this ongoing investigation and to

protect its integrity and potential court proceedings, the OPP and OSPS are unable to comment further at this time,” the statement said. “We recognize the significant impact this case has had on the community and we sincerely appreciate everyone's patience as we continue to conduct a thorough and comprehensive investigation.”

While the reported arrests were obviously very welcome, the handling of the information in the case by the police has raised questions about secrecy and the need to maintain an open justice system. The media have of course tried to trace the arrest record, but so far we still don't know who was arrested three months ago.

Continued on page 13

Comment

Botswana and America: different elections, differing outlooks on democracy

Despite a longer experience with democracy than Botswana, a significant number of Americans fear that this week's election outcome could lead to a civil war, unlike in the African nation.

Gwynne Dyer

Global Affairs



LONDON, U.K.—Botswana's elections have always been seen as a model for Africa, but the one last week has a somewhat wider relevance. The way its politicians handled victory and defeat could serve as a model for politicians in the United States.

Botswana has been democratic since it got its independence from



Whether Republican Donald Trump, left, or Democrat Kamala Harris wins the U.S. presidential election, the ideological passion that Americans bring to their votes has always been off the scale, writes Gwynne Dyer. *White House photographs by Shealah Craighead and Cameron Smith*

Britain in 1966, and for all that time it has been governed by the same party: the Botswana Democratic Party. Now the BDP has finally lost power—and there has been no uproar, no claims or counter-claims, no crisis.

Botswana has been an island of domestic peace and democratic rule in the African continent. It has some major advantages, however. Eighty per cent of its population belongs to the same Tswana ethnic group, which is rare in Africa. It is also a welfare state, which is even rarer.

Even after 58 years in power, therefore, the BDP's defeat in last week's election came as a shock.



It was largely due to a high level of joblessness among young people. There's lots of money sloshing around, but diamond mining doesn't create much employment, and the young are frustrated even though they are not going hungry.

The BDP's share of the vote in recent elections has been just above 50 per cent, so its defeat should not have come as a surprise, but few people are old enough to remember a time when it had not been running the country. Despite all the signs, the BDP was psychologically unprepared for defeat.

So what did now-former president Mokgweetsi Masisi do when

the votes were counted? He called up Duma Boko—the leader of the victorious Umbrella for Democratic Change—to congratulate him, of course. That's what the defeated candidates in an election are expected to do in a democracy.

Afterwards, Masisi confessed to a press conference that his party “got it wrong big time. I will respectfully step aside and participate in a smooth transition process ahead of inauguration. I am proud of our democratic processes and I respect the will of the people.”

“What has happened today takes our democracy to a higher level,” replied Boko. “It now means we've seen a successful, peaceful, orderly democratic transition.” That's how responsible grown-ups behave in a democracy, even if it's the first time power has changed hands in 58 years.

Why is this a relevant topic for today? Because the United States—far bigger, much richer, and with several centuries' experience of democracy—held an election this week, and a significant number of Americans fear that it could lead to a civil war.

I don't know the outcome of the Nov. 5 vote as I write this,

but a civil war certainly wouldn't happen if Donald Trump were to win the election. There would be great concern that a second term for Trump could greatly damage American democracy—and civil rights in particular—but his opponents would realize that violence would just make matters worse.

The bigger risk is an electoral defeat for Trump because he would be certain to claim that his opponent's victory is fraudulent whether or not he truly believes it. Even then, a full-scale civil war would be unlikely, but the U.S. is a heavily armed society where violence is—in activist H. Rap Brown's formula—“as American as apple pie.”

Botswana is not that sort of place. Most countries aren't. But while political issues in the U.S. are much the same as they are in other developed countries, the ideological passion that Americans bring to them has always been off the scale.

Consider, for example, the issue of slavery. Both the U.S. and the United Kingdom were deeply in the slave trade for a long time, but when the British finally realized it was wrong, they just bought the slave owners out.

When a majority of Americans reached the same conclusion 30 years later, it set off a civil war that killed at least three-quarters of a million soldiers—about two per cent of the population at that time. The policy differences at issue in this election are not very different from those elsewhere, but Americans have whipped themselves into an existential frenzy about them.

Gwynne Dyer's new book is *Intervention Earth: Life-Saving Ideas from the World's Climate Engineers*.

The Hill Times

The sad saga of Afghan-Canadian military advisers

Veterans' benefits have improved considerably in recent decades, but not all Canadians sent into war zones are treated equally.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



Interim Ombud for the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces Robyn Hynes, left, has picked up the advocacy mantle for language and cultural advisers with Minister Bill Blair's office. *Photograph courtesy of DND and The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



OTTAWA—We are now in the midst of Remembrance Week, and most Canadians are wearing a poppy to pay tribute to the

brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of Canada. It should also be a time for civilians to reflect

on those veterans who returned home with either physical or mental wounds due to their experiences on foreign battlefields.

Thanks to advances in psychiatric science, we better understand what used to be termed “shell shock” during the Great War, or “battle fatigue” during the Second World War, which resulted in the sufferer being officially labelled as “LMF”—“lacking moral fibre.”

While veterans' benefits have improved considerably in recent decades, not all Canadians sent into war zones are treated equally. By this I refer to the dozens of Afghan Canadians who served as language and cultural advisers (LCAs) with the Canadian Armed Forces during the decade-long war in Afghanistan. These individuals wore uniforms and body armour, and went on patrols outside the wire to act as interpreters for our troops, but they did so as term employees of the Department of National Defence. They were recruited for their knowledge of Dari or Pashto

languages, and their understanding of Afghan cultural practices. Commanders and troops alike considered them to be invaluable. As they were not soldiers, they did not rotate home every six months, with many of the LCAs serving in theatre for more than two years consecutively. Some of these individuals were wounded, and many currently suffer from PTSD.

The problem for these LCAs arises from the fact that—as federal employees—they had six months after completion of their contract to apply for any medical compensation. They are not entitled to benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada. As the effects of PTSD are not necessarily evident in the first six months, those LCAs now suffering from the invisible wound of PTSD have found themselves in bureaucratic limbo.

Initially, the military directed those affected LCAs to the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). However many of the injury claims by the LCAs have been rejected for the simple reason that WSIB officials are not familiar with those who have suffered mental trauma as

Continued on page 14

The gender-gap election

While women flocked to Kamala Harris, men afraid of losing their benefits bestowed upon them by patriarchy found solace in Donald Trump.

Erica Ifill

Bad+Bitchy



She may have won the TikTok campaign, but Vice-President Kamala Harris faltered by consistently ignoring and insulting Arab Americans in the must-win state of Michigan, writes Erica Ifill. *White House photograph by Lawrence Jackson*

OTTAWA—By the time you read this column, voting in the United States presidential election will have wrapped. However, whether there is a clear winner may not have been decided. As I am writing this on Monday afternoon, I’ll do my best with tenses, conditionals, and subjunctives.

This election was predicted to have gone down to the wire. I have thoughts.

Given that Donald Trump was a contestant, immaturity was a main mode of communication from his insulting every racialized community one could think of, to questioning Vice-President Kamala Harris’ race. Republicans used the same ol’ stale misogynistic and racial tropes such as questioning Harris’ IQ, spreading rumours that she slept her way to the top, and stating the fact that she has no biological children means that she’s a childless cat lady—implying that she has no value as a woman. (Stop threatening women with a good time.) Harris’ running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, was right when he called the GOP “weirdos.”

The fact that Trump even ran for re-election was embarrassing. On March 30, Trump became

the first former president to be convicted of felonies. On Dec. 19, 2022, the U.S. House Committee on the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol recommended Trump be brought up on criminal charges including obstruction of justice, conspiracy to defraud the U.S., and inciting an insurrection. He was also found liable for sexual abuse and defamation due to a federal lawsuit brought about by E. Jean Carroll in 2022. Talk about failing up, further proving that as long as you’re a white man, you could even be a convict and run for the highest office in the land.

This was a TikTok campaign, and it’s one that Harris won. Her team—made up of generation Z—rolled out a spectacular campaign that was quirky, fun, and tied directly to current pop culture trends and celebrities:

Charli XCX called her “brat,” Beyoncé answered her calls—she never speaks publicly, so this is a get—as did Megan Thee Stallion, and Cardi B. While this attracted attention, it also ignored one of the central issues for Democratic young voters: Gaza.

The Harris campaign consistently ignored and insulted Arab Americans in the must-win state of Michigan. They are typically Democratic voters who turn out to vote. In 2022, President Joe Biden won Michigan by 154,144 votes, aided by Wayne County, which encompasses Dearborn, Mich. Biden won the county with 68.4 per cent versus Trump’s 30.3 per cent of the vote, yet Biden won the state of Michigan by a small margin. The BBC reported that Harris polled at “a razor-thin lead but her edge over Trump

has narrowed to below a single percentage point.” These are votes Trump spent the last weeks of the election trying to capture.

For this community, the main issue was Gaza. For them, the level of pain in watching their family members and friends die in a genocide was too much to bear. The stakes to these voters were much, much higher than the Democrats would have had us believe. You can’t tell an Arab-American voter that Trump is worse because he instituted a Muslim ban when the Democrats spearheaded a genocide. Harris has failed to find messaging that would comfort Arab Americans during a painful time. Starting with the many statements promising full support for Israel, to the refusal to allow Palestinian delegates to speak at the Demo-

cratic National Convention, to her refusal to speak to the undecided movement, Harris treated those voters with contempt. Winning Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania was integral to her path to the presidency.

But the big story of the 2024 election was the gender gap, given that this election had implications regarding gender roles and women’s rights. Women—especially young women—flocked to Harris while young men were in Trump’s corner. *The New York Times*’ explanation was that of the anxiety men have with the increasing power of women, and where they fit in that paradigm: “On the other are young men, some of whom feel that rapidly changing gender roles have left them behind socially and economically and see former President Donald J. Trump as a champion of traditional manhood.” Men are afraid of losing their benefits bestowed upon them by patriarchy. My heart bleeds. Trump is an unapologetic image of an aggressive, say-anything-you-want, domineering archetype of a “strong man” that is supposedly missing because of “wokeness”—meaning women have rights, not privileges granted by men.

Trump’s running mate, JD Vance, projected men’s dominance on the home front. *The Times* explains: “Mr. Trump, with his cage-fighting, shirt-ripping, insult-hurling campaign, has offered an alternative, aggressive version of masculinity. His running mate, JD Vance, offers another, in his emphasis on the importance of patriarchal families and women raising children.” These views line up with the manosphere—a new media backlash against women—and can explain why Trump appeals to racialized men who haven’t unpacked their misogyny in their own communities.

Katherine Tate, a political science professor at Brown University, summed up women’s power this election: “The women’s vote will be decisive this election. If Harris wins, it will because women elected her.”

Erica Ifill is a co-host of the *Bad+Bitchy* podcast. *The Hill Times*

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Comment



So far, the only parliamentarians known to support Canada signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are NDP MPs Heather McPherson, left, and Don Davies; Green Leader Elizabeth May; and non-affiliated Senator Marilou McPhedran, writes Jim Creskey. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Who's standing up to the danger of World War III?

For the peacemakers' work to bear fruit, Canada's political leadership will have to find the courage necessary to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Jim Creskey

Opinion



The Ottawa roundtable on "Nuclear Disarmament in Times of Unprecedented Risk" was a deeply worrisome event, but not

because the participants were alarmists. Quite the opposite. The 26 members of the roundtable were unpretentiously diplomatic, restrained, and empathetic. This made their reasoned agreement on the looming possibility of a thermonuclear Third World War even more alarming.

Meeting in a modest conference room at Ottawa's Cartier Place Hotel on Oct. 24 were former Canadian ambassadors for disarmament, leaders of some of the most respected of Canada's peace-making organizations: Canadian Pugwash, Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, and Project Ploughshares. Many of the roundtable members have had distinguished roles in government, diplomacy, academe, and nuclear weapons verification.

The list of names includes Doug Roche, Cesar Jaramillo, Matt Korda, Sylvie Lemieux, Peggy Mason, Paul Meyer, Tariq

Rauf, Jennifer Simons, Dr. Adele Buckley, Robin Collins, Dr. Nancy Covington, Bev DeLong, Dr. Richard Denton, Walter Dorn, Dr. John Guilfoyle, Dr. Ellen Judd, Dr. Arnd Jurgensen, Firdaus Kharas, Alex Neve, Ernie Regehr, Shane Roberts, Erika Simpson, Earl Turcotte, and Frank von Hippel. The topics they covered ranged from NATO's approach to Ukraine, the increasingly limited shelf life of nuclear deterrence, the role of military contractors in driving government policy, and Canada's contribution—or lack thereof—to nuclear disarmament, and the two remaining international nuclear treaties.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was meant to limit the number of nuclear-weapons nations to the ones that existed when the treaty was signed in 1968. Four nations have already skirted the NPT by constructing their own nuclear weapons: North Korea, Israel, India, and Pakistan. The flaw embedded in the

NPT is the conceit that the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, as well as NATO partners are allowed to keep and enhance their nuclear warheads while all other nations are forbidden.

The other, more recent treaty doesn't abuse logic and human nature in the same way as the NPT. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an unambiguous ban of nuclear weapons. So far, it has been signed by 94 United Nations member states, and ratified by 73. Signatories include Ireland, Austria, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, and the Vatican. No nuclear weapons state has yet to sign the treaty, and non-nuclear NATO members—like Canada—have so far refused to support the treaty.

A nuclear Third World War is estimated to begin and end in no more than an hour and a half. By the time it ends, to quote Nikita Khrushchev, "The survivors will envy the dead." How this would happen is spelled out in detail by the journalist Annie Jacobsen. Her lengthy interviews with former U.S. secretaries of defence, American military leaders, and nuclear scientists describe the minute-by-minute result of an unstoppable nuclear exchange.

At the Ottawa roundtable, her book, *Nuclear War: A Scenario*, was cited by Korda, who is the associate director for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. The book, published by Dutton in 2024, is a chilling minute-by-minute description of the technology that can destroy thousands of years of global civilization in the time it takes some Toronto commuters

to get to work in the morning. I have read that book, which was a Father's Day present from my oldest son. It is what book blurbs call a page-turner, but one about a real-life catastrophe.

At the roundtable, it was often mentioned that disarmament is no longer a priority for the states that hold the keys—the U.S., Russia, and China—even as NATO is expanding nuclear weapons in Europe.

It's understandable that Jaramillo, executive director at Project Ploughshares, concluded at the end of the session: "Things are bad and getting worse; we expect governments to resist, and we will not relent."

I hope that this exceptional group of Canadian peacemakers does not relent.

For their work to bear fruit, Canada's political leadership will have to find the courage necessary to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. So far, the only parliamentarians I know who support this are NDP MPs Heather McPherson and Don Davies, Green Leader Elizabeth May, and Senator Marilou McPhedran.

If political leaders are looking for public support for nuclear abolition, they might consult a national Nanos survey commissioned by roundtable participant Simons through the Simons Foundation, the Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition, and Le Collectif Échec à la guerre. The 2021 poll showed that 74 per cent of Canadians say that Canada should sign and ratify the abolition treaty.

Jim Creskey is a founding editor and publisher of *The Hill Times*.

The Hill Times



In a not-so-distant future, a Conservative government led by Pierre Poilievre gets down to business. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Information blackout still shrouds investigation of shocking murder of Ontario resto owner

Continued from page 9

CBC News has reported that the legal community in Owen Sound is as much in the dark as everyone else. Local lawyer Ram Shankar told the network that in his two decades of practising law, he can't remember a case where police kept the details of an arrest completely under wraps. "There's a lot of secrecy that appears on the case and it's unclear as to why," Shankar said in an interview with CBC. "Normally when charges are laid, the public would hear the name of the accused, their location, and precise charges and details. There's been nothing so far. It's pretty unusual. To the best of my knowledge, that's not the practice anywhere."

As the community has tried to come to terms with the murder, the information blackout has also left open the question of whether the attack on Rahman—a native of Bangladesh who came to Canada in 2013 after living in England—might have been influenced by religious or racial hatred. When that issue will be cleared up is anyone's guess.

Regardless, Owen Sounders have worked through their collective grief and outrage over the incident to demonstrate their affection and respect for Rahman, a successful entrepreneur, beloved husband and father, and an active participant in community and charitable activities. This effort has included raising \$250,000 for his family, a funeral procession that brought out hundreds of people, the awarding posthumously of the YMCA Peace Medal, and creation of a scholarship fund in his name.

In the latest gesture, about 50 people gathered in downtown Owen Sound two weeks ago to plant a lone oak tree in his honour. "In Memory of Sharif Rahman, whose gentle and unwavering love for his family left an enduring mark on our hearts," the plaque at the base of the tree reads. "May his legacy of kindness and compassion inspire generations to come."

But the questions of justice—and what happened that night in 2023—remain unanswered.

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

Good morning, Prime Minister Poilievre—here is your agenda

What would the early days of a Poilievre-led government look like? Andrew Caddell sketches it out.

Andrew Caddell

With All Due Respect



KAMOURASKA, QUE.—It is sometime in the future. Pierre Poilievre has been elected to lead a Conservative government with an overwhelming majority. Ten days after election night, he has been to Rideau Hall to watch Governor General Mary Simon swear in his 20-member cabinet. He returns to his office to discuss next steps with his advisers before the cabinet is ushered in.

Surprisingly, the Prime Minister's Office team advocates for the "Costanza Strategy"—named after Jerry Seinfeld's sidekick George Costanza, who discovered he could only succeed if he did the opposite of what his instincts told him. Of course, most new

governments do the opposite of their predecessors and blame them, summarized by the finance minister's declaration, "We had no idea things were this bad."

But this time, things are different. With 42 per cent of the popular vote, Poilievre has won in a landslide. But while many Canadians voted for Poilievre the hardliner, most supported his Conservative Party to get rid of Justin Trudeau's Liberals. And with the NDP and Liberals' collateral damage, the Bloc Québécois is His Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

So, the new PM and his entourage have a conundrum: govern as they campaigned and alienate half the population, or govern from the centre, and proceed gradually. Keeping in mind the challenge of Quebec, Poilievre decides to follow his campaign pronouncements, but govern as a moderate.

So, on this first day, he cuts the carbon tax as promised, but also puts an end to the 2035 deadline for zero-emission vehicles. "Our oil and gas industry is not the enemy, nor are our car makers," he says. "We contribute a tiny fraction of global emissions, and we are not going to suffer while China laughs at us and pollutes the Earth."

He increases the GST by two points, tagging the increase the

Deficit and Environment Tax (DET) to remind Canadians "it was Trudeau who gave us this debt." The tax will pay down \$100-billion in debt over five years, and support private sector environmental innovation. He declares an end to government subsidies for battery plants. "If electric car makers want to come to Canada, they are welcome, but not because we put out a \$20-billion welcome mat."

The cabinet agrees to deal with the size of government without taking a machete to it immediately. While during the campaign he denounced the 40 per cent increase in public servants since Trudeau came to power, the cabinet knows it would be draconian to fire tens of thousands of people overnight.

Instead, he creates a Royal Commission into the Public Service of Canada, to be chaired by Don Drummond, a former assistant deputy minister of finance under Liberal Paul Martin, when the civil service was reduced by a fifth in 1995. The royal commission is the first in more than 60 years since John Diefenbaker gave the Glassco Commission a mandate to reorganize the federal public service. The PMO knows this royal commission will provide the blueprint for broad

reductions in personnel and spending.

He will strike another Royal Commission on Productivity, chaired by Robert Asselin of the Business Council of Canada. It will investigate all aspects of the economy, from provincial trade barriers to vocational training, from literacy to immigration.

On the international front, the new prime minister will increase military spending and set a goal of 120,000 active military personnel. However, the National Shipbuilding Strategy will be frozen, and any further naval ships will be purchased from Taiwan and South Korea for a fraction of the price of Canadian-made ships.

Meanwhile, his foreign policy will involve diplomatic and trade collaboration with the Anglosphere—the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia—as well as Europe, while casting a wary eye to Russia, China, and Iran. He declares Canada and India will jointly examine ways of improving their relationship.

All of this he announces in his first address to Canadians that night. A calm and measured Poilievre promises to defend the Constitution, "which has been so neglected by the previous government," and commits himself to promoting the best of Canada, never apologizing for our past, "for it is our future that matters most." In the weeks that follow, his approval ratings soar to 80 per cent, even in Quebec. The die is cast.

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

Opinion

Let Ukraine strike back

The restraints put on Ukraine by its western allies to not attack missile launch sites in Russia have become a major barrier to Ukraine's success.

ISG Senators Stanley Kutcher & Donna Dasko

Opinion



Russia's genocidal war on Ukraine has entered a new and terrifying phase. We hear about the murder of innocents in Kyiv, Lviv, Poltava, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih, Kharkiv, and more. No longer are Russian attacks primarily focused on the front lines where military forces face each other, but Russia is increasing its targeting of innocent civilians who are far from the front.

Orphanages, schools, sports stadiums, and apartment buildings are not military targets. People trying to live their lives peacefully are not soldiers. Children who simply want to be with their friends should not be killed when walking to school. Citizens shopping at a market or patients in a hospital are not legitimate military targets.

Russia is increasing its attacks on innocent people, in contravention of the Geneva Conventions and with complete disregard for the laws of war. This is an escalation of Russia's brazen disregard for the international rule of law.

Now, instead of ground troops attacking and killing civilians—



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, left, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Canada can work harder to convince our allies to lift the restrictions that they have put on Ukraine, write Senators Stanley Kutcher and Donna Dasko. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

such as what happened in Bucha and Irpin in the early phase of this genocidal war on Ukraine—the attacks are coming from the air from drones, airplanes, and missiles launched from sites within Russia. Some sites are within 100 kilometres of the border with Ukraine, others further away. Some of this airpower is provided to Russia from Iran and North Korea. Some of these armaments—incredibly—include microelectronics, made in western countries.

Many of these missiles are shot down by Ukraine using defensive weapons provided by west-

ern countries. But there are not enough of these. While promises of more have been made, many have not been delivered. Including those promised by Canada.

The restraints put on Ukraine by its western allies to not attack missile launch sites in Russia have become a major barrier to Ukraine's success. These restraints enable and accelerate the slaughter of innocents and the wanton destruction of homes, schools, shops, cultural sites, and places of worship.

It is obvious that Ukraine—to protect its innocent civilians—must be able to launch retaliatory strikes

against the sites from where the attacks come. Hit the archer, not the arrow, is the obvious response.

Additionally, Ukraine needs to be able to strike associated military targets such as ammunition depots that house the projectiles used to kill innocents.

These are defensive, not offensive responses. These are in accordance with international law.

Yet, while Ukraine has the capability to use weapons it has received to achieve these legitimate defensive ends, it is prevented from doing so by those same countries who have provided the weapons.

Such political handcuffing of Ukraine could be interpreted as western powers caring more about the safety of Russian military sites than they care about Ukrainian civilians being slaughtered by airstrikes launched from those same sites.

Canada has stated that it puts no such restrictions on Ukraine regarding the military equipment that it has provided to date. Recently, the prime minister indicated support for Ukraine striking back. That is good news, but the reality is that Canada has not provided Ukraine with the armaments that it needs to conduct such strikes.

So, what can Canada do to better help Ukraine now?

We can work harder to convince our allies—especially the United States and the United Kingdom—to lift the restrictions that they have made, and let Ukraine strike back. We can also move more quickly to meet the promises that we have made and provide more air-defence systems to Ukraine.

Winter is coming. Like many Canadians, Senator Kutcher has family in Ukraine. They live in terror of the airstrikes. They are preparing for a long-term loss of electricity, which in the freezing cold of winter means no heat, no light, and no water. Just think of what it would be like if you and your family spent the Canadian winter in similar circumstances.

They are suffering needlessly. The West is fiddling while Ukraine burns.

Yet, it burns so that people in other western countries can sleep. But that fire will reach the West, on the backs of dead innocents.

Putting out the fire will benefit Ukraine and the western democratic world simultaneously.

Let Ukraine strike back. *Independent Senators Stanley Kutcher (Nova Scotia) and Donna Dasko (Ontario) are both members of the Standing Senate Committee on National Defence, Security, and Veterans Affairs. The Hill Times*

Comment

The sad saga of Afghan-Canadian military advisers

Continued from page 10

a result of exposure to a conflict zone.

Sadly, this story of neglect was first flagged more than five years ago by then-Canadian Forces and DND ombud Greg Lick. He first wrote a letter to then-defence deputy minister Jody Thomas on June 18, 2019, urging the department to urgently resolve the issue of compensation for the LCAs. On Remembrance Day that same year, the CBC's Murray Brewster broke the story of Mohammad

Amin—last name withheld for privacy—who had served as an LCA with the military in Kandahar, and was subsequently denied medical treatment for his PTSD. The result of this double whammy of the ombudsman's request and sympathetic media exposure? Nada.

To their credit both Lick and Brewster have stuck with this crusade. On Sept. 29, 2023, Lick wrote directly to Minister of National Defence Bill Blair to raise this issue to the political level. On Oct. 19, 2023, the CBC headlined

Brewster's story "Ombudsman blasts Ottawa's 'inadequate' efforts to help injured Afghan military advisers." The official reaction? Again, nada.

On March 8, Lick again wrote to Blair—only this time he took the unique step of offering a solution to the impasse facing the LCAs: he cited as precedent the federal government's decision in 2017 to pay cadets injured in a 1974 grenade explosion at Canadian Forces Base Valcartier in Quebec. This resulted in the March 12 CBC story by Brewster

entitled "Civilian advisers who served in Afghanistan deserve compensation now, ombudsman says."

Surely this time Blair would leap into action? Again, nada.

Lick left the Ombud's office in July, but his successor—acting ombud Robyn Hynes—has taken up the cudgel on behalf of the LCAs. On Aug. 28, she wrote to Blair notifying his office that she is launching a probe into Ottawa's treatment of these Afghan-Canadian LCAs.

In a statement to *The Ottawa Citizen* last week regarding that ongoing investigation, Hynes noted, "We really thought we could get these individuals what they need and deserve through face-to-face engagements and letters with senior leadership of the Department of National Defence

and the Canadian Armed Forces, including the minister."

Hynes also acknowledged that this could be a last throw of the dice for the Ombud's office: "At this point, we have very few tools left in the toolbox to encourage action. The report we will release in December will hopefully achieve that aim."

Let's hope for the sake of those former LCAs that Blair's office follows the military's philosophy of not leaving a soldier or a team member behind. Canada owes these individuals the treatment and compensation that they earned serving the country.

We shall remember their service. *Scott Taylor is the editor and publisher of Esprit de Corps magazine. The Hill Times*

The Hill Times Policy Briefing | November 6, 2024

TRANSPORTATION

**What's at stake
as Minister Anita
Anand pulls
double duty on the
transportation file?**



The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Transportation Policy Briefing

Transport Minister Anita Anand said enhancing connectivity and reducing bottlenecks in Quebec and areas along the St. Lawrence River would help create efficient and reliable supply chains in a Transport Canada press release on Oct. 18. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



Transportation infrastructure adaptation requires more data and long-term thinking, say sector experts

A National Infrastructure Assessment to gather data about priority infrastructure needs in Canada was announced in 2021, but has yet to be launched.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Adapting infrastructure for Canada's roads, railways, and ports to contend with extreme weather and climate change is an uphill battle that requires more federal investment, greater collaboration with the provinces and territories, and more data to help guide decision-making, according

to experts in construction and transportation.

"First of all, we need more data" said Rodrigue Gilbert, president of the Canadian Construction Association (CCA). "I think we know barely nothing about the state of our infrastructure."

Gilbert told *The Hill Times* that Canada is facing a problem of aging infrastructure, and adapting the country's transportation sector—and other sectors—around a changing climate requires more data to help with long-term planning, which isn't easy to obtain. More data is needed on every kind of infrastructure in Canada, according to Gilbert.

"There's not a lot of data. [Statistics] Canada is doing a little bit of it, but most of the data is not really available," he said. "I think we need a big picture [plan] because often right now infrastructure investment is related to the electoral cycle, and that's probably the worst thing to do. What we're looking for is really

long-term planning where each investment is planned for 20 to 25 years."



NDP MP Taylor Bachrach says 'there's more work that can and should be done' in regard to an assessment of vulnerabilities for Canada's infrastructure. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

When asked about the data gap related to infrastructure and climate change, Gilbert said the problem is a lack of co-ordination between multiple levels of government, and that "everyone is really protective of their own data."

To help gather data regarding Canada's infrastructure needs and priorities, a plan for a National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) was announced in the 2021 federal budget, but has yet to be launched.

The Housing Department released a report in July 2021 that included a recommendation for the federal government to create an independent advisory body to provide expert advice regarding major infrastructure in Canada. A spokesperson for Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada said that an announcement for the establishment of the advisory body is expected "early this fall," as previously reported in *The Hill Times*.

An NIA could provide information to help inform infrastructure investments related to needed materials, resources, training, and labour, according to a CCA report released in September 2024.

Gilbert said that greater investment is also needed for transportation infrastructure such as rail and airports because Canada is a trading nation that imports and exports most of its goods. Infrastructure investment has been "very limited" for almost a decade, he added.

"Every time there's a bigger climate issue—like if it's flooding, [or] there's an impact on rail, on the airports, on roads—that's going to cause a break in the supply chain ... and there's an impact, not only on trade and transportation infrastructure, but the entire infrastructure system in Canada," he said. "We need to adapt to the climate change, and that's something that's been very difficult in the last few years for lack of investment."

NDP MP Taylor Bachrach (Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.), his

party's transport critic, told *The Hill Times* that Canada is lagging behind when it comes to climate adaptation "across the board."

As an example of the mounting pressure on infrastructure in the transportation sector, he pointed to the atmospheric river disaster in British Columbia in 2021, which dumped nearly a month's worth of rain on the province in under 48 hours, damaging highways and railways and displacing more than 3,300 people.

“

We continually see extreme weather events that cause major damage to infrastructure, and I haven't seen a concerted effort to change the status quo.”

— NDP MP Taylor Bachrach

"There's definitely a need for planning and a need to get our collective heads wrapped around what can be done to safeguard our transportation system," said Bachrach.

Bachrach said that extreme weather events are going to become more frequent and more severe.

"We continually see extreme weather events that cause major damage to infrastructure, and I haven't seen a concerted effort to change the status quo," he said. "At the same time, we're talking about a fairly monumental challenge, because significantly adapting the existing infrastructure is an expensive proposition."

To help Canada better adapt infrastructure in the transport sector to the realities of climate change, Bachrach said one of the highest priorities should be to conduct an assessment of vulnerabilities.

"There's more work that can and should be done in that regard. In terms of building new infrastructure, the government needs to ensure that infrastructure is being built to withstand what we know is coming," he said. "I think there are some examples where we're seeing progress towards that, but—by and large—I don't think the pace of change

Continued on page 18



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Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is advancing sustainable transportation by researching low-carbon fuels—such as synthetic diesel, e-kerosene, e-methanol, and ammonia—produced from hydrogen, electricity, nuclear, and other energy sources.

CNL supports the marine sector's decarbonization through alternative fuel testing, feasibility studies, infrastructure design, fleet and route assessments, and emissions reduction strategies.



Transportation Policy Briefing

Transportation infrastructure adaptation requires more data and long-term thinking, say sector experts



The November 2021 atmospheric river disaster in British Columbia dumped nearly a month's worth of rain on the province in less than 48 hours, damaging highways and railways and displacing thousands of people. Photograph courtesy of the Province of B.C.

Continued from page 16
really matches the severity of the situation.”

Randall Zalazar, director of government relations for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, told *The Hill Times* that climate change is a rapidly evolving situation, and when it comes to adapting transportation infrastructure, “everyone is on their back foot.”

“There’s a lot more that needs to be done across the board from government and industry,” he said. “I think we definitely want to see further action on investing into critical transportation infrastructure and resilience, but not just the resilience in infrastructure, but tying all of this into a broader, long-term institutionalized infrastructure plan in Canada. I think that’s one area where we’ve fallen behind is that

we haven’t taken that long-term, institutionalized and co-ordinated approach.”

Zalazar said a co-ordinated approach could look like a national trade infrastructure plan. A Canada Trade Infrastructure plan has been endorsed by organizations including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the CCA, and the Canada West Foundation as a means of co-ordination and planning of investments in trade infrastructure—such as road, rail, air, port, and marine assets—over a period of more than 20 years as a way to boost Canada’s competitiveness.

Adam Thorn, director of transportation for the Pembina Institute, told *The Hill Times* that the effects of a shifting climate are being seen through instances of flooding in B.C., and disasters such as wildfires, all of which can

disrupt transportation infrastructure. Canada experienced a record-setting series of wildfires in 2023, with more than 6,000 fires scorching 15 million hectares of land—or an area larger than England, according to Natural Resources Canada.

“Even when [natural disasters] don’t actually disrupt transportation, it certainly becomes more expensive to maintain ... bridges or roads or ports or airports,” he said.

Transport Canada’s five-year adaptation plan—the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for 2021/22 to 2025/26—provides an outline for how to build climate resilience across the transportation sector. It includes recommendations such as developing a strategic communications plan to help raise awareness of adaptation initiatives in place at Transport Canada, and undertaking research to better understand the economic and transportation impacts of disruptions due to climate change on the transportation system for specific modes and supply chains.

Thorn said he thinks real progress has been made in implementing the adaptation plan, but emphasized that more work still needs to be done to address climate emissions from the transportation sector.

responsibility. As an example, he said roads and bridges fall under provincial jurisdiction for the most part.

“I think the federal government can provide real leadership—and not to say that they haven’t been doing so—but I think, again, if you look across the provinces, we see really just different approaches, and some provinces have very advanced plans and some don’t. I think that’s one of the areas in which definitely we need to see improvement,” he said. “I think one of the challenges, obviously, is that we’re really beginning to see the impacts of climate change earlier than I think many people anticipated. This is really becoming—I think—an increasing challenge.”

To help support Canada’s supply chain, Transport Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) announced up to \$38-million towards seven shipping projects in Quebec and along the St. Lawrence Seaway under the National Trade Corridors Fund on Oct. 18. The National Trade Corridors Fund supports infrastructure projects in Canada, including projects that help the transportation system to better withstand the effects of climate change.

The projects include work at the Port of Montreal, which will receive \$12.5-million for a project to expand operational space and increase container storage at the Canest Terminal by 20 per cent.

“By enhancing connectivity and reducing bottlenecks in Quebec and the areas along the St. Lawrence River, consumers, workers, and small businesses will benefit from efficient and reliable supply chains. This, in turn, supports economic growth and helps make life cost less for Canadians and Quebecers,” said Anand in a Transport Canada press release.

jcnockaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Canada public infrastructure statistics

- At the end of 2022, transportation and water infrastructure in Canada had a total replacement value of \$2.6-trillion. Local and regional government organizations were responsible for almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of this infrastructure.
- Based on current replacement values estimated on Dec. 31, 2022, local and regional government organizations were responsible for the majority of Canada’s road transportation infrastructure. These organizations owned 64 per cent of the replacement value of roads, 76 per cent of the value of public transit assets, and 82 per cent of the value of active transportation infrastructure. Bridges and tunnels were an exception, as 69 per cent



A construction site in Orleans, Ont., on July 12. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

of them were owned by provincial and territorial governments.

- The pace of construction of roads increased between 2020 and 2022. There were 12,396 two-lane equivalent kilometres completed on average per year, surpassing the annual average length of roads built during any other period by more than one-quarter. While most (57 per cent) roads by length were owned by rural municipalities in 2022, urban municipalities owned the majority (62 per cent)

of active transportation infrastructure.

- Road transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, tunnels, and walking and cycling infrastructure, as well as public transit systems, accounted for \$1.63-trillion of current replacement value estimated at the end of 2022. The cost to replace all road transportation infrastructure rated as being in poor or very poor condition was estimated to be \$250.2-billion, or 15 per cent of the total replacement value.



Greater investment is also needed for transportation infrastructure such as rail and airports because Canada is a trading nation, says Rodrigue Gilbert. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

—Source: Canada’s Core Public Infrastructure Survey: Replacement values, 2022, released by Statistics Canada on Oct. 21, 2024

Toronto's air passenger preclearance is a force multiplier for Canada-U.S. trade

Border frictions and travel delays can throttle our growth in trade, investment, and new jobs if we don't constantly work to make travel seamless and easy.

Laura Dawson &
David Paterson

Opinion



Eighty-five years ago, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport welcomed its first commercial passenger flight—a charter flight carrying Tommy Dorsey and his swing-band for a two-day engagement at the Canadian National Exhibition. Today, due to the com-

bined contributions of Toronto Pearson and Billy Bishop airports, commercial aviation is not only a major economic contributor in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), it is also a key driver of the international trade and investment relationship between the United States and Ontario.

Daily direct flights between Toronto and more than 40 American cities make it possible to reach United States commercial hubs within hours. These trips are even more convenient because of investment in connected ground transportation networks. Whether your destination is a downtown office or a regional auto plant or industrial park, less and less time is being lost to transportation inefficiencies.

And travel is about to get even faster. On Sept. 26, Billy Bishop Airport hosted senior U.S. and Canadian officials to mark the final stages of preclearance approval, setting the stage for full preclearance services in the autumn of 2025.

Customs preclearance at Canadian airports allows departing passengers to be inspected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection prior to boarding their flight. This

shaves time from the passenger journey, and increases the number of U.S. destinations directly accessible from Canada. Pearson Airport has had preclearance facilities in place since 1952—the first in Canada. By next year, two of only 15 global preclearance sites will be in the GTA.

Convenient air travel makes it easier for Americans to do business in Ontario, and vice versa. This is important. If Ontario were a standalone country, it would be America's third-largest trading partner, doing almost half a trillion dollars of two-way trade each year. Ontario is also the top customer for exports from a dozen states. From a regional basis, the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes region has a combined GDP of \$6-trillion, and accounts for 28 per cent of all economic activity between the two nations. Except during COVID, regional trade has been growing by about 10 per cent a year.

For U.S. businesses looking to expand their production and sales base, the Ontario market offers more than 15 million potential customers with a median household income of greater than \$100,000. Plus, Ontario has critical minerals, green power, a skilled workforce, and growing strengths in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and technology.

The economic ties between Ontario and the U.S. are already strong. Common language, business culture, and historic trade linkages have laid the groundwork for the relationship. However, border frictions and travel delays can throttle our growth in trade, investment, and new jobs if we don't constantly work to make travel seamless and easy.

Initiatives like preclearance, combined with accelerated travel programs like NEXUS and U.S. Mobile Passport Control, together with self-check in and other tech-

nologies provided by airports and airlines, bring us closer to the day when a traveller can move from city to city with virtually no lineups.

Hassle-free travel is not just a nice perk, but a key driver of business velocity. We're all very good at Zoom calls, but, as a 2024 Deloitte report confirms, nothing substitutes for in-person meetings to build client relationships.

Preclearance is not just good for business in Ontario, it is good for Toronto. A study by York Aviation projects a net impact of \$5.3-billion in annual GDP, \$215-million in total annual tax revenue, and 3,680 on-site jobs as a result of next year's introduction of preclearance at Billy Bishop Airport. Similar benefits have already been realized as a result of preclearance at Toronto Pearson Airport, and the Pearson Lift expansion project currently underway is predicted to generate more than 100,000 new jobs, \$28-billion in new exports for the region, and \$23-billion in new foreign direct investment.

With more efficient air travel opportunities and fewer border delays, Ontario will feel less like a foreign destination and more like an integrated part of U.S. domestic operations. However, these improvements are not automatic. For full impact, preclearance must be combined with a supportive policy environment and continued investment in technology and infrastructure. In an increasingly volatile global economy, government and industry must work together to anticipate problems and maximize efficiencies wherever possible.

Laura Dawson is the executive director of the Canada-U.S. Future Borders Coalition. David Paterson is Ontario's representative in Washington, D.C.

The Hill Times

Investing in Canada's Air Transport Sector: The Vital Role of NAV CANADA in Modernizing Air Navigation

As global air travel demand is projected to double by 2043, Canada stands at a critical juncture. The safety and efficiency of our air transport system are crucial for our future economy.

NAV CANADA, a not-for-profit corporation, operates the world's first privatized Air Navigation System (ANS) and ensures the safe, efficient movement of aircraft across the country through air traffic control, flight information services, and navigation infrastructure.

In 28 years, NAV CANADA has invested \$2.6 billion in infrastructure modernization to maintain and improve the safety and efficiency of the Canadian air transport ecosystem. The result is one of the safest air navigation systems in the world, and a number of world-first technology deployments. While keeping Canada's airspace among the safest, NAV CANADA prepares for a rapidly changing aviation landscape.

Today, NAV CANADA is at the precipice of the most significant modernization effort in a generation. "Air travel is essential to our social fabric as a nation," says Mark Cooper, NAV CANADA's VP & Chief Technology and Information Officer. "Our airspace is the second largest in the world, we are at the crossroads of international traffic, and we rely on aviation to connect our communities and businesses to each other and the world."

"The future of air navigation services will adapt to traffic demand, withstand economic shocks, and enhance value for Canadians through better travel experiences and environmental performance."

NAV CANADA's roadmap seeks to achieve these benefits through investment in people and technology.

Fueling Canada's Economic Future

Investment in a next-generation air navigation system will position Canada as a leader in aviation technology, attracting international business and driving innovation. With the International Air Transport Association projecting global air travel demand to double by 2043, Canada's commitment to cutting-edge technologies in air traffic management is crucial.

A suite of technologies will enhance information sharing among airports, airlines, and NAV CANADA, increasing predictability, and maximizing throughput at the busiest airports. Time-based separation, which is currently being deployed at airports across the country, is helping maintain airport capacity when weather and winds are not favourable, recognizing that each commercial aircraft that lands at an airport represents millions in economic output.

Creating Jobs

Modernizing the Canadian air navigation system is expected to create more job opportunities across various sectors. As new technologies are deployed and infrastructure is developed, high-paying jobs in engineering, technology, and maintenance, as well as in air traffic services will be required. This job creation will boost the Canadian economy and offer rewarding careers in a changing industry.

A recent Airport Council International study highlights the aviation sector's economic significance, showing that Europe's airports and air connectivity create 14 million jobs and contribute 5% of the region's GDP annually. It also found that a 10% increase in direct air connectivity leads to a 5% rise in GDP per capita and a 1.6% increase in jobs. Additionally, the study indicates positive effects on poverty reduction and access to education.

For its part, NAV CANADA is working to bring high-paying jobs to market sooner. Through a new partnership with CAE, NAV CANADA is bolstering its own training programs with an additional training centre based in Montreal, meaning more Canadians will be trained by 2028 and will enter the job market for rewarding careers in air traffic control and flight information services.

Better Air Travel for Canadians

By reducing system bottlenecks and reinforcing reliable access to essential services, NAV CANADA initiatives will contribute to the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Generational investment in NAV CANADA's air navigation system means modernized airspace infrastructure to better withstand disruptions both operationally and financially, such as natural disasters or economic shocks like those the industry experienced during the pandemic.

Trajectory-based operations (TBO) will create a gate-to-gate planning environment, integrating all aspects from gate availability to weather, optimizing aircraft trajectories. It means less impact for the traveling public when severe weather events occur and less time to recover from these disruptions.

"Investing in Canada's air transport sector makes air travel smoother and more reliable, reducing delays and improving on-time performance. These innovations enhance the travel experience, lower operational costs, and boost the economy, making air travel more efficient for all," says Mark Cooper.

Reducing Environmental Impacts

NAV CANADA's modernization plans aim to reduce the environmental impact of air travel. By optimizing flight paths – reducing the number of track miles between point A and point B – NAV CANADA aims to lower fuel consumption and minimize associated greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that optimized trajectories could shave as much as 6 per cent off of the sector's emissions.

Longer term, airspace modernization will also support new classes of airspace users such as drones and urban air mobility, with electrified fleets, delivering new services and economic opportunity to Canadians.

On the ground, new digital facilities will incorporate services from multiple airports into a single hub, reducing the company's facility footprint and energy consumption while delivering enhanced services to aircraft operators.

Setting Our Course

NAV CANADA's innovation plans aim to harness advanced technologies and predictive analytics to revolutionize air traffic management, integrate new classes of airspace users, and enhance operational predictability and safety. Investment in modernizing core infrastructure, such as replacing aging communication, navigation, weather platforms and surveillance equipment, will ensure reliable air transport, particularly in remote Canadian regions.

Government support is essential for maintaining Canada's competitiveness in the global aviation market and fostering economic growth. These benefits extend beyond aviation; they will drive economic growth and enhance Canada's global competitiveness in the market for a generation.



Transportation Policy Briefing



Minister Anita Anand was sworn in for her dual role as head of the transport portfolio and president of the Treasury Board on Sept. 19. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Balancing priorities: tackling Canada's growing transportation challenges

As regulatory challenges mount, Minister Anand's leadership could streamline Canada's transportation sector for the future.

Lindsay
Kislock

Opinion



Canada's transportation and logistics network, which serves as the backbone of our economy, is at a crossroads. Essential for trade, connecting supply chains, and maintaining national cohesion, the sector faces complex challenges, including regulatory bottlenecks, infrastructure delays, and capital needs. With these issues in mind, Minister Anita Anand's recent appointment to head the transportation file—while continuing as president of the Treasury Board—offers a promising opportunity to

strengthen Canada's economy by enabling the transportation sector to thrive.

Anand's dual roles could be invaluable. Her experience in regulatory reform and fiscal oversight can bring clarity and efficiency to a sector burdened by lengthy approvals and complicated processes. Her recent initiatives, extensive stakeholder consultations, and a renewed focus on cross-border regulatory co-operation with the United States underscore her commitment to driving productivity, and cutting red tape. A modernized approach could strengthen Canada's global competitiveness.

Canada's top transportation challenges

The Western Transportation Advisory Council's (WESTAC) *Compass 2024 Report* highlights key challenges for the sector. Among the top challenges noted are the regulatory burden and delays in government decision-making. According to the report, 57 per cent of transportation leaders expressed dissatisfaction with Canada's regulatory environment, citing that prolonged timelines hinder infrastructure projects and delay critical upgrades. This was

the first time the government's inability to make timely decisions emerged as a top challenge, signalling an urgent need for change.

Reducing Canada's heavy regulatory burden is critical. The complex and prolonged approval processes for projects—coupled with interprovincial trade barriers—hamper growth and investment. With the *Compass 2025* survey underway, we are eager to see whether regulatory concerns continue to dominate.

Anand's regulatory expertise

As president of the Treasury Board, Anand has consistently focused on reducing regulatory barriers and improving productivity. In November 2023, she launched a public consultation to identify ways regulatory reform could strengthen Canada's supply chains, and modernize trade networks. This consultation—part of the government's Targeted Regulatory Reviews—gathered feedback to make regulatory processes more efficient and reflective of Canada's current economic realities.

Her leadership in regulatory co-operation further underscores her commitment to aligning

policies for cross-border trade. The revival of the Canada-United States Regulatory Co-operation Council exemplifies her vision. During meetings with U.S. officials and business leaders in Chicago and Washington, D.C., Anand prioritized reducing red tape and minimizing unnecessary regulatory hurdles, a move aimed at easing the cost burden on businesses in both countries.

I had the opportunity to attend a Canada-U.S. Regulatory Co-operation roundtable hosted by Anand in Winnipeg earlier this year and was impressed by her dedication to engaging diverse stakeholders to identify complex challenges and seek innovative solutions. Her willingness to champion the challenging issues suggests that she could be the determined leader that Canada's transportation sector needs.

Aligning fiscal oversight with transportation priorities

Balancing her roles as president of the Treasury Board and minister of transport, Anand has a unique opportunity to bring about synergy between fiscal oversight and regulatory reform.

With a leader who understands regulatory intricacies and the broader economic landscape, Canada could see streamlined approval timelines for transportation projects, and an emphasis on using funding initiatives like the National Trade Corridors Fund to move forward infrastructure projects of national significance and ultimately enhance Canada's transportation resilience and global standing.

A future with potential

Canada's transportation sector stands at a crossroads. We must lessen the regulatory overburden as it stifles growth and investment. With Anand's track record in reform and focus on cutting unnecessary regulatory burdens, Canada's transportation sector may finally achieve the efficiency and modernization it needs to support long-term economic growth. With Anand at the helm, Canada's transportation sector can look forward to a brighter, more connected, and more competitive future.

Lindsay Kislock is the president and CEO of WESTAC, a council of organizations in the transportation sector represented by senior decision-makers.

The Hill Times

Policy Briefing **Transportation**

Heavy-duty transportation may accelerate the big economic potential of nature's smallest molecule

Significant progress on the federal strategy can be made through the strategic creation and expansion of hydrogen hubs.

Karen
Hamberg

Opinion



In 2020, Natural Resources Canada published the *Hydrogen Strategy for Canada*—a call to action and implementation framework to seize the economic, environmental, energy security, and export opportunity of low-carbon hydrogen. And this national effort has been complemented by six provincial strategies with British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia each advancing their own funding programs, policies, and supportive measures.

From coast to coast, approximately 80 hydrogen production projects have been announced, representing an expression of interest of more than \$100-billion in potential investment dedicated to building out this clean energy opportunity.

NRCAN released its *Progress Report* this past May, the product of three years of engagement and analysis involving more than 1,000 of Canada's leading experts across the hydrogen value chain. It includes progress in implementing the recommendations of the strategy, features projections of hydrogen's role in meeting our climate objectives, and provides a roadmap of Canada's next steps and priorities.

One of those priorities is the establishment of hydrogen hubs. Hydrogen hubs are a geographic network of producers, consumers, collaborators, and connective infrastructure to deliver the projects that facilitate the demonstration, development, and commercialization of a hydrogen economy. In its most simple construct, a hydrogen hub connects energy supply and energy demand.

The Edmonton Hydrogen Hub and the Northern BC Hydrogen Hub contain the required elements to drive Canada's hydrogen economy. These include a supply of reliable low-carbon energy; industrial land suitable for production; existing distribution infrastructure like pipelines, road, and rail; and access to both domestic and international markets. And both hubs are accelerating the decarbonization of heavy-duty transportation through the alignment of supply and demand.

In Alberta, construction of Air Products' new net-zero hydrogen energy complex and world-scale liquefaction facility in Edmonton's Industrial Heartland will provide hydrogen for transportation, refining, and petrochemical end-uses. And Edmonton Global's 5,000 Hydrogen Vehicle Challenge is driving the adoption of hydrogen across public and private sector fleets. The Alberta



Energy and Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson launched the *Hydrogen Strategy for Canada: Progress Report* this past May. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Motor Transport Association is leading Transport Canada's Zero Emission Truck Testbed project, a real-world pilot of three Class 8 heavy-duty fuel cell trucks, and one Class 8 heavy-duty battery electric vehicle on distinct routes in Alberta and British Columbia.

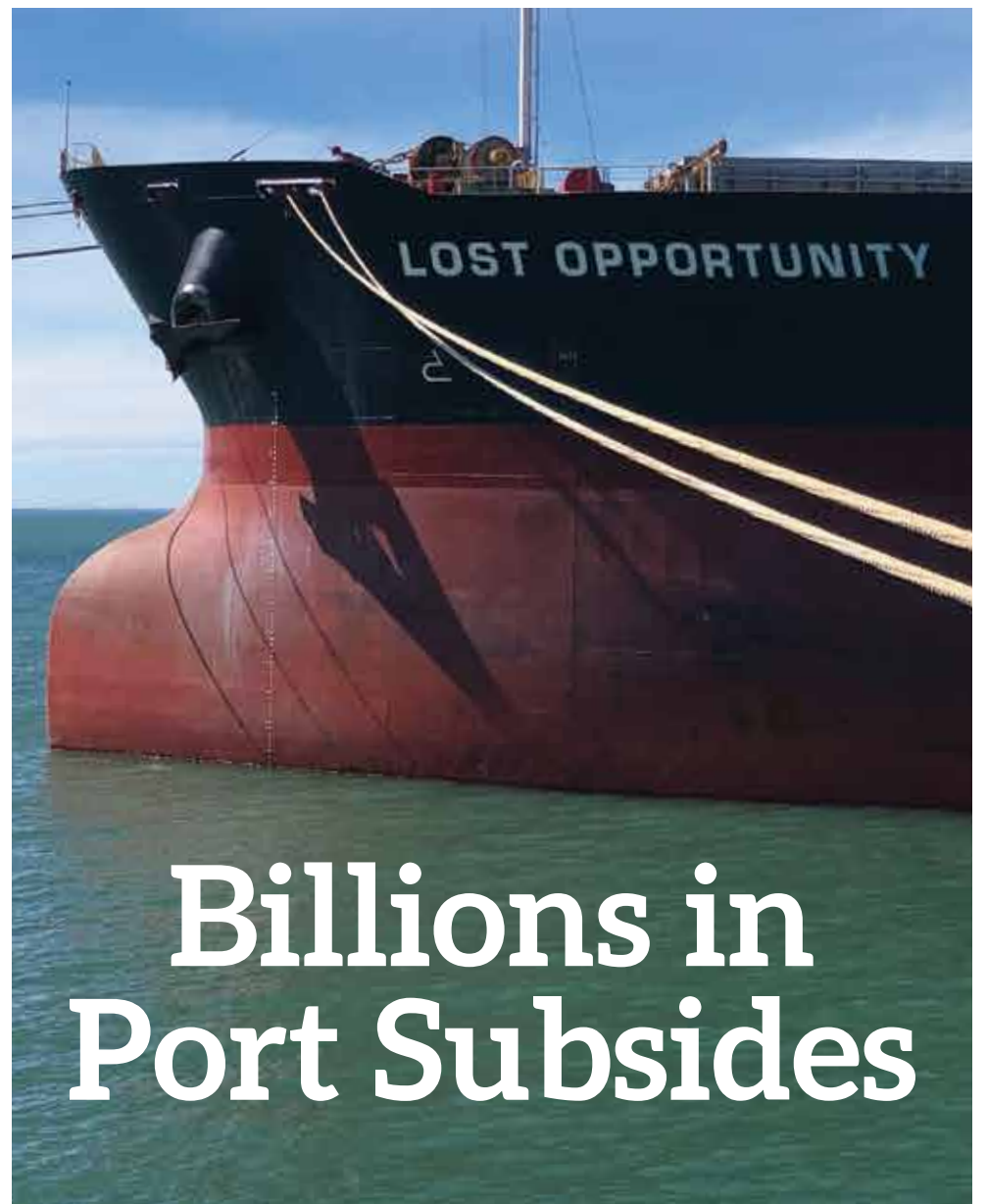
In B.C., HTEC's H2 Gateway is focused on simultaneously developing both supply and demand for hydrogen through a regional, ecosystem-based approach. Supported by a \$337-million loan from the Canada Infrastructure Bank, HTEC is building a liquefaction facility in North Vancouver and three new hydrogen production facilities in Burnaby, Nanaimo, and Prince George to expand Western Canada's hydrogen supply capacity. The investment will expedite the build of an interprovincial network of up to 20 refuelling stations to support the deployment of hydrogen vehicles. It is expected that 14 of the 20 new stations will enable the refuelling of up to 300 heavy-duty vehicles per day.

The promise of hydrogen-powered transportation is not new, and it is fair to ask what is different this time. Fuel cost remains a barrier, but the potential exists to achieve price parity with diesel with proposed medium- and heavy-duty sales mandates and incentives. Questions around limited vehicle choice are resolving themselves as the number of medium- and heavy-duty truck and bus models available in Canada have more than doubled in the last two years. And the Alberta Motor Transport Association pilots will share data and results with regulators, prospective fleets, and industry stakeholders contributing to a greater understanding of the capabilities, costs, and limitations of hydrogen.

The final paragraph of NRCAN's *Progress Report* says it best: "make no mistake, many challenges remain." The steady market traction in the heavy-duty transport sector is evidence of the significant progress that can be made through the strategic creation and expansion of hydrogen hubs.

Karen Hamberg is a partner and national clean technology leader at Deloitte Canada where she works with the Northern BC Hydrogen Hub, Edmonton Global, and the Alberta Motor Transport Association.

The Hill Times



Billions in Port Subsidies

A deal so good they won't talk about it.

The Prince Rupert Port Authority has given exclusive rights worth billions of dollars to one company in a secret deal. It's time for the port authority to bring fairness to Canada's third largest port and to support everyone.

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Transportation Policy Briefing



Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon. The recent rail stoppages that risked leaving our cities and towns without critical chlorine is only one example of what's at stake if C-58 remains in place, writes Randall Zalazar. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

It's not too late to course correct on what ails Canada's transportation sector

Repealing the anti-replacement worker law and thoughtful long-term infrastructure investments are just two steps the feds can take to make meaningful changes.

Randall Zalazar

Opinion



They say Canada has only two seasons: winter and construction. Lately, though, it feels like we're down to just one: strike season.

The recent wave of labour issues—having extended into the fall with repeated strikes and an indefinite work stoppage at the Port of Montreal—is not the cause of Canada's supply chain challenges. Rather, it's a symptom of a government that has taken businesses and trade for granted.

Canada is a trading nation, and all Canadians benefit from the wealth created by exporting our natural resources and manufactured goods. When Canadian businesses can't get their goods to market reliably, not only is our international trade reputation harmed, but so is the quality of life of people across the coun-

try. With every disruption to our supply chains, it becomes increasingly clear that government policy isn't supporting the people who rely on well-functioning Canadian businesses for their livelihoods. The data backs this up.

There has been a threefold increase in labour disruptions from 2022 to 2024. In fact, a Canadian Chamber of Commerce Business Data Lab analysis of Employment and Social Development Canada data revealed that 2023 saw the most days lost to labour disputes since 1986. It is a disturbing trend, and recent government legislation will only make it worse.

The passage of Bill C-58—anti-replacement worker legislation—upset the long-established balance in labour relations that had led to relative stability since

the late 1980s. Despite evidence that shows that anti-replacement worker legislation leads to more and longer strikes, the government moved forward with a one-sided approach, leaving businesses with fewer options and often unable to even “keep the lights on” for the communities that count on them. The recent rail stoppages that risked leaving our cities and towns without critical chlorine are only one example of what's at stake. And it's not only our communities we compromise when supply chains keep getting blocked, it's also the countless small businesses that employ millions of Canadians, boost our economy, and fund essential public services.

Today's reality: strikes abound, and Canadians are becoming more and more aware of how vulnerable our supply chains are that we count on for our life essentials—whether that's food, fuel, or everyday goods.

The veil will be lifted once again just in time for the holiday season, as the largest container port in Eastern Canada is rocked by another strike—this one of indefinite duration. Instead of being shared with loved ones, gifts will sit in distribution centres, leaving families disappointed and further harming businesses that rely on the season.

Policymakers must look beyond short-term politics and strive for a balance to ensure a robust, responsive economy that serves everyone. Listening to the concerns of employers and organized labour is one part of this, but so, too, is making the nec-

essary investments in the infrastructure that supports our supply chains so that we don't bottleneck our economy.

While Canadians take pride in our nation's resilience and adaptability, many aspects of our transportation infrastructure are underfunded, outdated, or unco-ordinated. Since 2020, Canada has dropped from eighth to 16th in infrastructure rankings in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking, putting us far behind the United States—our largest trading partner—which ranks seventh.

A 2021 report by the European Court of Auditors—which reviewed the management of major transport infrastructure projects in Australia, Canada, the European Union, Switzerland, and the U.S.—found that Canada alone lacks a consistent, institutionalized approach to long-term co-ordination and planning. This is no minor undertaking. Our vast geography, low population density, and remote northern communities present transportation challenges not faced by most other countries.

Taken together, we have a clearer picture of what ails our transportation sector. Although some of these problems were self-inflicted, it's never too late to course correct.

First, the government should repeal Bill C-58, and instead give itself the tools to compel binding arbitration when a situation requires it. Sometimes when relationships or discussions break down, only a neutral third party can decide what is reasonable and fair. Our economy cannot grind to a halt over a single labour dispute. Next, thoughtful long-term infrastructure investments in shovel-ready projects—guided by a Canada Trade Infrastructure Plan—would enhance the reliability and efficiency of transportation across all modes for both industry and millions of travellers. Finally, an all-of-government commitment to eliminating barriers to trade, particularly regulatory burden and overlap, would allow supply chain participants to deliver products to people more quickly and affordably.

As governments and businesses worldwide seek stability and dependable trading partners, Canada has a unique opportunity to rise on the global stage. However, if our government continues to overlook the fundamental contribution of our businesses and trade, our international reputation will erode, our standard of living will decline, and investors will look elsewhere. Canadians cannot afford that—especially when we have the natural resources and expertise our global partners need. Together, government and industry can find the solutions necessary to position Canada's transportation sector as a global model of excellence.

Randall Zalazar is the director of government relations at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. *The Hill Times*

A Prince Rupert monopoly is blocking Canada's energy potential



Minister Anita Anand and Transport Canada must uphold the commitment to modernizing ports, and ensuring that Canada's export infrastructure aligns with our national economic interests, writes Rob Booker. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

in good faith, hoping to find a mutually beneficial solution. Instead, we've been met with threats of further legal action simply for raising awareness of the issue—a stance that does nothing to support Canada's ability to meet global demand for sustainable fuel sources.

A single supplier not only restricts Canada's ability to meet international demand but risks putting the country in a position where competitors—especially in the U.S.—capture market share we could easily fulfill.

Alberta, as a key producer of propane, already faces limited routes for exporting its resources, with only a few feasible options for moving goods through North America. Forcing our energy resources through a single supplier constricts Alberta's opportunities, affecting the economic prosperity of both the province and the country.

For the sake of Canadian competitiveness and our nation's economic resilience, the Prince Rupert Port Authority must be called to the table to revisit this exclusivity arrangement. We're urging Transport Canada—which oversees port authorities across the country—to uphold its commitment to modernizing ports, facilitating fair competition, and ensuring that Canada's export infrastructure aligns with our national economic interests.

Canada's role in the Asia-Pacific energy markets is more than an opportunity; it's a necessity.

A bottleneck at this key export terminal, restricted by an exclusive deal, limits the country's economic potential. It's time for the Prince Rupert Port Authority to align with federal objectives, sit down with Trigon, and find a solution that benefits all stakeholders.

By working together, we can ensure that Canada remains a leader in supplying cleaner energy to the world.

Rob Booker is CEO of Trigon Pacific Terminals.

The Hill Times

The port authority has barred additional propane exporters from the Prince Rupert market, and is refusing to disclose the full scope of the arrangement.

Robert Booker

Opinion



The demand for propane exports from Canada is immense, with potential clients clamouring for greater capacity and more competitive options.

At Trigon, we're prepared to repurpose terminal lands and infrastructure currently used for thermal coal—which will soon be banned for export—to support propane exports. The global propane market is expected to grow through the second half of this decade, and remain strong through 2050. But currently, there are only two export facilities on Canada's West Coast, both at Prince Rupert: one operated by AltaGas, and another run by Pembina. AltaGas is already advancing a second terminal at the port with Royal Vopak.

Shipping propane to Asian markets also allows Canadian exporters to diversify beyond United States rail exports,

which have historically dominated our sales but yield lower prices. Canada should be focused on growing its export potential, not strangling competition and limiting our access to lucrative markets abroad.

Canada has been vocal in its goal to modernize port operations, promote competition, and attract investment in the sector. This was a central message in the federal government's Port Modernization Review. It's also embedded within Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, which aims to strengthen economic ties with Asia by increasing export capacity and facilitating energy flows. But the port authority exclusivity deal runs counter to these goals.

Our only recourse has been legal action. Trigon has reached out to the federal body in an effort to initiate discussions

As global demand rises for cleaner, more secure sources of energy, Canada faces a choice: expand capacity or risk being left behind.

At Trigon Pacific Terminals, a deep-sea bulk export terminal in Prince Rupert, B.C., we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to modernize our facilities for cleaner energy exports to Asia, including ammonia—a critical zero-carbon fuel of the future. We're committed to doing our part to diversify Canada's energy exports, both in terms of fuels and destinations, to meet rising demand.

However, our path forward has hit a regulatory roadblock. The Prince Rupert Port Authority, the federal body governing Canada's third-busiest seaport, has granted a monopoly over propane exports to a private consortium of Calgary-based AltaGas and Dutch multinational Royal Vopak.

Propane—another low-emission energy source—is seeing growing demand across Asia as a primary fuel for cooking and heating. Despite this, the port authority has barred additional propane exporters from the Prince Rupert market, and is refusing to disclose the full scope or all of the terms of the exclusive arrangement. The bottom line is that the door to enter this critical market has been shut.

POWERING PROGRESS:

2024 UPDATE TO CFA'S DRIVING TO 2050 VISION

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Transportation Policy Briefing



A just and effective decarbonization strategy requires rethinking car dependency and investing in sustainable, inclusive transport alternatives, writes Luis Patricio. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Decarbonizing the transportation sector should leave no one behind

Prioritizing EV policies caters primarily to privileged individuals, and ignores many other social and economic issues.

Luis Patricio

Opinion



According to the Government of Canada, the energy sector is responsible for 82 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in the country, with 78 per cent coming from the combustion of fossil fuels. Approximately one-third of total energy emissions come from the transport sector with personal transport being the main contributor, “largely due to an increase in driving.”

The transport sector is the only sector in Canada that has seen a net increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between 2005 and 2022.

Decarbonizing the transport sector is one of the most signif-

icant and challenging efforts required to secure a sustainable future for all in Canada. To get there, we must shift away from car-centric models of transportation and focus on public transit and cycling, which have a much lower carbon footprint and are more inclusive policies.

Thus far, electric vehicles (EVs) have been embraced by governments in Canada as one of the main solutions to reduce emissions and combat climate change; they have offered an increasing suite of measures to encourage the transition to EVs.

On the demand side, there are several incentives to purchase EVs, including the federal Incentives for Zero-Emission Vehicles. Even though a few provinces offer rebates for electric bikes—Quebec, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island—there isn’t an equivalent federal program to incentivize electric or conventional bikes.

On the supply side, the federal government will provide \$28.2-billion in subsidies to EV battery plants in Windsor and St. Thomas, Ont. And another \$5-billion—shared with Ontario—to Honda EV manufacturing plants. The federal government is also funding the installation of charging stations across the country.

Compare this to the \$400-million disbursed over five years for the federal Active Transportation Fund to support expansion and enhancement of active transpor-

tation infrastructure and a modal shift away from cars. Active transport receives approximately one per cent of the investment of EV battery production alone without even considering investments in actual road infrastructure.

Research on commuting to work has identified that more than a million Canadians experience

“**Converting all motorized vehicles to electric without a robust policy to shift some of those trips to other modes could also dramatically increase electricity demand.**”

mobility poverty, defined as limited mobility coupled with socioeconomic disadvantage. Research looking into other basic-needs transportation trips—such as education, health care, and groceries—suggests that this number is much higher.

EVs are still more expensive than gas-powered cars, which are already unaffordable and out of reach for many Canadians, including people with disabilities; newcomers who might face language, cultural, or financial barriers; single-parent families; seniors; and young Canadians.

Prioritizing EV policies caters primarily to privileged individuals, and ignores many other social and economic issues.

Converting all motorized vehicles to electric without a robust policy to shift some of those trips to other modes could also dramatically increase electricity demand. Statistics Canada is projecting an increase in electricity consumption between 4.7 per cent and 9.4 per cent from new EVs alone—a conservative estimate given the trend towards larger EVs.

The push for EVs in Canada and around the world also creates a huge demand for minerals. In the search for alternative mining sites, electrification is driving deep-seabed mining, potentially threatening a biodiverse and fragile ecosystem.

A federal national transportation policy should not rest on EVs alone. It should:

- Evaluate all federal transportation projects and grants through an equity lens to assess if and how equity-deserving groups are benefiting from them.

- Create a permanent fund for public transportation to improve and expand both transit and bike-share systems across the country.

- Provide at least as many incentives and subsidies for electric bicycles as the ones available to electric cars.

- Prioritize funds to dedicated transit corridors and cycling infrastructure projects that achieve at least a “minimum grid” network over highway expansions and other developments catering primarily to cars.

- Fund pilot projects to implement and scale up bicycle logistics programs, and strengthen the national bicycle sector.

- Prioritizing public transit and cycling over EVs would also reduce obesity and combat a sedentary lifestyle, decrease the number of road fatalities and injuries, and require much less space—leading to more compact urban form, and less urban sprawl.

It’s clear that electric vehicles cannot solve Canada’s transportation challenges.

A just and effective decarbonization strategy requires rethinking car dependency and investing in sustainable, inclusive transport alternatives. Canada must prioritize a shift toward public and active transport in its decarbonization strategy to ensure no one is left behind in the transition to a low-carbon future.

Luis Patricio is doing his PhD research on transport justice in the geography and environment department at Western University, and teaches environmental stewardship at Huron University. The Hill Times

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Opinion

The youth vaping crisis: Ottawa needs to clean up its mess

A federal flavour ban could shut down scofflaws by closing the legal supply of flavoured products across the country.

Cynthia Callard, Flory Doucas & Les Hagen

Opinion



Addictions Minister Ya'ara Saks' refusal to ban flavourings until the problem of illicit trade has been handled has earned her criticism from health groups and praise from the nicotine industry, write Cynthia Callard, Flory Doucas, and Les Hagen. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

It was entirely predictable that vaping manufacturers would raise the threat of illicit trade to fight measures that stopped them using flavourings that lure young people into nicotine use.

It was entirely unexpected, however, that the minister of addictions would fall for this ruse. Or that she would use this bogeyman as a pretext to further delay a federal ban on vape flavours.

Canada's tobacco companies have a proven history of exploiting fears of illicit trade to block every significant tobacco control measure. Their participation in the contraband market to force a rollback in tobacco taxes in

the 1990s resulted in billions of dollars in penalties.

The nicotine industry has also established a relationship with the underground economy. Nicotine vaping products became legal for sale and promotion only in May 2018, yet for several years beforehand, a thousand or more vape stores had openly defied federal law with street-level stores and online marketing. Ironically, among those former black marketeers are some of the industry spokespeople who are now raising fears about illicit trade in flavoured vapes.

This industry hasn't fully cleaned up its act: Health Cana-

da's most recent inspection report found one-third of specialty vape shops broke federal health laws.

Health regulators know that tobacco and nicotine companies will pose enforcement challenges. But that has not stopped governments around the world from trying to curtail the product designs and marketing which have triggered a global youth vaping crisis. Nor should it prevent Canada from tackling its youth vaping rate—now one of the highest in the world.

Vape flavours are banned in many countries, including Australia, China, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Norway.

The United States Food and Drug Administration has effectively banned flavoured vapes by refusing to authorize their sale.

These countries are experiencing challenges in enforcing these restrictions, as are the two Canadian territories and four provinces that have adopted them. Yet, in no jurisdiction is there evidence that illicit trade has made things worse than if the regulations were not in place.

One of the main reasons that provincial flavour restrictions are being undermined by illicit trade is the willingness of vaping retailers to sell non-compliant products across provincial lines. Provincial governments have little leverage to halt activities outside their borders. Indeed, they are essentially powerless to stop this industry from using outlets in provinces where flavours are allowed to promote, sell, and deliver into provinces where they are not.

A federal flavour ban could shut down these scofflaws by closing the legal supply of flavoured products across the country. It will be much more effective to police illicit imports at the country's borders than to try to catch shipments across provinces.

Even if illicit trade continued, a flavour ban in Canada would greatly benefit public health. It

would make it harder for youth to access attractive products and harder for suppliers to influence youth. It would also reduce the health risks to those who use legal products because the proposed regulation would ban all but a limited number of specified e-liquid ingredients.

At the moment, there are no safety standards for vaping products sold legally in Canada and very few restrictions on the ingredients that can be used in e-liquids. Health Canada has acknowledged that there are some 3,000 unique flavour combinations in the vaping market.

Canada's youth need the federal government to stop stalling on vape flavours, and to start designing better controls on the vape market. The industry continues to roll out new gimmicky devices that make vaping nicotine ever more fun, enticing, easy-to-use, and affordable, and which make it even easier for them to recruit young people.

Minister Ya'ara Saks' refusal to ban flavourings until the problem of illicit trade has been handled has earned her criticism from health groups and praise from the nicotine industry.

A minister of addictions who finds herself aligned in this way might want to take a good hard look in the mirror.

Cynthia Callard is executive director of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada. Flory Doucas is co-director of the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control. Les Hagen is executive director of Action on Smoking & Health (ASH Canada).

The Hill Times

Government agencies using AI must implement governance programs, or risk losing trust

Canada can ensure that AI systems are developed and deployed in a way that respects human rights, and promotes social justice.

Aneeta Bains

Opinion



Over the past year or so, we have seen tremendous advancements in generative arti-

ficial intelligence innovations, yet widespread business adoption of this new technology has largely remained stagnant. According to business leaders, that is because they are still grappling with ethical concerns and how to trust the data behind AI.

When it comes to governments using AI, these tools can leapfrog public services and enhance national security. However, if AI does not have the proper ethical guardrails and human oversight, it could pose significant risks, including biased decision-making and compromising data security.

As a global AI leader, IBM believes both government and industry have a role to play in ensuring AI is adopted ethically and responsibly. We have been advocating for regulations on the uses of AI which pose the

greatest risk to society—such as applications which can affect a person's ability to buy a house, or use their facial data without their consent—since 2019. But when it comes to how organizations—including government agencies—are developing and deploying AI, there are steps they can take now to safely govern its use without the need for new regulations.

In this era of rapid technological advancement, the government has a unique opportunity to establish a robust framework for AI governance. By prioritizing transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, Canada can ensure that AI systems are developed and deployed in a way that respects human rights, and promotes social justice.

The first step towards achieving this goal is to establish a clear

governance framework. This means creating a set of principles and guidelines that prioritize the responsible use of data in AI decision-making. This framework should include provisions for data transparency, accountability, and security, as well as mechanisms for addressing bias and ensuring fairness.

As AI systems rely increasingly on vast amounts of data, it is essential that we establish clear standards for data collection, storage, and use. This means developing common data formats, protocols, and architectures that enable seamless data sharing and collaboration across government agencies and departments.

Another critical aspect is the need for data transparency. As AI systems make decisions that affect Canadians, it is essential

that we provide clear explanations of how these decisions are made. This means developing AI systems that are transparent, explainable, and auditable, and providing Canadians with access to information about how their data is being used.

As we continue to navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of AI, it is essential that we prioritize accountability and responsible adoption. Two crucial first steps are to get educated on AI, and set up a trusted AI governance dashboard. This will enable organizations in Canada to stay ahead of the curve and harness the full potential of AI to improve our daily lives, drive economic growth, and support industry adoption. However, the choices we make about how to use technology are not without consequence. Therefore, it is vital we prioritize transparency, accountability, and ethics in our approach to data governance. This requires a collective effort from government, industry, academia, and civil society to establish clear standards, guidelines, and regulations that promote responsible innovation and mitigate potential risks.

Aneeta Bains is managing partner, Canadian federal public service, at IBM Canada.

The Hill Times

The Big Photo

Employment, Workforce Development, and Official Languages Minister Randy Boissonnault was one of a cadre of Liberal MPs and ministers to speak at a press conference in the Wellington Building in Ottawa on Nov. 4 to announce the government's draft regulations setting a cap on greenhouse gas pollution from the oil and gas sector. The reaction from Boissonnault's fellow Albertan, Premier Danielle Smith: "I'm pissed."



The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

News

Difficult deliberations ahead as MPs look to avoid ‘watered-down’ harassment policy

Despite recommending against adopting a formal policy, Tory MP Michelle Rempel Garner says ‘that doesn’t mean ... that we shouldn’t have something.’

Continued from page 1

policy “loophole” will finally be closed.

While Liberal and NDP MPs have told *The Hill Times* they want to see a formal process developed to deal with complaints of harassment between MPs, Conservatives appear to remain reticent, with Tory MP Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, Alta.) having warned committee members against recommending that such a policy be embedded “within the existing code” of conduct for MPs—found within the Standing Orders—at the House Affairs Committee’s (PROC) last meeting on the study.

“We all know the reality of what’s going to happen with that: it’s going to be politically weaponized, even if it goes through House of Commons administration,” said Rempel Garner, who isn’t a regular PROC member, but has subbed in for colleagues through the course of the study. “We can’t do this, let’s be realistic.”

In 2015, a code of conduct and process to deal with allegations of sexual harassment between MPs was incorporated as an appendix to the Standing Orders. The House also currently has a workplace harassment and violence prevention policy, but it only applies to MPs as employers, and covers situations involving employees, interns, and volunteers, and does not extend to situations between MPs. That said, *The Hill Times* confirmed with the Speaker’s office last week that early conflict resolution services offered as part of this harassment policy “are available to Members for situations between Members should they wish to receive this support.”

Otherwise, House rules enable MPs to rise on a point of order to complain about unparliamentary language used during proceedings, which the Speaker then rules on, and can lead to an MP being asked to apologize, and if they refuse, they can be named and asked to leave the Chamber.



Conservative MP Michelle Rempel Garner on her way into the West Block building on Oct. 21. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

MPs interact with each other in a variety of settings, but in the House Chamber or during committee meetings, those interactions are protected by parliamentary privilege—a list of rights that permit MPs to “speak freely in the conduct of a proceeding ... while enjoying complete immunity from prosecution or civil liability for any comment they make,” as explained by House procedure.

How to create a policy that deals with harassment between MPs while navigating parliamentary privileges is a core challenge facing PROC.

Mathysen said whatever PROC recommends, she wants to see “the loophole eliminated so that we are dealing with MP-to-MP harassment.”

“We’ve had some preliminary conversations about how you do this, because it can get complicated in terms of making it effective,” said Mathysen. “I just want to make it effective.”

PROC heard witness testimony over the course of three meetings, starting on May 28 with House officials including Speaker Greg Fergus (Hull-Aylmer, Que.), the clerk, the law clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms Patrick McDonnell, and the House chief human resources officer, who spoke to existing policies, and highlighted that the 2014 motion that brought about the study that resulted in the creation of the MP sexual harassment policy had instructed the committee to examine policy options for addressing harassment generally.

Mathysen, who’s familiar with those previous in-camera deliberations from having been an MP’s staffer at the time, has called PROC’s decision not to

pursue a general harassment policy for MPs during the 41st Parliament a “missed opportunity,” and highlighted the fact the Conservatives formed a majority government when the decision was made.

On May 30, Liberal MPs Pam Damoff (Oakville North-Burlington, Ont.) and Iqra Khalid (Mississauga-Erin Mills, Ont.) appeared at PROC to share their own experiences with harassment, both directly from other Members of Parliament, and from the public that they said was instigated by fellow MPs. Damoff has attributed her decision to not seek re-election to the “threats and misogyny” she’s experienced as an MP.

Most recently, on Oct. 22, the committee heard from Chi Nguyen, executive director of Equal Voice; Madeline Nwokeji, program director for the Heritage Skills Development Centre; and Hanny Mendoza, executive director of WomanACT. Nwokeji and Mendoza both stressed the need for “robust” training and education programs, including bystander intervention training, while Nguyen highlighted Equal Voice’s research, including polling that points to increasing concern about online safety and harassment among young women interested in pursuing politics, and the need for anti-harassment policies to “meaningfully support complainants.”

Despite warning committee members against recommending the adoption of a formal MP-to-MP harassment policy on Oct. 22, Rempel Garner said “that doesn’t mean—given the change in gender composition of Parliament—that we shouldn’t have something.”

Beyond recommending against the inclusion of “anything ... that allows for the weaponization of HR,” she offered three ideas for committee members to consider. First, to “extend” Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) services—through which MPs and staff can access counselling—to “include a mechanism to de-escalate tension, particularly within caucus.” Secondly, she urged the committee to recommend changing the Standing Orders to make it a “violation of privilege” to leak use of EFAP services to media to ensure “there’s some sort of House censure for” doing so. Finally, she suggested there should be more training for party whips and caucus chairs who are in part responsible for “managing HR in an environment where HR law doesn’t apply,” and that there should be “rules in caucus meetings for party leadership, as well as for caucus chairs, on how to manage interaction[s]” during meetings to avoid “people yelling at each other or berating each other.”

“At the end of the day, there should also be some sort of process for vexatious complaints,” she added.

Earlier in the meeting, Rempel Garner also stressed her view that any measures dealing with MP-to-MP conflict need to be put in the hands of “completely neutral arbiters, such as law enforcement or other officials outside of the party” or even parliamentary system—a list that would preclude both the Speaker’s office and party whips.

Rempel Garner did not respond to interview requests from *The Hill Times*, nor did any of

her Conservative colleagues who are members of PROC. At earlier meetings, Conservatives, including Rempel Garner, focused on criminal sanctions as an avenue to address instances where an MP feels they are being harassed.

Speaking with *The Hill Times*, Mathysen said she understands Rempel Garner’s “wariness,” and said the “last thing” she wants is for “something as serious as harassment” to become a partisan “tool.” In that vein, she agrees that any such process shouldn’t be put in the hands of the Speaker, recognizing that while the Speaker’s office “is nonpartisan,” the individual in the chair is still a member of a political party, which will lead to questions of whether decisions are “partisan driven.”

Mathysen said, whatever the process, it needs to be confidential and non-partisan. In her view, “doing that through House administration is the best option.”

As for interactions protected by parliamentary privilege, Mathysen said she thinks that’s where a pledge launched by the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians last spring comes in.

The pledge asks parliamentarians to commit to calling out “abuse and harassment” when they see it, and to agree to engage in “respectful debate,” not “personal attacks.”

While Mathysen didn’t have a current number of signatories—Liberal, NDP, and Bloc Québécois association members have been collecting names from their respective caucuses—she said she’s heard “good numbers” from the Liberals that match the—so far—near total uptake within her own caucus.

The association includes one Conservative Senator among its membership. Mathysen said she hasn’t “been able to fully connect with Conservatives” yet on the initiative, but hopes the association’s upcoming annual general meeting—set for later this month—will “allow us the opportunity to really solidify the allyship that I’m hoping to see across party lines.”

Unanimity ideal, but recommendations shouldn’t be ‘watered down’: Mathysen

Asked what he hopes to see in PROC’s report and his thoughts on Rempel Garner’s recommendations on his way into the House Chamber on Oct. 24, Liberal MP and committee member Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Ont.) said only: “I heard what she said, and I’m thinking about it.”

That same day, *The Hill Times* caught up with NDP MP and caucus chair Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan-Malahat-Langford, B.C.) outside the West Block and asked his thoughts on the recommendation that caucus chairs and party whips receive more training. Though MacGregor isn’t a member of PROC—and therefore won’t be part of the report-drafting process—he said he thinks such training would be helpful,

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and that he'd also be interested in seeing exploration of the idea of creating a "more formal networking and communication structure" between the different caucus chairs—and potentially also party whips—so they are "more regularly in contact," including to address potential inter-caucus tensions.

MacGregor said he's open to the idea of creating a formal policy to deal with complaints of harassment between MPs. "Anything that's kind of encouraging a dialogue about how we can be more respectful to each other, both in

the Chamber [and] at committee, but also in our interactions with each other—I'm open to that."

Mathysen, a former deputy whip, said she thinks training "could be done better" for all MPs, and could "potentially" be "more intensive for House leadership."

Current mandatory training for MPs largely focuses on their responsibilities as employers. When an MP is elected, their "onboarding" includes in-person workplace harassment and violence prevention training—which MPs must redo every three years—as well as "e-learning" related to Labour Code health and

safety requirements, explained the Speaker's office. Optional courses covering "people management essentials" and "giving and receiving feedback" are also offered, and "training can also be organized upon request through either internal or external resources." Further "tools and support" related to things like "emergency procedures and training on how to de-escalate potentially violent situations" is offered by the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms and Corporate Security.

Stopped on her way into the West Block on Oct. 31, Liberal MP Mona Fortier (Ottawa Vanier, Ont.), a member of PROC, said she thinks the House needs "some mechanism" by which MPs would "be able to not just share, but to—if there is harassment—to be able to find a solution."

"I'm hopeful that we'll have recommendations that will guide us on making that possible," she said. "I think we need a mechanism for sure ... how that will be created is the one that is a bit tricky."

Asked about Rempel Garner's suggestions and warning, Fortier said she'll be "taking all of the information and testimonies, and also ideas coming from all parties," into consideration in deciding "the best way to finalize the report."

Committee reports are not required to be unanimous; if opposition members don't agree with a majority report, they can file supplementary or dissenting



Liberal MP Mona Fortier says a mechanism to deal with MP-to-MP harassment is needed. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



NDP MP Alistair MacGregor says he's open to creation of a formal MP harassment policy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

opinions. House rules—including the adoption of a new code of conduct or policy to be embedded within the Standing Orders—can be changed by a majority vote, usually on a motion to concur in a committee report that recommends changes.

Asked whether she's concerned about the possibility that recommendations could be adopted without unanimous agreement, Mathysen said "I am, certainly, worried about that—not going to lie."

But at the same time, she said it would be a "shame" if the

committee's recommendations were "watered down so much as well, so that everybody is in agreement."

"We certainly saw that 10 years ago," Mathysen said. "I don't want to wait another 10 years, or have to keep fighting for it for another 10 years before anything should happen. So, I'll see what we can do, I'll see where we end up. I'm gonna come at this with a positive attitude and benefit of the doubt, and see where we get; just take one step at a time."

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

DND access-to-info woes persist as compliance with law drops, backlog grows

Continued from page 4

limits spelled out in the act, and they're violating them routinely. In fact, they're violating them more and more often."

Beeby said if the department knows that it is dealing with an increase in requests and processing more pages, it raises the question of why it hasn't hired more staff.

DND reviewed 296,479 pages for the 1,128 requests closed in 2023-24, compared to 213,058 pages for the 1,645 closed requests in 2022-23, and 266,367 pages for 1,616 closed requests in 2021-22.

"This is not a new phenomenon," he said. "If you know it's happening, why aren't you hiring?"

"This government doesn't seem to worry about hiring staff—the public service has grown hugely under the Liberal government—but somehow access to information, which desperately needs these ATIP officers, wasn't able to get the staff for that part of government.



Information Commissioner Caroline Maynard took the defence minister to Federal Court three times during the 2023-24 fiscal year to compel his department to follow her orders. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

It's just incredibly frustrating for requesters."

The annual report notes that the department still has four requests open, as of March 31, that go back to 2015-16.

"They have a bunch of really dusty requests there," Beeby said. "The purpose of access is to inform citizens in a timely way of what's going on with the government. Ten-year-old re-

ports are just not going to cut it. They're certainly not going to cut it for journalists. You're going to have to change professions and become historians."

In May, the Canadian Association of Journalists announced DND as the 2023 winner of the "Cone of Silence" award for "outstanding achievement in government secrecy" after taking three years to respond to an ATIP re-

garding the cost of the Canadian Surface Combatant procurement.

Macdonald-Laurier Institute fellow Richard Shimooka, who researches Canadian defence, said while DND has seen an increase in spending recently, the auxiliary areas of the department haven't been seeing increased funding.

He said with the focus on the need for the Canadian military to be properly equipped, that leaves its ATIP department on the sidelines.

He said—as a researcher—DND's ATIP regime has become "less and less valuable" to understand contemporary public policy issues.

Shimooka said that the delays in the system come from both a need for a technological solution, as well as a need to address a culture of secrecy.

"I do think there's a resistance to change within the public service," he said.

IRCC compliance rate jumps, while other top ATIP-requested departments stagnate

Of the five government institutions that are traditionally subject to the most ATIP requests, there has been some improvement, but most have remained fairly stagnant.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) met legislative timelines for 77 per cent of requests, a sharp increase from 21 per cent in 2022-23. It

received 182,907 new requests during 2023-24.

Annual reports from the other four departments show that their processing of ATIPs have largely remained stagnant with previous rates.

In 2023-24, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) met its statutory obligations for 91 per cent of its requests, up from 2022-23 when it followed legislative timelines 90 per cent of the time. It received 13,277 requests during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

The information commissioner has previously raised concerns that ATIP requests to IRCC and CBSA have inflated ATIP requests that burden the system due to applications for individual immigration files that should be available elsewhere.

The RCMP met its legislative obligations for 35 per cent of requests in 2023-24, a decrease from 42 per cent in 2022-23. It received 3,658 requests in 2023-24.

In 2023-24, the Canada Revenue Agency reported that it met legislative timelines for 71 per cent of requests, which was a decrease from 76 per cent in 2022-23. It received 2,404 new ATIP requests in 2023-24.

The Privy Council Office closed 64 per cent of its requests within the legislated timeline, a slight increase from 2022-23, when it closed 63 per cent of requests within the statutory timeline. It received 673 requests during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

nmoss@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

News

Conservative fundraising machine on track to smash 2023's historic \$35.2M record as Grits play ad-buy catch-up

With another \$3.32-million in the bank this quarter, the Liberals have 'money to play with,' but they can't afford to waste it on ineffective ads, says Conservative strategist Cole Hogan.



Since he became leader in late 2022, the Conservative Party under Pierre Poilievre has raised more than \$73.9-million in donations. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Continued from page 1

year total. But while the Grits have the money to spend on the long-awaited digital ads released last week, Conservative strategist Cole Hogan says trying to match the Tories dollar for dollar is a fool's errand without a resonant message.

In the third quarter of 2024—from July 1 to Sept. 30—the Conservatives raised more than \$8.44-million, averaging \$185 from 45,441 individual contributions. While those totals are a slight decrease from this year's previous quarters, it's a signif-

icant increase compared to the same period last year when the party raised a record-breaking yearly total of \$35.2-million for 2023, the first full year under Pierre Poilievre's (Carleton, Ont.) leadership. That total surpassed the party's previous non-election year record of \$24.2-million in 2018, and both of their 2019 and 2021 election-year totals of \$30.8-million and \$26.5-million, respectively.

In 2023, the Conservatives raised \$11.9-million in the year's final three months. With a total of \$28.97-million raised in the first three quarters of this year alone, the party will only need to raise just over \$6.28-million in the same period to surpass that record. Furthermore, with 148,991 total contributions so far, the Conservatives are 51,258 shy of surpassing last year's total of 200,248 as well.

While the Conservatives enjoy a \$12.1-million lead for the year and a \$2.9-million lead for the quarter compared to the other parties' combined fundraising totals, the governing Liberal Party posted its second-best non-election year third quarter with \$3.32-million, averaging \$167 from 28,445 contributions. Despite representing a slight decrease from the previous quarter, the only other third

quarter with a higher fundraising total was 2018 when the Liberals raised \$3.7-million from 33,070 contributions.

With \$10.1-million in fundraising over the first three quarters of 2024, the Liberals only need an additional \$5.4-million to surpass 2023's total of \$15.6-million. During the fourth quarter of 2023, the Liberals raised \$5.79-million from 38,288 contributions.

In third place, the New Democrats raised \$1.27-million from 14,082 contributions, for a three-quarter total of \$3.9-million, roughly \$2.95-million less than the 2023 total of \$6.86-million raised from 68,063 contributions. However, the NDP would need to raise slightly more than the \$2.65-million it raised during the same period last year to surpass that total.

The Green Party of Canada's \$379,850 from 4,242 contributions slightly edged out the Bloc Québécois' \$356,397 from 2,229 contributions. There was a three-quarter total of \$1.15-million for the Greens, and \$1.02-million for the Bloc. In order to surpass their previous year's totals, the Bloc and Green Party will need an additional \$754,085 and \$786,806, respectively.

GT&Co principal Cole Hogan told *The Hill Times* he has no doubt the Conservatives will not only meet last year's total, but far surpass it. He noted that donors generally make their largest contributions in the fourth quarter, ahead of tax season.

"The Conservative Party fundraising machine rolls on, and this is just further wind in their sails," Hogan said in an interview on Oct 30.

Hogan credited the Conservatives' ability to consistently hit such large fundraising totals—particularly since Poilievre became leader—to the party's commitment to engaging with the new members it gained during 2022's leadership contest.

Since the fourth quarter of 2022—the first full quarter under Poilievre's leadership—the party has raised \$73.9-million, compared to \$31.59-million for the Liberals and \$13.3-million for the NDP.

Additionally, Hogan said the Conservatives' success is a combination of consistent engagement, a resonant message, and a sizeable financial commitment to support both.

Hogan said the Liberals' totals show that the party certainly has "money to play with," but with less than half of the Conservatives' war chest, the Grits will need to be far more strategic in how they use theirs.

"As great as digital is for reaching as many people on as many platforms as possible, you still need a significant ground game to actually ID voters, and the Liberals might have to choose between those two things," Hogan said.

Last year, the Conservatives spent \$8.5-million on advertising, according to the party's annual financial returns for 2023, which Elections Canada posted online in early July. In comparison, the Liberals spent roughly \$381,000 on

Quarterly Fundraising, 2024

	Q1	Contributions	Q2	Contributions	Q3	Contributions	Total \$	Total Contributions
Conservative Party	\$10,697,111	51,031	\$9,832,051	52,519	\$8,449,288	45,441	\$28,978,450	148,991
Liberal Party	\$3,098,432	27,661	\$3,774,567	28,523	\$3,321,634	28,445	\$10,194,632	84,629
New Democratic Party	\$1,349,484	14,699	\$1,294,197	14,063	\$1,271,463	14,082	\$3,915,143	42,844
Green Party	\$401,000	4,456	\$376,076	4,210	\$379,850	4,242	\$1,156,926	12,908
Bloc Québécois	\$342,998	2,149	\$321,806	1,841	\$356,397	2,229	\$1,021,201	6,219
People's Party	\$240,026	3,024	\$140,057	1,850	\$202,106	2,278	\$582,189	7,152

Source: Elections Canada

Third-quarter fundraising comparison, 2015-present

	2015*	2016	2017	2018	2019*	2020	2021*	2022	2023	2024
Conservative Party	\$10,082,104	\$3,131,308	\$3,644,008	\$4,855,184	\$10,143,752	\$5,659,092	\$9,843,840	\$3,925,351	\$7,063,991	\$8,449,288
Liberal Party	\$7,282,890	\$3,223,065	\$3,130,845	\$3,761,601	\$7,276,261	\$3,109,362	\$7,648,139	\$3,196,181	\$3,009,524	\$3,321,634
New Democratic Party	\$9,141,936	\$972,607	\$1,090,260	\$861,890	\$2,646,792	\$1,333,169	\$3,994,678	\$1,174,832	\$1,576,054	\$1,271,463
Green Party	\$2,050,843	\$514,728	\$443,828	\$555,387	\$2,596,173	\$813,247	\$1,326,696	\$347,733	\$343,812	\$379,850
Bloc Québécois	\$446,451	\$99,733	\$76,445	\$24,847	\$502,330	\$299,508	\$1,228,726	\$108,668	\$248,293	\$356,397
People's Party	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$270,939	\$272,748	\$202,106

*Election year

Source: Elections Canada

Continued on page 31

Continued from page 30

advertising in 2023, while the NDP spent only about \$42,000.

While data on this year's ad spending is limited, according to Meta's Ad Library, the Conservative Party of Canada and Poilievre's official pages spent a combined total of \$352,766 in the final month of the third quarter.

In comparison, the combined totals for the Liberals' and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's (Papineau, Que.) pages spent \$30,327, while the NDP and Leader Jagmeet Singh's (Burnaby South, B.C.) pages spent a combined \$15,618.

On Sept. 29—the day the Conservatives launched their latest “Mountain” ad—they spent \$44,318, more than they spent over the first seven days in September. In comparison, the Liberals spent \$3,086, while the NDP spent \$1,240.

In the month of October, the Conservatives spent a combined \$344,942 on the two pages, compared to the Liberals' combined \$14,496, and the NDP's \$120.

Speaking with *The Hill Times* before the release of the Liberals' first digital ad on Oct. 31, Hogan said he would pay close attention to not only how much the Liberals are willing to spend on it, but also the “tenor and tone” of the messaging.

“If the message in those Liberal ads is, ‘our government has accomplished so much,’ no one's ready to hear that message,” Hogan said. “So you can spend all you want, but it's still not going to be effective.”

The following day, Oct. 31, the Liberals released their first of two digital ads, highlighting their accomplishments toward “strengthening [Canada's] health-care system.” The ad—featuring mostly still images and voiceover—highlights the federal government's response to COVID-19, the federal dental care and pharmacare programs, and accuses Poilievre of wanting to cut those programs.

According to Meta's Ad Library, the Liberals spent a combined \$1,647 on the same day that the ad was released, compared to the combined \$9,448 for the Conservatives' two pages.

On Nov. 1, the Liberals released their second ad, once again highlighting the party's governing record but without mentioning Poilievre. The Liberal and Trudeau pages spent a combined \$2,303 that day, compared with the combined \$5,637 for the Conservative and Poilievre pages.

A longtime and vocal advocate for the Liberals to start producing ads, former Grit ministerial staffer Greg MacEachern declined to comment on the content of the ad now that it has arrived, but said he hopes it



Liberal strategist Greg MacEachern says he hopes the new ads will address some of caucus' concerns, but the delay has needlessly raised expectations. *Photograph courtesy of Greg MacEachern*



The Liberal Party released the first of a pair of digital ads on Oct. 31, accusing Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre of planning to cut health-related programs. *Screenshot courtesy of X*

begins to address the caucus' long-standing concerns.

However, MacEachern, now a principal at KAN Strategies, did say that, in his experience, the ad would have been far more effective had the extended wait not raised expectations.

Additionally, he said he hopes there will be more ads forthcoming, as even the most effective, well-funded ad can still fail to make a difference.

“Just look at the amount of money that gets spent on Super Bowl ads every year, and not all of those land,” MacEachern said, adding that he does hope some significant amount is being spent either way rather than “just hoping it goes viral online.”

In response to questions from *The Hill Times*, Parker Lund, the Liberal Party's director of communications, confirmed that the new ads would be running on digital platforms and noted the delay in updates to Meta's ad library data.

While the Liberals may be slowly starting to increase spending on ads, one group has taken up the mantle, promising to go “dollar for dollar” with the Conservatives.

According to an Oct. 24 report by the *Toronto Star*, an anonymously funded organization called Protecting Canada—which has ties to the NDP, Liberals, and major unions—is promising to spend “as much as it takes” to match the Conservative “media machine.”

Since the beginning of September, the group has spent more than \$187,000 on Meta ads, and from Oct. 14-20, it spent \$99,659—more than the Conservatives' combined page total of \$76,290.

While Hogan said the ads he has seen from the group were well produced, he believes its campaign will have the same difficulties as the Liberals, pointing to one ad which features an older video of Poilievre cursing at his fellow committee members.

Hogan said that, for a significant swathe of voters, a video of Poilievre saying “F-you” to a group of Liberal committee members won't have the intended effect.

“A lot of people would think that's cool,” Hogan said. “You can't make a tut-tut argument these days where your argument is, ‘can you believe this guy's style?’ because it's going to land poorly ... That's part of the reason why people like them.”

Additionally, despite not knowing where the group is getting its money,

Hogan said they may have bitten off more than they can chew.

“They're going to have to report back to whoever's funding this and tell them it's actually made an impact,” Hogan said. “If they can't do that, they're going to have someone breathing down your neck be-

cause, wherever that money is coming from, I don't think it's an endless well.”

“Even the most strident partisan is gonna say that's a lot of money for what may be a lost cause, even if they're really keen to fight it.”

sbenson@hilltimes.com
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News

Housing advocates wary of funding plan after praising Poilievre's GST pledge

Scrapping Liberal funding for housing projects to pay for a tax cut on some new homes 'doesn't make a lot of sense,' says Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness head.

Continued from page 1

plan to pay for it is making them nervous that a potential Tory government won't be willing to use all the tools at its disposal to build the affordable housing Canadians desperately need.

On Oct. 28, Poilievre (Carleton, Ont.) promised that should his party form government, he would eliminate the GST on newly built homes sold for less than \$1-million, which he said would save homebuyers \$40,000—or \$2,200 in annual mortgage payments—on an \$80,000 home. Currently, Canadian homebuyers receive a rebate of 36 per cent on newly constructed homes purchased for less than \$350,000, for a maximum of \$6,300.

"The GST was not meant to apply to the basic necessities of food and housing," Poilievre told reporters last week in Ottawa, adding that he expects the proposal would spur the construction of an additional 30,000 extra homes.

Poilievre sent a letter to Canada's premiers on Nov. 3, calling on them to match his promise by cutting the provincial sales taxes on newly built homes.

"[I]f you match my announcement with a provincial sales tax cut of your own on new homes, you will save your residents tens of thousands of dollars," Poilievre wrote in the letter.

Following his announcement last week, homebuilders' associations and housing advocates praised the proposal, which Poilievre and other Conservative MPs quoted during Question Period later in the week.

"The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness says that my Conservative plan to scrap the GST on the purchase of housing is, and I quote, 'smart,'" Poilievre said in the House on Oct. 30, citing other organizations like the West End Home Builders' Association who called it "the most significant housing policy commitment made in the past two decades."



Housing Minister Sean Fraser, left, and Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre have been butting heads in Question Period over housing policy. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

Poilievre's fellow Conservatives also cited Mike Moffat, a housing expert who has regularly been consulted by the governing Liberals on their own housing strategy.

Writing for *The Hub*, Moffat called Poilievre's proposal "the boldest middle-class housing proposal released to date from any federal political party," and predicted it would save Canadian homebuyers \$4-billion each year.

However, in the same piece, Moffat said Poilievre's proposal isn't flawless, pointing to the Conservative leader's plan to cover the estimated \$4.5-billion cost of the rebate.

Poilievre said he would eliminate the Liberals' Housing Accelerator Fund and the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund. The accelerator fund, introduced in the 2022 federal budget, allocated \$4-billion until 2026-27 to encourage home building in cities. The fund was further topped up last April with an additional \$400-million.

Moffat wrote that cancelling those programs would be a mistake, though he added that Conservative criticisms of them aren't without merit, noting instances where cities like Ottawa have disregarded the programs' requirements.

Similarly, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness' (CAEH) praise of the proposal was also selectively quoted. Despite calling the measure a "smart" way to encourage new builds, it also said the proposal "shouldn't come at the expense of critical programs that help build the deeply affordable housing we need."



Tim Richter, president and CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, says existing funding programs aren't perfect, but they have done a 'fairly good job' of reducing costs and barriers to new housing construction. *Photograph courtesy of Tim Richter*

In an interview with *The Hill Times*, Tim Richter, CAEH's president and CEO, said that while he still believes the overall proposal "makes a lot of sense," he remains "nervous" about how Poilievre would pay for it.

"When housing is such an issue for Canadians, it doesn't make a lot of sense to eliminate any housing programs that can produce results," Richter said. "One of the critical issues right now in the housing system is the cost that the municipalities are piling on to the production of new housing, and we need to reduce that in any way we can."

Richter said that from his perspective, the Housing Accelerator has done a "fairly good job" of helping to reduce those costs and

remove barriers to new housing in those municipalities, though he granted the program wasn't "perfect by any stretch."

Richter also said he is curious how Poilievre would stop municipalities from doing what some did after the Liberals removed GST on newly constructed rental apartments.

"When the federal government cut the GST for that, you saw some municipalities increase development charges by almost the exact amount," Richter explained. "So I'm curious how Poilievre would keep the municipal government from eating up that newly freed tax base."

Theoretically, the GST cut could ultimately reduce homelessness by increasing homeownership, thus reducing the demand on the rental market, which would in turn do the same for units for those in the most precarious housing need, but Richter said it couldn't do so by itself.

"The GST alone isn't going to resolve chronic homelessness," Richter said. "So, I'm quite eager to see what else a Poilievre government would do on deeply affordable, supportive housing, and homelessness overall."

Despite Poilievre's criticism and promise to cut the program, Housing Minister Sean Fraser (Central Nova, N.S.) revealed during Question Period on Oct. 29 that Conservative MPs have been "going behind [Poilievre's] back" to write Fraser letters to advocate for their communities to receive funding through the housing accelerator fund "because they believe it will get more homes built."

According to the *Canadian Press*, which reviewed the letters sent between September 2023 and February 2024, Conservative MPs Dan Albas (Central Okanagan-Similkameen-Nicola, B.C.), Michael Cooper (St. Albert-Edmonton, Alta.), Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, Ont.), Lianne Rood (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Ont.), and Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, N.B.) had all written to Fraser requesting their communities' applications to the fund be approved. *The Toronto Star* reported on Nov. 4 that a fifth Tory MP, Frank Caputo (Kamloops-Thompson-Cariboo, B.C.), had also written to Fraser expressing disappointment that a city in his riding hadn't received funding from the program.

While he slammed Poilievre's plan to pay for the GST cut, Fraser remained neutral on the proposal itself in response to questions from *The Hill Times*.

"We welcome any ideas that will potentially help build more homes, and tax measures are an important piece of that," Fraser wrote, pointing to the Liberals' previous cut to the GST on new apartment construction.

"[We] continue to explore measures that can help get more homes built faster and drive down the cost of housing," Fraser's statement continues. "Poilievre says his proposal would help create 30,000 new homes a year, but he proposes to do this by cutting funding that is expected to help unlock 750,000 new homes over the next 10 years."

Housing target unchanged despite reduced immigration targets, say ministers

While Poilievre's GST proposal garnered much of the political focus last week for its potential to increase supply, the Liberals' announced reduction in new permanent residents could also have a significant effect on Canada's housing demand.

During the announcement on Oct. 24, Immigration Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.) said the reduction in new residents in 2025—down from 485,000 people to 395,000, with further reductions to 365,000 by 2027—will mean Canada would not have to build an additional 670,000 housing units in that time.

While some had taken that to mean a reduction in the Liberals' goal of building 3.87 million new homes by 2031, Miller later clarified the comment was illustrative of the impact the immigration reduction will have rather than reflective of a change in the government's housing targets.

Speaking with reporters prior to the Liberals' caucus meeting on Oct. 30, Fraser confirmed the government would not be adjusting its housing targets.

"We need to build as quickly as we can, and we need to do everything that we can to get there," Fraser said. "We're going full board with everything we got."

sbenson@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Defence Minister Bill Blair. In addition to withdrawing from NATO, Canada should negotiate a bilateral North American defence agreement with the U.S., writes Roger Cyr. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada is a butter—not a gun—nation

Instead of being a NATO member, Canada should join the Partnership for Peace program.

Roger
Cyr

Opinion



The “Guns or Butter” model is a simple economics concept that describes the trade-off governments face in spending on national defence or on domestic programs. The model is meant to highlight the spending constraints faced by governments—they must choose between the two.

Canada has chosen the butter route. The federal budget for 2024—all 430 pages of it—makes it clear it is all about social domestic programs, and certainly not guns. For the defence budget, a sum of \$8.1-billion has been earmarked for new equipment and infrastructure. But this sum is to be shared by National Defence, the Communications Se-

curity Establishment, and Global Affairs Canada.

Yet, the intent is for the Navy to spend at least \$80-billion for 15 new frigates, and \$20-billion for new submarines. That is only the major ship construction planned over the next 30 years. These amounts are in today’s dollars. Given inflation and cost increases, the end amount will likely be more than \$200-billion. At \$8-billion per year, it would take 30 years to pay for these. There will also be major costs to replace the aging Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels. Now, which federal social program or service will need to be abandoned or reduced to pay for this?

While the frigates and submarines are the major cost for naval ship requirements, there are also major capital costs for the Army and the Air Force. The NATO condition is for member nations to spend two per cent of their GDP on defence. Canada is now at about 1.4 per cent of GDP for defence, and even with the planned ship construction for the Navy, the two per cent goal will not be achieved by 2024. This begs the questions: why is Canada a member of NATO since it cannot meet its obligations, and why does Canada need to be a member?

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an alliance of 32 nations, 30 European nations, and

the United States and Canada established in the aftermath of the Second World War. NATO is a collective security system: its independent member states agree to defend each other against attacks by third parties. During the Cold War, NATO operated as a check on the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact. The alliance has remained in place since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, even though the threat to European members has dissipated.

Nonetheless, NATO has remained a peace maker. The NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) was a NATO-led multinational peace enforcement group in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a one-year mandate that began on Dec. 20, 1995. NATO was responsible to the United Nations for carrying out the Dayton Peace Accords. The accords had three major goals: ending of hostilities, authorization of a military and civilian program going into effect, and the establishment of a central Bosnian government. Several NATO member states contributed to the Force, including Canada. Non-NATO nations also contributed military personnel, including Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia,

Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Russia, and Ukraine.

Once the IFOR mandate expired, it was replaced by the Stabilisation Force, with basically the same nation participants, and with a similar mandate. It was followed by the Kosovo Force—since Kosovo was facing a grave humanitarian crisis—and again, both NATO and non-NATO nations participated. In 2002, as a measure to promote peace, NATO created the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program for non-NATO nations. The program provides PfP members an opportunity to be granted further assistance from NATO without having to commit to becoming full members of NATO. The program has additionally started an initiative for military education.

The program is aimed at creating trust and co-operation between its member states and non-aligned nations; 18 states are now members. It contains six areas of teamwork, which aim to build relationships with partners through military-to-military co-operation on training, exercises, disaster planning and response, science and environmental issues, professionalization, policy planning, and relations with civilian governments.

Since NATO was created to protect European nations from an invasion of the Warsaw Pact—which has now been dissolved—and since Canada does not meet the alliance’s defence requirements, Canada should simply resign as a member of NATO. Instead, Canada should join the NATO PfP program and be available to assist any nation facing threats or invasions. Canada should negotiate a bilateral North American defence agreement with the U.S. for the protection and defence of the territory. This agreement should include maritime defence, and a commitment to the maintenance of a substantial naval force.

Most of the former pact nations are now either NATO members, PfP members, or are in the queue to join NATO. The NATO alliance has now become pointless to Canada given the phasing out of the Warsaw Pact. As for this country’s territory, our main defence agency is NORAD, and not NATO. The North American Aerospace Defence Command is a combined organization of the U.S. and Canada that provides aerospace warning, air sovereignty, and protection for Canada and the continental U.S. Maybe there is a need to create a similar combined organization with the Americans that would provide sea warning, sea sovereignty, and protection for both us and the U.S., or a bilateral defence agreement.

Canadians will always stand for peace and harmony in the world, and will readily contribute to any such endeavour.

Roger Cyr is a retired engineering commander with the Royal Canadian Navy, and a retired civilian NATO liaison officer.

The Hill Times

Opinion



Canadian lawmakers of all stripes must acknowledge that an overwhelming majority of the public believes the free ride for Big Tech must end, writes Damian Collins. *Unsplash image by Igor Omilaeu*

pass the Kids Online Safety Act. In the U.K., the bill was passed by a Conservative majority government with bipartisan support from then-opposition Labour. Our fellow citizens want action.

Second, Canadian parliamentarians should pass a slimmed-down version of the current bill, jettisoning controversial changes to the Criminal Code and Canadian Human Rights Act. The focus should remain on holding Big Tech accountable—not on sending Canadians to prison.

The duties to act responsibly and to protect children at the core of the legislation are an achievable first step in restoring civility online. It would require social media companies to mitigate harmful content, and protect Canadians' freedom of expression. Companies would be required to provide user-friendly guidelines, offer tools for blocking and flagging unlawful material, and label amplified harmful content. The companies would publicly share a digital safety plan, detailing their compliance efforts, risk assessments, and content moderation strategies.

Third, with an election looming, Parliament must swiftly act to pass the law so the Digital Safety Commission can begin to take shape. The new regulator will need to hire many staff for the massive task of ensuring social media platforms fulfil their responsibilities and protect children online. In the U.K., Ofcom ramped up from 100 people to more than 400 employees to handle online safety. In contrast, Canada has a mere dozen.

Without laws requiring Big Tech to act responsibly and protect children, platforms like Musk's X can continue to operate with impunity, allowing extremist agitators to use social media to tear us apart. Canadian lawmakers must pass the Online Harms Act. Failure to do so would cost years of progress, leaving Canada behind. That would only benefit Big Tech.

Damian Collins, OBE, was a U.K. Conservative Party MP from 2010 to 2024. In 2021, he chaired the U.K. Parliament Joint Committee on the Draft Online Safety Bill, and was subsequently the minister responsible for the bill.

The Hill Times

In the age of dangerous disinformation, it's time to get serious about online harms

How can a multicultural society function when hateful lies are allowed to spread like wildfire on the very platforms on which we rely for information?

Damian Collins



Opinion

This summer, riots swept across the United Kingdom following the horrific murder of three children at a Taylor Swift dance class. Disinformation about the attacker's nationality, religion, and immigration status rapidly spread on platforms such as X and Telegram. For days, riots in England and Northern Ireland resulted in violent clashes with police, injuries, property damage, theft, and 1,200 arrests. U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised that rioters "will feel the full force of the law." When online hate turns into real world violence, Big Tech must be held accountable, too.

Far-right leaders like Tommy Robinson—no stranger to Canada—incited much of the violence himself. And he was aided by

powerful friends. On X, Elon Musk mused that mass migration and open borders were to blame, and recklessly telegraphed the inevitability of civil war.

Canada is not immune to this type of extremism. Just a month prior to the riots, Robinson's three-date Canadian tour was thwarted when federal authorities arrested him for immigration violations. Robinson—who helped create the anti-Islam English Defence League—was in the country to stoke Canadians' fears and attempt to undermine the Canadian consensus on immigration.

In both the U.K. and Canada, we benefit in countless ways from open, multicultural societies. But how can a multicultural society function when hateful lies are

allowed to spread like wildfire on the very platforms on which we rely for information? When will we stop allowing these platforms to monetize hatred?

Last November, the U.K. Parliament passed the Online Safety Act. The law gives the Office of Communications (Ofcom)—the U.K. regulator—the power to fine social media platforms up to \$32-million or 10 per cent of their global revenue if they fail to take action on unlawful material such as violent extremist content. While the regulator continues to plan for the law's full implementation by 2025, Canadian parliamentarians can draw several lessons as they debate the Online Harms Act this autumn.

First, Canadian lawmakers of all stripes must acknowledge that an overwhelming majority of the public believes the free ride for Big Tech must end. In a Leger poll earlier this year, 70 per cent of Canadians said they support greater regulation of social media. But Canada risks falling behind other nations. The European Union is now enforcing the Digital Services Act. Australia has the Online Safety Act. Even in the United States, Republicans and Democrats in the Senate recently came together to



Innovation Minister François-Philippe Champagne. Politicians should quickly pass a slimmed-down version of the Online Harms Act, writes Damian Collins. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*



Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu said in February the federal government is reviewing procurement policies to determine who can claim to be Indigenous when bidding for federal contracts. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

'We can't waste any more time': feds' procurement plan failing at economic reconciliation, say Indigenous leaders and MPs

NDP MP Lori Idlout says that Indigenous Peoples are 'being robbed of their opportunities' due to federal procurement issues.

BY IREM KOCA

Indigenous leaders and opposition MPs say the federal government's procurement strategy is failing to provide meaningful economic development for Indigenous communities, with their businesses securing only a fraction of federal contracts.

"We're not seeing any economic development in Indigenous communities when non-Indigenous people benefit from the program," Shannin Metatawabin, chief executive officer of the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, told *The Hill Times* in an Oct. 29 interview.

Metatawabin said "if managed right," the federal government's controversial Procurement Strategy for Indigenous Business (PSIB) has "great potential" to provide Indigenous Peoples with opportunities for economic reconciliation, but it should be an Indigenous-led process.

He said procurement is an important step toward economic reconciliation, and suggested collaboration between Ottawa and the First Nations Procurement Organization (FNPO) he helped create would speed up progress.

"We cannot waste any more time," he said.

Last December, five national Indigenous economic groups established the FNPO with the aim of helping businesses overcome systemic barriers in accessing federal procurement opportunities, and tracking whether the government meets its minimum five per cent Indigenous procurement target. The group includes AFOA Canada, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, First Nations Finance Authority, First Nations Financial Management Board, and the National

Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, with support from the Assembly of First Nations.

'We can't believe the government's numbers,' says Metatawabin

The federal government reported awarding \$1.63-billion to Indigenous businesses, representing 6.26 per cent of federal contract spending between 2022 and 2023.

Metatawabin said he does not believe this data, and expects it is closer to one per cent.

"It's been one per cent for more than 30 years. It's hard to believe that it's all of a sudden 6.5 per cent just overnight," he said. "If we're not part of developing the metrics of measurement along with the federal government, and if we're not part of certifying the Indigenous businesses for indigeneity and business structure, then we can't believe the government's numbers."

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

The government's Indigenous Business Directory (IBD)—listing 2,960 verified companies eligible for federal procurement in sectors from construction and technology to gourmet food—has faced increased scrutiny in recent months after Indigenous communities complained non-Indigenous business were profiting from the system. To be listed on the IBD, a business must be at least 51 per cent owned and controlled by Indigenous Peoples.

"There's always been a lingering concern" about the IBD within Indigenous communities, according to Metatawabin, "because we've all heard through the grapevine of these big award contracts being provided to people that are questionably not Indigenous."

Recent media reports and testimonies from Indigenous community leaders pointed at loopholes that have allowed non-Indigenous firms to benefit from the PSIB through self-identifying as Indigenous, or by using so-called "rent-a-feather" schemes where an Indigenous individual fronts a non-Indigenous company to secure contracts.

"The challenge of shell companies has always persisted," said Metatawabin, not only in government procurement, but also in large corporate projects where smaller firms face inherent barriers and lack capacity, often pushing Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses to partner.

"Indigenous people always seem to be used in that way," he said.

Conservative MPs grill Hajdu at committee

Conservative MPs grilled Indigenous Services Minister Patty Hajdu (Thunder Bay-Superior

North, Ont.) during her Oct. 28 appearance at the House Indigenous and Northern Affairs Committee, challenging her for not providing clear responses to questions around the PSIB.

Conservative MP Jamie Schmale (Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Ont.) pressed Hajdu on a recently revealed case involving the Canadian Health Care Agency. The nursing company is a major government contractor which received federal funding under a program set aside for Indigenous-owned businesses, despite not being Indigenous-owned itself, as reported by the *Globe and Mail*.

"How did they continue to get additional contracts from the federal government out of the Indigenous procurement angle when they were not Indigenous majority owned?" asked Schmale.

Hajdu did not address the specific case, but said firms listed in the directory might be subject to changes.

"Those companies change in formation, so certain companies may have Indigenous partners at times and may reform, and Indigenous partners may sell their shares," said Hajdu.

In February, Hajdu announced Ottawa was reviewing who can claim to be First Nations, Métis, and Inuit when bidding for federal contracts.

In March, Public Services and Procurement Canada suspended Dalian Enterprises from participating in federal contracts and from the IBD. According to Auditor General Karen Hogan, Dalian had secured \$7.9-million for its work on the controversial ArriveCan application in a joint venture with Coradix, which is not an Indigenous business. At the time of the suspension, ISC had 13 active contracts with Dalian worth up to \$35-million, and 56 active task authorizations totaling at \$9.7-million, according to government records.

Conservative MP Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.), asked Hajdu repeatedly why and when Dalian Enterprises was removed from the IBD, but she did not provide a timeline or reasoning.

ISC did not respond to *The Hill Times'* questions about Dalian, and other suspended businesses registered on the IBD.

In a tense back-and-forth, Hajdu and Genuis challenged each other's grasp of the issues. Hajdu criticized Conservative use of the term "Indigenous set asides" as misleading.

"I don't expect anything else from Conservatives who have no idea how procurement works and no idea what procurement targets mean."

"You know so little about your file," Genuis fired back. "You have nothing but insults for other members rather than answers about your disastrous record of Indigenous procurement," he said. "You should be ashamed of the job you've done."

Hajdu responded that Genuis "should be ashamed for not understanding that Indigenous businesses have had a hard time competing for procurement with the government."

She argued improving Indigenous procurement "would be at risk

under any Conservative government" where she predicted cuts to these programs.

Genuis raised a question of privilege at the end of Hajdu's committee appearance, claiming the minister refused to answer questions, but the motion was overruled by Liberal committee chair Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, B.C.).

Ottawa 'refusing to act' on Indigenous procurement: Idlout

NDP MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut) said Hajdu's remarks at committee sounded "like she's saying good things, but not a lot of action comes with that."

"I don't think that she was unable to [respond to the questions], I think she was refusing to," Idlout added. "There's a huge difference in that."

Idlout said the federal government "absolutely" understands the depth of the issues around Indigenous procurement, but that "they're refusing to act."

Idlout said Indigenous Peoples are "being robbed of their opportunities" for economic development, and the ability to showcase their talents and support families when shell companies, non-Indigenous peoples, or corporations end up benefiting from federal government's procurement set-aside programs.

"These opportunists definitely have a huge negative impact on the real lives of Métis and First Nations and Inuit," she said.

Idlout argued that the solution lies in the federal government following through on promises to pursue "nation-to-nation relationships in Canada."

"We now know who the First Nations are. We know who the Métis and the Inuit are. Focusing on the expertise that each Indigenous nation has and using those for your positive relationships is what can make a difference," she said.

Bloc Québécois MP Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Que.) told *The Hill Times* that identifying indigeneity is a "huge problem." He emphasized that to foster economic reconciliation, the government needs to empower Indigenous people to lead their own development, and that participation in federal procurement offers a significant leverage for achieving that goal.

Metatawabin said companies are "tokenizing" Indigenous Peoples and businesses "to enter through the front door of government procurement," and argued federal mechanisms must be strengthened to prevent this.

"I think that we need to increase the consequences to deter future bad actors," Metatawabin said.

The FNPO's work can also support the federal government's Office of Supplier Integrity and Compliance, he added. OSIC recently replaced what was called the Integrity Regime in procurement to identify unethical or fraudulent suppliers and eliminate the risk of contracting with them and can go as far as to suspend the ineligible suppliers.

ikoca@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times



Laura Ryckewaert Hill Climbers

New hires on board for ministers MacAulay, MacKinnon

Plus, Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc has named a new director of issues management.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister **Lawrence MacAulay** has a new communications adviser on his team with the recent hiring of **Axandre Lemours**.



Axandre Lemours is now a communications adviser to Minister MacAulay. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Lemours started with MacAulay's office at the end of October, and was most recently working as an administration and communications assistant with the Ottawa Arts Council, a bilingual local advocacy organization.

In a recent LinkedIn post announcing his new job, Lemours wrote that "Team MacAulay is wonderful, and I'm glad to join up and continue to learn and grow as a comms administrator."

Lemours' CV includes two almost half-year-long runs as an exam administration co-ordinator with Yardstick Assessment Strategies—now Meazure Learning—and as a patron services specialist with the National Arts Centre. He's previously worked for the federal Liberal Party, including as a national events administrator, and is an ex-box office assistant with the Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa. Lemours has also logged hours working the box office for the Toronto International Film Festival, and is a past box office manager for the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, and a former film critic for *SHIFTER Magazine*.

In 2020, the Ottawa native got a short profile in *The Ottawa Citizen* as part of a list of "The top Black Ottawa artists and creators you should know," which notes that Lemours has also taken the stage as an actor with companies including Orpheus Musical Theatre, ASNY Productions, and Theatre Kraken.

Now in MacAulay's office, Lemours is working under director of communications **Annie Cullinan**.

Headed in the other direction is special assistant **Andrew Yang**, who left the agriculture minister's team in September.

Yang was first hired to work for MacAulay roughly one year ago, and before then



Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay, left, and Labour and Seniors Minister Steven MacKinnon have each added a new staffer to their respective offices, and likewise each saw a staffer depart. *The Hill Times photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade*

had been a trade compliance analyst with the G7 Research Group.

Matthew Mann is chief of staff to MacAulay, whose office otherwise currently includes: director of policy **Hilary Peirce**, policy advisers **Arianna Myers** and **Jeremy Keats**, director of parliamentary affairs **Bradley Henstock**, director of operations **Maria Morley**, senior special assistant for the Atlantic **Michael Ferguson**, special assistant for issues management and parliamentary affairs **George Williams**, executive assistant to the minister and chief of staff **Annabel Da Silva**, and driver **Nick Mamo**.

Turning to Labour and Seniors Minister **Steven MacKinnon's** office, there's a new digital communications adviser on board: **Michael Danzer**.



Michael Danzer is now a digital communications adviser to Minister MacKinnon. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Danzer was most recently working as an assistant to Quebec Liberal MP **Anthony Housefather**, and officially joined the minister's team on Oct. 14. He's previously also worked at Quebec's national assembly as an assistant to Liberal MNA **Sona Lakhoyan Olivier**, and has worked for the municipal party Ensemble Montréal. Danzer holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Concordia University.

On the flip side, senior communications adviser **Hartley Witten** recently bade farewell to MacKinnon's team to return to



Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau's** office. Prior to the mini-cabinet shuffle this past July that saw MacKinnon take over the dual portfolio after former minister **Seamus O'Regan** announced his decision to step down from cabinet and not seek re-election in the next federal race, Witten had been press secretary and senior communications adviser to O'Regan as labour and seniors minister.



Hartley Witten recently left Minister MacKinnon's office to return to the PMO. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

As of Oct. 19, Witten is now a senior special assistant for communications in the PMO where he previously worked for most of 2022 as executive assistant to then-PMO communications director **Cameron Ahmad**.

There are further changes to the PMO team to report, so stayed tuned to **Hill Climbers** for a proper update on the top office soon.

Prior to joining the PMO, Witten logged experience working as a consultant with Blackbird Strategies, and as an assistant to New Brunswick Liberal MP **Wayne Long**, and British Columbia Liberal MP **Joyce Murray**, amongst other past jobs.

Philippe-Alexandre Langlois is director of communications to MacKinnon, and currently also oversees senior communications adviser and press secretary **Mathieu Perrotin**.

Paul Moen is chief of staff to the labour and seniors minister.

LeBlanc promotes new director



Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** has promoted a new director from within his team. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister **Dominic LeBlanc** has named a new director of issues management in his office following **Caroline Williams'** exit last month.



Caroline Williams has left Minister LeBlanc's office. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

Williams had been working for LeBlanc for the last year, having joined his office shortly after the July 2023 cabinet shuffle. Before then, she'd worked for Minister **Bill Blair** through a number of portfolios, starting in 2021 as an issues and parliamentary affairs adviser to Blair as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister, and ending as director of parliamentary affairs to Blair as then-emergency preparedness minister and Privy Council president. On the Hill, Williams has also previously worked as special assistant for parliamentary affairs to then-economic development and official languages minister **Mélanie Joly**, and as an assistant to Ontario Liberal MP **Ruby Sahota**.

Following her departure, **Mary-Liz Power**—who was most recently LeBlanc's deputy director of policy for public safety—has been promoted to director of issues management and senior policy adviser.

Prior to joining LeBlanc's team as deputy director one year ago, Power was a senior policy adviser to Joly as foreign affairs minister.

An ex-Ontario Liberal staffer, Power has been working on the Hill since the start of 2020, beginning as press secretary to Blair as then-public safety and emergency preparedness minister. From May 2021 until early 2023, Power worked in the PMO, first as an issues adviser and later as an issues management and parliamentary affairs adviser.

Maja Kostic continues as director of policy for public safety, while **Rebecca Parkinson** is director of policy for intergovernmental affairs, and senior adviser **Rob Jamieson** leads policy related to the democratic institutions file.

Working under Williams is issues manager **Danielle Racanelli**.

Cory Pike is chief of staff to LeBlanc for public safety, while **Brandan Rowe** is chief of staff for the minister's other two portfolios.

lryckewaert@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times

Slovakia throws national day party

The Hill Times photographs Sam Garcia



Slovak Ambassador Viera Grigova delivers remarks at her country's national day reception at the Slovak Embassy on Oct. 3.



Folk band Zemplin from Michalovce, Slovakia, performs for the guests.



Stanislav Griga, husband to the Slovak ambassador, left; Grigova; and then-Ghanaian high commissioner Anselm Ransford Adzete Sowah.



Thai Ambassador Kallayana Vipattipumiprathes, left, Kosovar Ambassador Adriatik Kryeziu, and his wife Nezaqete Fazliu Kryeziu.



Dagmar Timurova, deputy chief of mission at the Slovak Embassy, left; Griga; Grigova; and Pavlina Stavaraska, wife of the Slovak defense attaché.

Saint Kitts and Nevis mark independence anniversary



Saint Kitts and Nevis High Commissioner Samuel Berridge delivers remarks at his country's independence day party at the Lord Elgin Hotel on Sept. 30.



Berridge, left, and International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen.



Berridge, left, his wife Farryn Tamica Prosper-Berridge, and Darlene McLean, executive director of the Christian Embassy.



Taiwanese Representative Harry Tseng, left, and Berridge.



Jamaican High Commissioner Marsha Coore Lobban, left, Barbadian High Commissioner Gline Clarke, Berridge, Hussen, and Bahamian High Commissioner V. Alfred Gray.



Stuart Benson
Party Central



Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, left, his new and departing deputy heads of mission Kouhei Maruyama and Tokuro Furuya, respectively, and International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen at the residence in Rockcliffe Park on Oct. 31. *The Hill Times* photograph by Stuart Benson

A Halloween farewell to Furuya, and konnichiwa to Kouhei

Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi hosted a ‘Hello, Goodbye’ party to toast the departure of deputy head of mission Tokuro Furuya, and the arrival of successor Kouhei Maruyama at his official residence on Oct. 31.

Politicos, politicians, and diplomats said *sayonara* to **Tokuro Furuya**, Japan’s deputy head of mission, and *konnichiwa* to his replacement, **Kouhei Maruyama**, at the Ambassador’s residence on Oct. 31. And while parting may be sweet sorrow, it’s always best to say *Hello, Goodbye* with a song.

After leaving a bowl of mini chocolates at home that was presumably empty within 20 minutes, **Party Central** hired a coach to a distinctly un-haunted mansion in the hills of Rockcliffe Park this Halloween to say farewell to Furuya, who, by publication, is off to sunny Australia and a promotion as consul general in Melbourne.

Arriving just before 6:30 p.m., **Party Central** and the rest of the guests walked up Japanese Ambassador **Kanji Yamanouchi**’s manicured front lawn and into the home’s large front foyer where the night’s host was greeting those who had already arrived, alongside Furuya and Maruyama.

Already mingling beyond the greeting line, the front room was nearing capacity, with many notable guests from the diplomatic, public service, and parliamentary circles enjoying complimentary refreshments.

Party Central spotted International Development Minister **Ahmed Hussen**; Liberal MP **Vance Badawey**; Conservative MPs **Clifford Small**, **Laila Goodridge**, and **Greg McLean**; Senators **Rob Black**, **Stan Kutcher**, **Salma Ataullahjan**, **Yonah Martin**, **Tony Loffreda**, and **Yuen Pau Woo**, who was sporting a festive pumpkin hat; former senator **Victor Oh**; **Weldon Epp**, Global Affairs’ assistant deputy minister for the Indo-Pacific; Sinopsis’ **Charles Burton**; the PMO’s **Ben Chin** and **Oz Jungic**; Reuters’ **David Ljunggren**; and **Margaret Dick-**

enson, award-winning cookbook author. There were also deputy heads of mission from Azerbaijan, Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia, Chile, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, South Korea, Italy, India, Romania, Mexico, Myanmar, Belgium, Australia, the United Kingdom, China, and Brunei Darussalam.

Once all of the guests had arrived, their attention was drawn to the small stage and podium in the middle of the room for short speeches by Yamanouchi, Furuya, Maruyama, Hussen, Epp, Jungic, and, later in the evening, Kutcher, who had been delayed in traffic.

Yamanouchi—famous in the Ottawa bubble for his love of the arts and music—began his speech by comparing the assembled works of **William Shakespeare**’s 137 plays and **The Beatles**’ catalogue of more than 200 songs.

While both cover the gambit of life’s happy and bitter moments, for the purposes of his analogy, the most relevant is simply: “hello and goodbye.”

“I’m so sad to say goodbye to Tokuro-san, but at the same time, happy to say hello to Kouhei-san,” Yamanouchi said.

While Furuya has only served as Yamanouchi’s deputy head of mission since September 2021, the pair’s working relationship and friendship extends back two decades to when they were staffers in Japan’s diplomatic press division.

In that time, Yamanouchi said Furuya has always been there to offer his support and an infectious smile that many in Ottawa have now come to love.

However, during his time as Yamanouchi’s fifth-most important ambassadorial asset—after his wife, chef, chauffeur, and accountant, in that order—he said Furuya had never been a “yes man.”

“Whenever it was necessary, he would say ‘no, ambassador’ in a very nice way,” Yamanouchi joked.

And while Furuya is leaving behind some big shoes to fill, his replacement, Kouhei, apparently has some big feet.

Having previously served as Japan’s consul general in Victoria, B.C., and an earlier stint in Washington, D.C., Kouhei is also the former Korean-language translator for the Japanese prime minister, which are all—but specifically the latter—jobs where even small mistakes aren’t something of which you can make a habit.

Following the speeches and a salutary shot of sake, Yamanouchi invited guests into the dining room and his backyard terrace for more sake and a Japanese buffet with seemingly endless platters of tuna, salmon, and scallop nigiri, giant tempura prawns, and bite-sized cuts of seared wagyu, courtesy of Yamanouchi’s second-most important asset, the ambassador’s personal chef **Yasuhiro Shima**.

Once the guests had eaten their fill, they were invited back into the house to gather around the piano for a sing-along rendition of another **John Lennon** standard, *Imagine*, before they were ushered out of the residence with an ingenious farewell receiving line.

sbenson@hilltimes.com
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Japanese Ambassador Kanji Yamanouchi, left, Kouhei Maruyama, and International Development Minister Ahmed Hussen.



Maruyama, left, and Liberal MP Vance Badawey.



Yamanouchi, left, ISG Senator Yuen Pau Woo in a festive pumpkin hat, and Tokuro Furuya.



Badawey, left, and CSG Senator Rob Black.



Conservative MPs Clifford Small, left, and Laila Goodridge.



British chargé d'affaires David Proddger, left, and Conservative MP Greg McLean.



Yamanouchi lists the top five most important ambassadorial assets: a good spouse, chef, chauffeur, accountant, and a reliable deputy.



Furuya, Japan’s departing deputy head of mission, attempts to quantify how much he loves the people he has met during his time in Canada without knocking over the nearby flag.



Reuters’ David Ljunggren, left; Manraj Khurana, staffer to Minister Hussen; and Rick Tachuk, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada.



PMO senior adviser Oz Jungic, left, Furuya, and John Matheson, president of JAJM Enterprises.

The Hill Times photographs by Stuart Benson



Matheson, left, Jungic, Oh, Maruyama, Furuya, Yamanouchi, and PMO senior adviser Ben Chin.

Former defence chief Natynczyk to be honoured at Vimy Gala on Nov. 6



Former chief of defence staff Walter Natynczyk will receive this year's Vimy Award at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute's annual Vimy Gala at the Canadian War Museum on Nov. 6. *The Hill Times* photograph by Jake Wright

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6

House Sitting—The House sits Nov. 4–Nov. 9, and breaks on Nov. 11 for Remembrance Day week until Nov. 15. It resumes again on Nov. 18, and is scheduled to sit from Nov. 18 to Dec. 17.

Bank of Canada Senior Deputy Governor to Deliver Remarks—Carolyn Rogers, the Bank of Canada's senior deputy governor, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Economic Club of Canada. Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel. Details: economicclub.ca.

CSIS Senior Official to Deliver Remarks—Nicole Giles, senior assistant deputy minister at CSIS, will discuss "Our Eyes Only: A Whole of Canada Approach to National Security Resiliency," an off-the-record event hosted by the C.D. Howe Institute. Wednesday, Nov. 6, at 12 p.m. ET at 67 Yonge St., Suite 300, Toronto. Details: cdhowe.org.

World Sikh Organization Canada Reception—The World Sikh Organization of Canada hosts its annual Parliamentary Reception to commemorate its achievements over the past 40 years. Featuring a keynote address by Emmy Award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker Angad Singh. Wednesday, Nov. 6, from 5–8 p.m. ET at 228 Valour Building, 151 Sparks St. RSVP: mukhbirsingh@worldsikh.org.

Vimy Gala—The Conference of Defence Associations Institute hosts the 32nd annual Vimy Gala, the most exclusive defence and security recognition gala of its kind. Former chief of defence staff Walter Natynczyk will receive this year's Vimy Award. Wednesday, Nov. 6 at 6 p.m. ET at the Canadian War Museum. Details: cdainstitute.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 7

'Salute to Service and Security'—The Canadian Club of Ottawa hosts a special lunch event in honour of Remembrance Day. Lt.-Gen. Michael Wright, commander of the Canadian Army, will deliver remarks on "Salute

to Service and Security: Honouring Our Veterans." Thursday, Nov. 7 at 11:30 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Château Laurier, 1 Rideau St. Details: canadianclubottawa.ca.

Kimberly Murray to Deliver Remarks—Kimberly Murray, independent special interlocutor for missing children and unmarked graves and burial sites, will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, Nov. 7, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York, 100 Front St. W. Details: canadianclub.org.

Webinar: 'Blue Skies Ahead'—Bluesky Strategies hosts a post-U.S. election webinar, "Blue Skies Ahead." With the U.S. election in the rear-view mirror, it is time to look ahead to the future state of the Canada-U.S. relationship. Featuring Laura Dawson of Future Borders Coalition, Robert J. Johnston of GEOCAP Advisors, and Evan Solomon of GZERO Media. Thursday, Nov. 7 at 12 p.m. ET happening online. RSVP: rsvp@blueskystrategiesgroup.com.

Book Launch: 'The Trudeau Record'—The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives hosts the launch of its new book, *The Trudeau Record: Promise and Performance* edited by Katherine Scott, Laura Macdonald, and Stuart Trew. Thursday, Nov. 7, at 5 p.m. at Metropolitan Brasserie, 700 Sussex Dr. Details via Eventbrite.

Lecture: 'Home Truths to Homeward Bound'—The Institute for Research on Public Policy hosts a talk on "Home Truths to Homeward Bound: Deeply Affordable Housing to Address Canada's Housing Crisis." Housing expert Carolyn Whitzman will review the federal policies that have led to the current housing crisis, and examine how new government efforts can prioritize deeply affordable housing for Canadians who need it most. Thursday, Nov. 7 at 5 p.m. at IRPP, 1470 rue Peel, #200, Montreal. Details: irpp.org.

Book Launch: A Communist for the RCMP—Library and Archives Canada hosts the launch of Dennis Gruending's new book, *A Communist for the RCMP:*

The Uncovered Story of a Social Movement Informant, the hidden story of a RCMP informant embedded within Canada's communist movements during the Cold War. Thursday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m. at Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. Details via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, NOV. 8

Jody Wilson-Raybould to Discuss Her New Book—Former Liberal justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Roshan Danesh will discuss their new book, *Reconciling History: A Story of Canada*, hosted by the Ottawa International Writers' Festival. Friday, Nov. 8, at 7 p.m. ET at Southminster Church, 15 Aylmer Ave. Details online: writersfestival.org.

An Evening with Minister Anand—Treasury Board President and Transport Minister Anita Anand will attend a dinner with Liberal MP Taleeb Noormohamed hosted by the Vancouver Granville Federal Liberal Association. Friday, Nov. 8 at 5:30 p.m. PT at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 West Georgia St. Details: liberal.ca.

SATURDAY NOV. 9

Senator Clement Hosts Democracy Dialogue—ISG Senator Bernadette Clement hosts a discussion on how we can engage in constructive dialogue to promote a healthy democracy. Saturday, Nov. 9, 1–4 p.m. ET at the Cornwall Public Library, 45 Second St. E., Cornwall, Ont. Details via Eventbrite.

Kings-Hants Liberal Fall Harvest Dinner—Liberal MP Kody Blois hosts a fundraising for his upcoming campaign featuring dinner with all the fixings made by the Port Williams Lions Club. Saturday, Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. AT at the Port Williams Community Centre, 1045 Main St., Port Williams, N.S. Details online: liberal.ca.

MONDAY, NOV. 11

Remembrance Day—Parliamentarians are in their ridings for Remem-

brance Day this week. A ceremony will take place at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

TUESDAY, NOV. 12

Stephen Harper to Receive Defender of Israel Award—Former prime minister Stephen Harper will receive the Defender of Israel Award at an event hosted by the Abraham Global Peace Initiative. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at the Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St., North York, Ont. Details: agpiworld.com.

Ambassadors' Speaker Series—Indonesia's Ambassador to Canada, Daniel Tumpal S. Simanjuntak, will deliver remarks on "Indonesia and Canada: Forging Stronger Bilateral Ties for a Shared Future," part of the Ambassadors' Speaker Series hosted by Carleton University. Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 5:30 p.m. ET at The Westin Ottawa Hotel, 11 Colonel By Dr. Details: carleton.ca.

TUESDAY, NOV. 12—WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

2024 PAAC Annual Conference—The Public Affairs Association of Canada hosts its annual conference on the theme: "40 years of PAAC: the Mosaic of Public Affairs." Panels and sessions will cover topics from government relations, communications, and polling, including an in-depth analysis of the recent American presidential election, and fighting back against the growing anti-lobbying rhetoric. Tuesday, Nov. 12, to Wednesday, Nov. 13, at George Brown College's Waterfront Campus, 51 Dockside Dr., Toronto. Details: publicaffairs.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

Minister Miller to Deliver Remarks—Immigration Minister Marc Miller will share updates on Canada's immigration plans, and how they will impact businesses and the Canadian economy at a breakfast event hosted by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 7:30 a.m. PT, at a location to be announced. Details online: boardoftrade.com.

PBO Giroux to Deliver Remarks—Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux will deliver remarks on "The State of the Economy and Government Finances," a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Association for Business Economics. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 11:30a.m. ET at the Rideau Club, 15th Floor, 99 Bank St. Details: cabe.ca.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13—THURSDAY, NOV. 14

First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum—The Assembly of First Nations hosts the National First Nations Homelessness and Mental Wellness Forum featuring plenary sessions, interactive dialogues, and workshops to promote holistic and culturally informed policy approaches. Wednesday, Nov. 13, to Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Pan Pacific Vancouver Hotel, 999 Canada Place, Vancouver. Details: afn.ca.

THURSDAY, NOV. 14

NDP Leader Singh to Deliver Remarks—NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh will deliver remarks on "Investing in workers. Growing the economy" at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Minister Gould to Attend Fund-raiser—Government House Leader Karina Gould is expected to attend a fundraising event hosted by the Burlington Federal Liberal Association. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6 p.m. ET at a private home in Toronto. Details: liberal.ca.

In Defence of Democracy 2024—The Samara Centre for Democracy hosts the "2024 In Defence of Democracy" lecture featuring award-winning investigative journalist Connie Walker in conversation with Nahlah Ayed, host of CBC Radio's *IDEAS*, discussing the

importance of storytelling in advancing reconciliation, justice and democratic renewal. Thursday, Nov. 14, at 6:30p.m. at the Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto. Details: samaracentre.ca.

FRIDAY, NOV. 15

Minister Miller to Deliver Remarks—Immigration Minister Marc Miller will deliver remarks at a lunch event hosted by the Canadian Club of Toronto. Friday, Nov. 15, at 11:45 a.m. ET at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Details: canadianclub.org.

Parliamentary Privilege in Practice—The Canadian Study of Parliament Group hosts the first in a series of three lectures this parliamentary session. Today's bilingual hybrid presentation, "Parliamentary Privilege in Practice," explores some of the least understood but most foundational elements of our parliamentary system, bringing together practitioners and academics. Friday, Nov. 15, at 10 a.m. ET in Room 425, 180 Wellington St. Details via Eventbrite.

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POLICY BRIEFING

DEFENCE

Publication date: **Wednesday, November 20** | Advertising deadline: **Thursday, November 14**

The Liberal government is projecting that Canada's defence spending to GDP ratio will reach the NATO-promised two per cent target by 2032. However, the parliamentary budget officer's Oct. 30 report says the feds will have to cough up much more money than planned to actually fulfill that commitment. Is Canada doing enough to reach NATO spending targets?

What issues do Canada's Armed Forces face in terms of combat readiness? How can these issues be addressed?

About 61 per cent of Regular Force members agreed that sexual misconduct is a problem in the Canadian Armed Forces, according to a report released by Statistics Canada on Dec. 5, 2023. What can be done to help address the issue of sexual misconduct in the military and military workplace?

What threats are posed to Canada's national security from countries such as China and Russia? How can Canada protect itself from these threats?

What are the challenges facing Indigenous Peoples in Canada's military, including issues of cultural adaptation, racial discrimination or language barriers? How can these problems be addressed?

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