**NEWS ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Feds’ electoral reform in doubt, but pollsters say a broken promise won’t sink Liberals**

After six months of work and an almost $700,000 price tag, Democratic Minister Maryam Monsef said she was ‘disappointed’ in the House Electoral Reform Committee. She later apologized. Meanwhile, the government has sent out more than 13 million postcards asking Canadians to participate in an online survey on electoral reform.

**NEWS SECURITY & SYRIAN REFUGEES**

Canadian security agencies ‘consulting’ with U.S. Homeland Security to vet all Syrian refugees coming to Canada

**By Abbas Rana**

Canadian security agencies responsible for vetting the thousands of Syrian refugees who have been arriving in Canada since late last year have been using a “robust” and “multilayered” security check process that includes checking U.S. Homeland Security databases.

“On the Syrian refugee decisions, we consulted with the Americans on everyone to make sure there wasn’t somebody identified as a security threat,” said Liberal MP Alexandria Mendès (Brossard-Saint-Lambert, Que.), in an interview with The Hill Times.

**NEWS MONEY & POLITICS**

Liberal MPs want per-vote subsidies for political parties back

**By Abbas Rana**

Some Liberal MPs are talking about bringing per-vote subsidies back for federal political parties, but deny this has come up because of the negative headlines or opposition criticism regarding the party’s fundraising events.

“The general consensus is that it would be one way of avoiding the misconception that you have to sell your soul for fundraising,” said Liberal MP Alexandra Mendès (Brossard-Saint-Lambert, Que.), in an interview with The Hill Times.

**NEWS AG & HOUSE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

House Public Accounts Committee ‘stretched’ in playing ‘crucial role’ of holding departments accountable: AG

**By Rachel Abella**

Auditor General Michael Ferguson says MPs on the House Public Accounts Committee responsible for studying his reports are “very challenged and stretched to be able to perhaps have as much influence as they possibly could,” and says he’d like to see other standing committees in both the House and Senate pick up on the systemic issues that his audits continue to uncover in federal departments, and to do more follow-up.

**NEWS POLLING & POLITICS**

‘Like a nuclear secret,’ public polls only scratch surface of what political campaign teams know

The victory of Donald Trump in last month’s U.S. presidential election shocked many, even media people who had been closely following the race. Yet, it’s quite likely the results weren’t as surprising to those directly involved with each of the main candidates’ campaigns.

Published polls that indicated Trump would lose told five different stories about the vote, with the actual result being closer to the last of the five, according to political campaign experts.

**Continued on page 32**
Leitch reaches out to those ‘ignored and mocked’ by Liberals, elite

Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch is expressing sympathy for those seen as ‘goobers’ and ‘slaw-jawed yokels’ for not adhering to Liberal and media elitist viewpoints.

Ms. Leitch said in a Facebook post last week that it’s “clear that my campaign has touched a nerve amongst the Liberal and media elites who demand adherence to their ideas. Anyone who disagrees is dismissed as ‘goobers’ and ‘slack-jawed yokels’ and is relegated to the ‘comment section.’”

Ms. Leitch’s campaign manager Nick Kouvalis expanded on the “comment section” theme in an email to The Hill Times: “If you want to read the comments and opinions of the two-thirds of ordinary Canadians who agree with Kellie’s platform, the comment section is one of the only places where that happens. It’s where the media relegates those voices, tells us how wrong they are, and derides them as a joke.”

Mr. Kouvalis said this was in an email from an editor at the newspaper, and not in an article.

Ms. Leitch said in her Facebook post: “It’s time to say enough to this condescending, elitist sarcasm that we get from the Liberal and media elites. It is the ultimate left-wing hypocrisy: they rally and rail for tolerance and respect and then their behavior and attacks are the epitome of intolerance and disrespect.” (It remains to be seen if her screening for Canadian values would test whether immigrants spell words like “behaviour” with the letter u.)

She asked supporters to donate $5, $15, or $25, in an effort raise $25,000 in 24 hours. (The campaign said this goal was surpassed.) The Facebook post provided a link to Ms. Leitch’s website to make a donation. On this website, the preset amounts—which one could ignore and punch in any amount—ranged from $15 to the maximum donation allowed by law of $1,525.

One has to wonder: is a person in a position to donate more than $1,500 to a political campaign not likely an elite themself?

Raitt leads Tory race in Twitter followers, so far

Conservative leadership candidate Kellie Leitch is expressing sympathy for those seen as ‘goobers’ and ‘slaw-jawed yokels’ for not adhering to Liberal and media elitist viewpoints.

The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

Lisa Raitt has more Twitter followers than all other registered Conservative leadership candidates. The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

Lisa Raitt has the most Twitter followers of any of the 14 registered candidates in the Conservative Party leadership race. However, if Kevin O’Leary were to enter the contest, he would bring with him a Twitter base many times greater than any of the leadership candidates so far.

The business magnate and panel member has 573,490 Twitter followers as of last week.

Here’s another fact. If donations were made in direct proportion to Twitter popularity, Tony Clement would still be in the race. He had 66,949 followers as of last week, which was more than three times what Ms. Raitt had, yet still dwarfed by Mr. O’Leary.

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden is coming to Ottawa this week. Photograph courtesy of the White House

With less than two months to go in the U.S administration of Barack Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden will be coming to Ottawa this week, giving Prime Minister Justin Trudeau another chance to interact with the U.S. leadership team he’s come to know and love.

It’s well documented that Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Obama have great rapport, and we assume that extends to the veep. We also know that anything can happen in terms of Canada-U.S. relations when Donald Trump takes over on Jan. 20.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Trudeau are sure to have some fascinating conversations next week. Assuming they’re not shy about photographs, meme makers will have a lot of material to work with. However, the actual talk that occurs between these two might be stranger than anything meme makers could come up with, given the circumstances.

Mr. Biden will be here on Dec. 8 and 9, according to the PMO. His visit will coincide with a first ministers meeting being hosted by Mr. Trudeau on Dec. 9, which also includes First Nations leaders.

The PMO provided no details about the itinerary of Mr. Biden’s visit, beyond the fact that there will be an official dinner held in his honour.

Here’s how the rest of the field looked last week in terms of Twitter followers: Kellie Leitch had 18,240; Chris Alexander had 13,405; Erin O’Toole had 12,821; Maxime Bernier had 9,861; Andrew Scheer had 9,835; Michael Chong had 7,499; Steven Blaney had 7,499; Deepak Obhrai had 4,400; Brad Trost had 2,234; Andrew Saxton had 2,063; Rick Peterson had 96; Daniel Lindsay had 46; and Pierre Lemieux had 35.

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The Canada-Boeing partnership is built upon commitment, transparency and collaboration. It's a partnership that brings over $1 billion annually to Canada's economy. An economy that would be bolstered by the acquisition of the F/A-18 Super Hornet, building on Boeing's proven Industrial and Technological Benefits initiatives for the CF-18 Hornet, C-17 Globemaster and CH-47 Chinook. Together, we will continue to enhance Canada’s global presence.

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Feds want to pass government opposition parties ‘disappointed’ by state of relations in House of Commons

The government says it’s pushing this week for the opposition to come to the table with a consensus on some bills.

By Rachel Aiello

Pressure is building inside the House as the government eyes priority legislation that it wants passed before the House adjourns until 2017, but the government says it’s so far been unable to find consensus with the opposition parties on how many hours and days of debate the parties are willing to cooperate on.

“It takes two to tango and we’re on the dance floor and we want to dance,” Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Man.), parliamentary secretary to Government House Leader Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Ont.), told The Hill Times last week.

Mr. Lamoureux said the opposition parties aren’t yet coming to the bargaining table under the understanding that the government has legislation it needs to pass which is why the government has to use its majority to pass bills.

“Any piece of legislation opposition can hold up indefinitely if it so chooses … we would rather negotiate some changes that when negotiation doesn’t allow for it, what other alternatives do we have? Not to act!” That’s not an option,” said Mr. Lamoureux.

The government says it’s pushing this week for the opposition parties to come to the table with a consensus on some bills and it’s placed the bills on notice to be debated this week.

This week, the House will spend Monday and Tuesday debating Bill C-29, the second budget implementation bill before the House adjourns. The Senate is already conducting a pre-study on the legislation in anticipation of receiving the bill shortly. The Senate has a deadline of Dec. 2 to report back on its pre-study of Bill C-29.

The rest of the week’s agenda was not formally set, pending a plan between the three parties. Ms. Chagger said she’d like the House to debate Bill S-4, 2017 Convention and Arrangement Implementation Act, 2016; and Bill S-3, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (third reading) and the use of omnibus legislation, to end prorogation and the use of omnibus legislation. Other senators have brought up included a departure from the current practice of having the whip office distribute lists of MPs’ speaking slots for the Speaker to follow when calling on MPs in Question Period, and instead leave it up to the Speaker to decide based on who is in the Chamber and not make an effort to participate in the debate.

In October, the House spent most of one day debating changes to the House rules, and throughout the debate, various options on parliamentary reform and how to make Parliament more family-friendly began to shake loose.

The House is scheduled to adjourn on Dec. 16 and will return on Monday, Jan. 30, 2017. The possibility of the House adjourning ahead of schedule is still on the table, and although it’s not something the government this week, MPs could still sneak out a few days early after all the caucus holiday gatherings.

The Hill Times
CN takes root across Canada

In honour of Confederation’s 150th birthday, CN is planting trees in 50 communities that have played a seminal role in Canada’s history.

www.cn.ca
Polling and political insiders say there’s a level of depth in polling and research done by political parties that never gets seen by the general public.

Continued from page 1

that Hillary Clinton had a slight lead over Mr. Trump, which was actually pretty accurate. Results of that Nov. 8 election, available as of last week, showed Ms. Clinton leading Mr. Trump by 0.9 per cent of the popular vote compared to 46.4 per cent for Mr. Trump.

But these polls did not show how the electoral-college system would ultimately hand victory to Mr. Trump. Each state is assigned a certain number of electoral-college votes, ranging from as many as 55 for California to as few as three for states such as Alaska, Vermont, and Delaware. In most cases, the presidential candidate who wins a plurality of votes in each state gets all of that state’s electoral-college votes. Maine and Nebraska are exceptions in that some of their college votes go to whoever wins the state overall, while others go to winners in specific districts. The successful candidate needed to win 270 electoral college votes of 538 electors, corresponding to the 435 Representatives, 100 Senators, and three electors for the District of Columbia, to win the U.S. presidency. Mr. Trump won 306 electoral college votes and Ms. Clinton won 232.

It’s similarly hard for pollsters in Canada to predict elections as national-level polling doesn’t necessarily tell you how the House of Commons’ 338-seat count will go. “This is the biggest challenge for the [polling] industry,” said Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research. “The news cycle doesn’t necessarily allow for nor can afford this type of polling, because it costs money to do in-depth, precise polling and micro-targeting and all of that,” Mr. Powers said. “So you get what you can afford or you get what’s given to you.”

Mr. Powers said polls that get done for media consumption — on contract or often for free — are done to create publicity for the polling firms. These companies tend to make most of their money from work done for companies and organizations, creating data that never goes public, he said.

“You guys don’t like to pay for polls,” Mr. Powers told The Hill Times. “As the owner of a polling company, we couldn’t make a living...”

While some researchers use formulas to project seat counts with varying accuracy, Mr. Nanos said he doesn’t bother “because to properly do seat projections, requires massive sampling, inter-ridings, where you can estimate what’s going to happen in a specific riding. Usually the only organizations with the proper resources to do seat projections, in my opinion, would be the parties themselves.”

Mr. Powers added that political parties are “way more motivated” than pollsters to get rich data on political intentions and attitudes. “Most polling companies — the ones that do the media polling — they don’t really care who’s going to win,” he said.

Political parties, he said, are “motivated to change the very things they’re measuring. They’re going to measure public opinion and they want to change it. So they’re very, very motivated to understand not just the ‘what’—okay, we’re ahead or behind — but the ‘why’ because only by knowing the ‘why’ can they change it.”

Mr. Nanos said political parties “like nuclear secrets.”

Those working for Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton might not have been as shocked as the rest of us at last month’s election results, given the type of data they likely had at their disposal. Photographs by Gage Skidmore.

David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data, said political parties pay relatively little attention to national polling in proportion to the attention they get in the news. “Instead, they’re probably taking snapshots of 20 to 30 key ridings and regularly calling those ridings and looking at the trend lines happening there.”

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Mr. Coletto said political parties “have more resources for polling than everybody else. They’re the ones that have the most at stake. They’re in a type of business where you make one sale every four years... So on that one day, you’re really going to be trying to understand what’s going on for that one day.”

Lorne Bozinoff. Photograph courtesy of Forum Research. No one ever gets to see [polling done by political parties]. That’s like a nuclear secret.

Mr. Bozinoff added that political parties are “way more motivated” than pollsters to get rich data on political intentions and attitudes. “Most polling companies — the ones that do the media polling — they don’t really care who’s going to win,” he said.

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toss-up ridings that they’re going for ... and everyone has the same ones on their list,” Mr. Bozinoff said.

Mr. Bozinoff recalled how Brampton, Ont., was former prime minister Stephen Harper’s first campaign stop after he called the 2011 election. Gains made in Toronto-area suburbs like Brampton were key to Mr. Harper’s Conservatives winning a majority government in that election.

“Those are ones that they probably are doing riding-level polls on,” he said.

Summa Strategies senior adviser Louis-Alexandre Lanthier, who worked for Justin Trudeau before he became prime minister, said in MP election campaigns for Mr. Trudeau, the team would have detailed information about people in different parts of his Papineau, Que., riding. He noted how the community of Park Extension was known to be predominately pro-Liberal, Villeray was more sympathetic to the Bloc Québécois, while St-Michel was somewhere in-between.

This and other details about residents helped the team know what to talk to people about in different neighbourhoods, Mr. Lanthier said. As well, on voting day, if most of the early results coming in were from Villeray and the Liberals were even slightly ahead, the team could rest assured that the riding would go red.

Mr. Lanthier noted how when he was helping out in the 2015 campaign, he was not privy to some of the data that other members of the Liberal team had. He recalled how at one point he “raised a red flag” that Mr. Trudeau not spending enough time in his own riding. However, he said party headquarters did not share this concern, and probably for good reason.

“Part of it was that they had the information already on the voter support in the riding. ... They were pretty confident that as a leader he was doing the right things, he was saying the right things, and he was showing up just enough in the riding to be able to be the leader that he needed to be across the country and still be representative of his riding.”

On the difference between the type of voter data that goes public and what political parties have, Mr. Lanthier said: “Where pollsters get information on what parties voters are supporting, the parties get different information like what voters are supporting in the platform, what issues they’re tracking.”

Words as expression.
As seeds of change.
As poetry.

Rupi Kaur grew up believing in the power of language. But it was as a student of rhetoric and professional writing at the University of Waterloo that she built her passion for poetry and images into something more. In her final year, Kaur combined her creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit she fostered as a co-op student to self-publish her first book, milk and honey.

Her poetry collection sold a staggering 17,000 copies, spurred by Kaur’s enterprising use of social media. Picked up by a publisher, milk and honey summited bestseller lists with more than 500,000 copies sold worldwide. The work, like Kaur herself, is eloquent and defiant — expressing hidden truths and shared experiences that move us beyond words.
No going back on electoral reform, Prime Minister Trudeau

It started a few weeks ago with an Andrew Coyne column headlined, “Cracks start to show in Trudeau Liberals.” In it, Mr. Coyne criticized Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government over the cash-for-access private fundraisers, the prime minister’s “non-partisan” Senate appointments, and the government’s efforts to “gaslight” electoral reform, saying there’s trouble brewing for the Liberals, which he said won’t show up in the polls right now, but trouble is sturring up. Mr. Coyne said the “image of youthful idealism is wearing thin.”

And there have been more negative headlines over the past few weeks for Prime Minister Trudeau. He was ripped for calling the late Cuban leader Fidel Castro a “remarkable leader,” and Toronto Star columnist Chantal Hebert recently wrote about how the political temperature was about to rise as the federal government faces three major issues to deal with including electoral reform, its climate change strategy, and the fate of the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Prime Minister Trudeau promised to do much better than former prime minister Stephen Harper. He was elected with enormous goodwill and was elected on a wave of real change and he won. But he’s over-promising and under-delivering too much. He can’t go back in time and change what he promised in the last general election. The one thing he can do, however, is deal with issues head on with the best interests of Canadians.

On fundraising, Mr. Trudeau can reinstate per-vote subsidies and reduce individual contribution limits to $100 or $200 from the current $1,500. What would eliminate any perception that rich people can buy their influence. Also, he should immediately stop attending exclusive fundraisers where he promised in the last general election. The Prime Minister’s office should use its energy instead of the investment of the country.

On electoral reform, Mr. Trudeau has no option but to keep his promise in its true letter and spirit. Any attempt to engineer a preferred outcome on electoral reform would give even more ammunition to the opposition parties that are successfully painting a picture of the prime minister as yet another “arrogant” and “entitled” Liberal elite who would do anything to stay in power.

Prior to the last federal election, Mr. Trudeau said it unequivocally as possible that “We are committed to ensuring that the 2015 election will be the last federal election using first past the post.” When he made that commitment, he may have thought of it a fancy campaign talking point, as a majority of Liberals—the third party in Parliament—did not expect to win the election, let alone a landslide majority government. But, Canadians chose to entrust the Liberals with a majority government on the promise that the Trudeau Liberals will be different from the Stephen Harper Conservatives who after 10 years in power were embroiled in a number of ethical controversies.

But, recently, Mr. Trudeau and his Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef have been flip-flopping on the electoral reform promise. After the all-party House Special Committee on Electoral Reform, last week, in its final report recommended a referendum on proportional representation, any attempt to change it was a backfire and tarnished the Liberal Party’s credibility. Now, it’s up to the Liberal Party leadership not to make Canadians regret the trust they put in the party.

Letters to the Editor

Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson’s father is Canadian too, eh?

Re: “Political leader wanted, no experience necessary,” (The Hill Times, Nov. 28, p. 9). Gerry Croot’s column on Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson as a possible U.S. presidential candidate. Mr. Johnson is also a Canadian citizen. Although he was born in the U.S., his father is from Nova Scotia. I understand that a couple of federal parties are looking for a leader and Mr. Johnson could be a serious candidate. If it is true that he is “The Sexiest Man Alive,” as claimed by People magazine, he could be a serious rival to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Of course, it is possible that Canadians prefer their sexiness a little shorter and a little thinner than The Rock.

Leitch should know big difference between mudslinging, mudkicking

There is a difference between mudslinging and mudkicking and the federal Conservative candidate Kellie Leitch, a high-minded member of the halls of Parliament, doesn’t seem to understand the difference between mudkicking, in its finest sense, is constructive. Mudslinging, however, is just there as a negative emotional lock that some people are using as a possible U.S. presidential candidate.

We need to stand up to corporate interests

It’s a sign of how polarized our society is that a majority Conservative candidate like Andrew Scheer who has no chance to win the federal Conservative leadership. The party is in a battle for survival and the Harper era GHG reduction targets are the best we can do. We can, we must do better. According to an Ekos poll of April 2014, of those who have some familiarity with the Leap Manifesto, 40 per cent support the mandate of the Leap. Clearly, Mr. Leitch is using Donald Trump’s toolbox to play media and the electorate. Her agenda is not “real change,” but to get elected. After that, who knows?

Grandstanding, the go-to itch for many politicians, wastes valuable time, money, and energy, which could be time better spent debating constructive solutions. But talk of this type is cheap.

We need to stand up to corporate interests. We need to collectivize stand up to the corporate interests which undermine our democracy.

Canada finally needs a national commissioner of children and youth

Establishing a national commissioner of children and youth would fill a 2015 Liberal campaign promise, and show the government commitment to its youngest citizens. It would also be a fitting way to mark the 25th anniversary of Canada’s ratiﬁcation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada’s one of the few industrialized countries without an independent, national voice for children. In Canada, a commissioner could monitor and report on the well-being of children, help coordinate child-related policies and programs among federal and provincial/territorial governments, investigate emerging issues and make recommendations for change, ensure that all children and youth benefit from the same quality of life, identify gaps in services, and foster public awareness about children’s well-being, and listen and speak for children at the national level.

President, Canadian Paediatric Society

 alas, is the name of the game of the oil-and-gas sector that Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna plans to bring in a national carbon pricing system, while others of us struggle to feel hope for the future, because she has decided that the woolly manifesto of the Harper era GHG reduction targets are the best we can do. We can, we must do better. According to an Ekos poll of April 2014, of those who have some familiarity with the Leap Manifesto, 40 per cent support the mandate of the Leap.

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Jan Slakov
Salt Spring Island, B.C.

The Rock, Dwayne Johnson

Actor Dwayne, The Rock, Johnson, Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia

Bruce Couche
Oakville, Ont.

The Rock, Dwayne Johnson

Actor Dwayne, The Rock, Johnson, Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia

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Salt Spring Island, B.C.

Canada finally needs a national commissioner of children and youth

Establishing a national commissioner of children and youth would fill a 2015 Liberal campaign promise, and show the government commitment to its youngest citizens. It would also be a fitting way to mark the 25th anniversary of Canada’s ratiﬁcation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada’s one of the few industrialized countries without an independent, national voice for children. In Canada, a commissioner could monitor and report on the well-being of children, help coordinate child-related policies and programs among federal and provincial/territorial governments, investigate emerging issues and make recommendations for change, ensure that all children and youth benefit from the same quality of life, identify gaps in services, and foster public awareness about children’s well-being, and listen and speak for children at the national level.

President, Canadian Paediatric Society

Rohin C. Williams
Past president, Canadian Paediatric Society

The Rock, Dwayne Johnson

Actor Dwayne, The Rock, Johnson, Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia

Bruce Couche
Oakville, Ont.

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson’s father is Canadian too, eh?

Re: “Political leader wanted, no experience necessary,” (The Hill Times, Nov. 28, p. 9). Gerry Croot’s column on Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson as a possible U.S. presidential candidate. Mr. Johnson is also a Canadian citizen. Although he was born in the U.S., his father is from Nova Scotia. I understand that a couple of federal parties are looking for a leader and Mr. Johnson could be a serious candidate. If it is true that he is “The Sexiest Man Alive,” as claimed by People magazine, he could be a serious rival to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Of course, it is possible that Canadians prefer their sexiness a little shorter and a little thinner than The Rock.

Leitch should know big difference between mudslinging, mudkicking

There is a difference between mudslinging and mudkicking and the federal Conservative candidate Kellie Leitch, a high-minded member of the halls of Parliament, doesn’t seem to understand the difference between mudkicking, in its finest sense, is constructive. Mudslinging, however, is just there as a negative emotional lock that some people are using as a possible U.S. presidential candidate.

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President, Canadian Paediatric Society

Rohin C. Williams
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A dictator, yes, but Castro was no Hitler

Castro was admired by many leaders, mostly because of his record in education and equality.

Ottawa—Pierre Elliott Trudeau was accused of canoodling with Fidel Castro as the two struck up a friendship so deep that Castro served as a pallbearer at the former prime minister’s state funeral. It should come as no surprise that Canada’s current prime minister would express affection and respect in the wake of the death of the Cuban nonagenarian.

Trudeau’s statement that Castro was a remarkable leader was met with virulent opposition in the Twittersphere and muted criticism from interim Conservative Leader Rona Ambrose.

Ambrose was smart enough not to belabour her point in a House of Commons exchange about the post-mortem comments. She knows that more than a million Canadians visit Cuba annually and witness Cuban reality firsthand. Those Canadians understand that the outpouring of cyber-space vitriol and comparisons of Castro to Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler is absolute absurdity.

Castro was a dictator but there is zero evidence he participated in mass disappearances or executions. On the contrary, there is a fair bit of proof that Castro focussed primarily on the purit of socialist objectives, including mass literacy and racial and gender harmony. He also negatively promoted his own cult of hero worship, with a heavy dose of police presence.

I first visited Cuba in 1974. The place was just opening up and I travelled there with a group of journalists who were working for the Ottawa Citizen. It wasn’t a vacation, more of a work assignment, but a vacation.

I was never much of a beach person so while there I made it my business to try and meet directly with Cuban citizens. I filled one suitcase with library and dated-time magazines, which I passed along to friends I met on the beach.

I visited a school and even ended up touring a radio station in Havana during our weeklong vacation. I was trying to understand what made this little communist island tick and went out of my way to speak to as many people as I could.

When I spotted the radio station, I entered, identified myself as a reporter on vacation, and started chatting with who turned out to be the manager. I asked him why he was so devoted to communism, and he described to me what he considered to be the purit of motivs. In his words, if his wife and a stranger were hit by a car, he would help the stranger and would assist a member of his family.

I couldn’t understand this and started to express his claim in the middle of our debate, someone emerged from the studio to politely inform me that foreigners were allowed in the station, and would I kindly leave? While on my way out of the country, I was accompanied to the airport by my new Cuban friends.

A few years later, when I was covering a story about the opening of the market in Havana, I was also accompanied to the airport by my new Cuban friends.

I objected, but authorities informed me that my friends were being questioned because they had received goods from a foreigner, in violation of Cuban law. (I had passed along my jeans, T-shirts, and a few other clothing items along with the magazines). I later learned that they were all released after questioning, returning to their lives as students. I communica- tion with my newfound friends has continued ever since.

Trudeau was mobbed at both events, holding court to the delight of assembled world leaders. The only one who pointedly refused to speak to him on either occasion was American vice-president Al Gore.

Castro was admired by many leaders, mostly because of his record in education and equality. On the issue of race, Cuba could probably teach Donald Trump a thing or two. But there’s none so deaf as those who will not hear.

Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era cabinet minister and a former deputy prime minister.

The Hill Times

Trudeau conjures up Cold War nostalgia

Justin Trudeau’s decision to lavish praise on a dinosaur like Castro is puzzling. It’s hard to present yourself as a leader of the future, when your public statements conjure up the past.

Justin Trudeau, a left-wing leader who likes to hang out with billionaire- aire capitalists and who doesn’t seem to be too concerned about who controls the means of production. I’d also wager a lot of money that Trudeau knows more about Star Wars character Jar Jar Binks, than he does about Karl Marx.

And, of course, that’s why his decision to lavish praise on a dinosaur like Castro is so puzzling. It’s hard to present yourself as a leader of the future, when your public statements conjure up the past.

Gerry Nicholls is a communications consultant.

The Times photograph by Jake Wright
**After Aleppo: a kind of peace?**

It looks like Bashar al-Assad has won his six-year war to stay in power.

**GWYNNE DYER**

**LONDON, ENGLAND—**Eastern Aleppo, the rebel-held half of what was once Syria’s biggest city, is falling. Once the resistance there collapses, things may move very fast in Syria, and the biggest question will be: do the outside powers that have intervened in the war accept Bashar al-Assad’s victory, or do they keep the war going? Even one year ago, it seemed completely unrealistic to talk about an Assad victory. The Syrian government’s army was decimated, demoralized and on the verge of collapse: every time the rebels attacked, it retreated. There was even a serious possibility that the Islamic State and the Nusra Front, the extreme Islamist groups that dominated the rebel forces, would sweep to victory in all of Syria. But then, just 14 months ago, the Russian Air Force was sent in to save Assad’s army from defeat. It did more than that. It enabled the Syrian army, with help on the ground from Shia militias recruited from Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq and mostly trained and commanded by Iranian officers, to go onto the offensive. Assad’s forces took back the historic city of Palmyra. They eliminated the last rebel-held foothold in the city of Homs. And last summer they began to cut eastern Aleppo’s remaining links with the outside world.

In July, the government forces took control of the Castello Road, ending the flow of food and supplies for eastern Aleppo’s 10,000 rebel fighters and its claimed civilian population of 250,000 people. (The real total of civilians left in the east of the city, once home to around a million people, is almost certainly a small fraction of that number.) A rebel counter-offensive in August briefly opened a new corridor into eastern Aleppo, but government troops retook the lost territory and resumed the siege in September.

For almost two months now almost nothing has moved into or out of the besieged half of the city, and both food and ammunition are running short inside. So the resistance is starting to collapse. The Hanano district fell on Saturday, and Jabal Badro fell on Sunday. The capture of Sakhour on Monday has cut the rebel-held part of Aleppo in two, and the remaining bits north of the cut will quickly be pinched out by the Syrian government’s troops.

The southeastern part of the city may stay in rebel hands a while longer, but military collapses of this sort are infectious. It is now likely that Bashar al-Assad will control all of Aleppo before the end of the year, and possibly much sooner.

At that point he would control all of Syria’s major cities, at least three-quarters of the population that has not fled abroad, and all of the country’s surviving industry. He would be in a position to offer an amnesty to all the rebels except the extreme Islamists of Islamic State and the Nusra Front, and a lot of the less fanatical Syrian rebels would be tempted to accept it.

For the many foreign powers that are involved in the Syrian civil war, it would then come down to a straight choice: Assad’s cruel but conventional regime or the Islamist crazies. Even Turkey and Saudi Arabia, however much their leaders may loathe Assad, could not openly put their armies at the service of the Islamists. (They used to send them arms and money, but even that has stopped now.) And for a newly installed U.S. President Donald Trump, it would become a lot simpler to “make a deal” with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin to finish the job of crushing Islamic State and the Nusra Front together.

Would the Russians and the Americans then hand over all the recaptured territory to Assad’s regime? Many people in Washington would rather hang onto it temporarily in order to blackmail Syria’s ruling Baath Party into replacing Assad with somebody a bit less tainted, but a deal between Putin and Trump would certainly preclude that sort of game playing.

How could Trump reconcile such a deal with Russia with his declared intention to cancel the agreement the United States signed last March to curb Iran’s nuclear weapons ambitions? Iran is Russia’s closest ally in the Middle East, and if Trump broke that agreement he would be reopening a U.S. military confrontation with Iran.

Since this question may not even have crossed Trump’s mind yet, it would be pointless for us to speculate on which way he might jump three months from now.

It’s equally pointless to wonder what kind of deal the Syrian Kurds will end up with. Turkey will want to ensure that they have no autonomous government of their own and are thoroughly subjugated by Assad’s regime. The United States, on the other hand, owes them a debt of honour for carrying the main burden of fighting Islamic State on the ground—but the Kurds are used to being betrayed.

All we can say with some confidence at the moment is that it looks like Assad has won his six-year war to stay in power. Gwynne Dyer is an independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. The Hill Times
We’re back!

If Canada continues to say one thing while doing another, it’s only a short time until our international colleagues’ patience wanes and Justin Trudeau’s hopeful proclamation rings hollow.

Back in Ottawa, Department of Fisheries and Oceans staff have been developing standards for marine protection independent of the international community. In draft form, they seem designed to allow Canada to justify sidestepping international standards.

Canada should be applauded for committing publicly to meeting the 10 per cent goal. But if in meeting that goal we create paper parks and count areas that don’t protect biodiversity, that commitment means nothing.

Let’s make sure our recently reinstated scientists and policy-makers are putting their full energy into making tangible, progressive biodiversity conservation designations, not sugar-coating and creating loopholes.

Watering down international decisions could undermine more than protections here in Canada. It could destabilize global biodiversity protection efforts. That’s not Canada making a comeback. That’s Canada going backwards.

With the likely rollback of U.S. support for environmentally progressive agreements and policy, it’s more important than ever that Canada step forward as a leader in the international arena.

Canada has some of the richest biodiversity in the world and a global responsibility to protect it. Decision-makers should consider effects on endangered species such as southern resident killer whales before expanding oil pipelines and tanker traffic.

Canada’s “we’re back” direction is important, looking to correct the course of the previous Conservative government, who by all accounts blew its 2010 shot at earning a seat on the Security Council because of its regressive stance on a variety of international issues, including climate change.

Hopes to get back in the game in time for the next UN Security Council election in 2020 perfectly match the timing for meeting international marine biodiversity commitments.

But if Canada continues to say one thing while doing another, it’s only a short time until our international colleagues’ patience wanes and Trudeau’s hopeful proclamation rings hollow.

Reputations take time to rebuild. When the global community meets in Mexico to negotiate desperately needed protection for biodiversity, let’s make sure Canada behaves in a way that prompts the world to say, “It’s good to have you back.”

Jay Ritchlin is the director-general of Western Canada for the David Suzuki Foundation.

JAY RITCHLIN

VANCOUVER—“We’re back.” Just over a year ago, freshly elected Justin Trudeau jubilantly broadcast his intention to revive Canada’s reputation as a progressive, co-operative and inclusive nation to the international community. But is that how Canada will be represented at the Convention on Biological Diversity’s 13th Conference of the Parties (COP 13) in Cancun, Mexico, this month?

The prime minister’s mandate letter to the fisheries minister made it clear that keeping oceans healthy is a priority, with a specific promise to protect 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas by 2020. But our country has been inconsistent in international negotiations.

Now into the mandate’s second year, it’s time to start matching words with action. When it comes to living up to its global reputation, things looked promising at last year’s climate summit in Paris. There, Canada played a leadership role, pushing for agreement on limiting global warming targets to 1.5 C. After 10 years of blocking co-operation on climate change, Canada received well-deserved kudos for stepping forward in international negotiations. Domestic policy has yet to follow suit.

On the international human rights front, we’re seeing a different side to Canada. A joint NGO report, “Canada is back, but still far behind,” expresses concern for the ineffectual federal watchdog overseeing Canadian multinational corporations.

Which Canada will show up on the international stage when it comes time to conserving biodiversity? Just weeks away from talks in Cancun, the Trudeau government is still leaving us guessing.

Will decisions supported there actually be implemented back home?

The Cancun talks on conserving ocean biodiversity will be critical. Many global fish stocks are collapsing due to overfishing, industrial development and the effects of climate change, including ocean acidification.

On the one hand, Canada is making bold statements on marine protected areas. When meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama earlier this year, Prime Minister Trudeau was emphatic that Canada would meet international commitments to protect 10 per cent of marine ecosystems by 2020 and “take concrete steps to achieve and substantially surpass these national goals in the coming years.”

On the other hand, at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii this past September—part of the lead-up to COP 13 in Cancun—Canada appeared stuck in a previous era. It advocated for weaker standards before supporting motions on protected areas and abstained from votes on increased marine protection that the vast majority of countries supported.

Here comes sunny: Just over a year ago, freshly elected Justin Trudeau broadcast his intention to revive Canada’s reputation as a progressive, co-operative and inclusive nation to the international community. The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright
Trudeau undoes own timid steps to sustainability, betrays promise to world

It looks counter-intuitive to be disavowing continued dependence on the fossil fuels that contribute to climate change, then approving two new pipelines that will stimulate and, arguably, prolong production in Alberta’s oilsands.

CATINEAU, QUE.—There is no doubt that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s approval of the twinning of the Kinder Morgan oil pipeline last week increases the danger of a devastating spill in the waters around Vancouver and beyond, despite the new $1.5-billion federal ocean protection plan. No spill response unit, “world class” or otherwise, can be confidently relied on to deal with the mixture of bitumen and chemical diluent that could leak, and sink, into Pacific gulf waters—partly because the mixture does not behave in the same way as conventional oil (which is bad enough.) As Green Party Leader Elizabeth May says: “No spill response unit will make bitumen float.” Trudeau’s personal assurances — if he thought the project was unsafe for the B.C. Coast, I would reject it” — is a stirring sentiment, but it is only that. There are no guarantees; the soon-to-be imperilled coastline is still vast, if not as remote, as the treacherous waters near the rejected Northern Gateway proposal.

The other pressing question is whether the pipeline approvals — Kinder Morgan, from Edmonton to Vancouver harbour, and the reconstruction and expansion of Enbridge’s Line 3 from Alberta to Wisconsin — will make Canada’s promise in Paris to reduce emissions 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 unachievable? It certainly looks counter-intuitive to be disavowing continued dependence on the fossil fuels that contribute to climate change, then approving two new pipelines that will stimulate and, arguably, prolong production in Alberta’s oilsands, home to the most polluting oil on the planet. And how sustainable is it to sell oil to China, the world’s leading producer of greenhouse gas emissions?

We will have a clearer answer this week, when Trudeau sits down with the premiers to finalize a national plan to reduce emissions. Whatever the outcome, however, the federal government’s decision to breathe new life into the Alberta tar sands puts far greater pressure on the rest of the economy — other regions, other sectors, individuals — to adopt severe carbon reductions.

Recent federal climate measures come nowhere near to compensating for the increased emissions to be generated by the new pipelines — not just the construction and the upstream emissions, but the pollution released when that fuel is burned. A federal carbon tax that starts at a risible $10 a tonne in 2018 and rises to a still-punny $50 by 2022, an accelerated phase-out of coal, which accounts for a small amount of Canada’s energy production — both are good initiatives, coupled with previously announced cuts to methane and hydrofluorocarbon emissions. But it will take more far-reaching, immediate, and probably costly remedies to get us close to even the modest targets set by Stephen Harper, much less address the increasingly worrying signs of a changing climate.

And the pipeline approvals — along with federal go-ahead for a proposed liquified natural gas terminal in northern B.C. — only make meeting the Paris goal of limiting future temperature increases to 2°C annually, or less, that much more difficult, if not impossible.

Another moment of stunning dissonance: Trudeau claimed, repeatedly, that he would not have approved either pipeline project without Alberta Premier Rachel Notley’s recently announced cap on oil sands emissions. That cap? Oil sands producers will be limited to 100 megatonnes of emissions a year — a 40 per cent increase from present levels! — at some unspecified future date. This is no forgiving a target it doesn’t instil confidence that it will be enforced. What if Keystone is approved by Donald Trump in the meantime? That could be another boon to the oilsands, meaning more emissions. This is sounding more like the ice cream diet than a serious plan to reduce carbon pollution.

Notley insists the new pipelines will only handle oil already scheduled for production from several plants that were approved, and in the process of being built, before world prices tanked. In other words, the oil was going to be extracted anyway; the challenge is getting it to more markets, more safely. But climate policy expert Adam Scott, of environmental group Oil Change International, says the current pipeline network is no longer adequate and “new pipelines will only be required if they plan to dramatically increase production.”

As to “getting oil to tidewater” via Kinder Morgan, will it be the magic bullet Notley and her industry pals insist upon? Having only one customer—the U.S.—is said to limit Alberta’s bargaining power and depress prices for its oil. But the fundamental problem is erratic world prices and the low quality of tarsands product, says Scott. The thick, sandy bitumen requires specialized refineries and there are not many in China, nor will China necessarily pay more for Alberta’s product than the cluster of U.S. refineries in the Texas gulf, which currently offer the highest prices for raw bitumen. Most of the oil from the existing Kinder Morgan line now goes south for processing in California, a pattern that is likely to continue for some time, despite the political excitement about exporting to Asia.

Some will be persuaded that sacrificing Canada’s climate goals—and the health of the planet—is justified if it means rescuing Alberta’s staggering economy and maintaining spinoff benefits elsewhere. That said, until recently Alberta was still leading the country in job creation. Not to minimize the pain: thousands upon thousands of jobs have been lost (although the rebuilding in Fort McMurray is providing some relief), and Calgary is faced with a 10 per cent unemployment rate and emptying office towers. But the answer, surely, is to reduce Alberta’s dependence on one endangered commodity, not lock it in with billion-dollar pipelines for decades to come. It will require amazing wizardry (and, perhaps, some fun with figures) for the prime minister and his cabinet to devise measures that will offset the dire climate consequences of the pipeline approvals, never mind bolster our weak and inadequate existing climate targets. It is possible other events might intervene. Kinder Morgan could be killed by a change of government in B.C., by legal action and protests, or by another oil market collapse.

Meanwhile, Trudeau and Notley celebrate their coup, a major boost to the country’s largest carbon emitter, wrapped inious environmental rhetoric, and accompanied by a few climate-friendly gestures. But behind the green screen, it’s business as usual.

Susan Riley is a veteran political columnist who writes regularly for The Hill Times. The Hill Times
He may be imperfect, but compared to the alternatives to the south and the east, Trudeau's popularity can only grow. Warren Kinsella

TORONTO—Do journalistic con- centsions revive our brains? It’s a serious question. In the fun new sci-fi movie Arrival, the plot posits the theory that language changes the way we think, and not the other way around. The aliens keep telling everyone what they think—kind of like a racist and sexist Donald Trump did, over and over—and everyone on Earth keeps trying to find some other more-obscure meaning, instead of the one right in front of their eyes (ie., that he really is that racist and sexist).

The movie is about aliens, but it could be about politics. People are always looking for an alternative that isn’t the one in plain view.

A Twitter acquaintance, Toronto Star columnist Justin Timson, reminded me of this last week. I had retweeted a windy, stentorian Mo- clean’s editorial about how Justin Trudeau's honeymoon was finally at an end. The honeymoon is “truly over,” insisted Maclean’s, sounding like they wanted to convince them- selves as much as the rest of us.

Timson’s pithy response: “For the 45th time. Hey here’s an idea: maybe the honeymoon metaphor in political journalism is over.” Well put, and true enough. Ms. Timson, it’s a luckier cliché, that “political honeymoon” nonsense, and another example of people letting language do their thinking for them.

Politics is a stew in which the ingredients are opportunism, timing, and good luck. Justin Trudeau came along when folks were sick of the Tories, when he looked shiny and new, and when the good times were upon him. Same with Donald Trump: he oozed out of a fetid, primordial realty TV swamp, exactly at the moment that angry white Americans were in the mood to vote against their economic and social self-interest. That’s a victory more attributable to luck than skill.

So just how far can Trudeau’s Cause be successful? Caused has been lucky. And, yes, as Mo- clean’s sniffr, a video of Trudeau got boozed by some drunks at the Grey Cup. Yes, the “cash for access scandal”—they called it a “scan- dal,” they really did, when no nor- mal person thinks that it is—has been attracting some unseemly headlines. And, yes, some much- delayed pipeline decisions were cause for some head-scratching in B.C., mostly among people who would never vote Liberal anyway.

So what, we say. Getting intro- duced at events sciences is always a really bad idea, per the political muse (cf., Tip O’Neill). Fundrais- ing isn’t ever pretty either, but until donors put parties ad space for free, it needs to be done. And pipelines? They’re a chink in the armoured alter- native (cf., Lac-Mégantic).

The fact is this: the punditry- cise is boring. Justin Trudeau has been atop the polls for more than a year, and it’s kind of dull. The Tories (who have too many lead- ership candidates) and the NDP (who has one) aren’t being an effective opposition, particularly. They aren’t keeping the Liberal leader up at night. So, as always, some media have assigned them- selves the role of Her Majesty’s Office. But since they haven’t per the timeless Val Sears quip, we have a government to defeat. It but Trudeau won’t be defeated anytime soon. And his honey- moon—whether you call it or not—isn’t ending, either. It’s barely started. And you can thank Donald Trump for that.

Until Donald Trump is indicted at the state level by an ambitious Democrat or until a Republican Congress tires of his madness and his wars, and com- mences impeachment proceedings in the House, the U.S. president-to-be is going to remain the biggest story on Earth. He is going to be the prism through which all political news is viewed, pretty much.

He won’t be President Trump. He will be President Troll, firing off insults via his Twitter account in the middle of the night. Raging as he stalks the marbled halls at Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue. And the me- dia—as they have always done—will be a-twitter about his Twitter. They can’t seem to get enough of it, as much as they loathe him. Up here in Canuckistan, Justin Trudeau can only benefit from that. When the (likely) next Con- servative party leader is doing his utmost to ape Trump, Trudeau will look pretty darn good to most Canadian voters, who deeply despise Trump. And if Angela Merkel fails in winning a fourth term in Germany next year, the far-right’s François Fillon or the neo-Nazi National Front achieves power in France next year, then Trudeau will be among the last progressives standing.

He may be imperfect, but compared to the alternatives to the south and the east, Trudeau’s popularity can only grow. And you don’t need to sub- scribe to journalistic conventions to know that.

WARREN KINSSELLA

The making of a Trudeau has just begun. Justin Trudeau won’t be defeated anytime soon, writes Warren Kinsella, and his honeymoon isn’t ending, either.

The Hill Times photograph by Jake White

As fans of Asia’s durian fruit know, smell doesn’t tell you everything. While the durian smells like putrid gym socks, its flesh is succulent and sweet. It is a reminder that things aren’t always as they seem.

Thomas Walkom

O n May 19, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended a Liberal party fundraising soiree at the home of a wealthy Chinese-Canadian. Canadian citizens who attended paid $1,500 each for the privilege. By law, foreigners—including an unknown number of Chinese na- tionals who were there—did not.

One attendee, Canadian finan- cier Shenglin Xian, was awaiting final federal approval of his plan to set up a new bank. He received that approval three weeks later.

Another, Chinese billionaire Zhang Bin, later contributed much of a $1.3 million charitable donation made to the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and the Université de Montréal.

That’s the bare bones of what happened. But since Tuesday, when news of this event first appeared by The Globe and Mail, the May 19 fundraiser has domi- nated Canadian political circles.

In political circles, it has eclipsed even the election of Donald Trump. Trump was the story of the year in 2015. The donation (to what even the charitable foundation because he truly ad- mired Pierre Trudeau. Or he may have been trying to curry favour with his son. Who knows?

What we do know is that Zhang seemed to have received nothing from any contribution other than a warm glow.

The donation (to what even Trudeau’s critics argue is a reputable charity) didn’t earn him access to the prime minister. He already bad that already.

Conservative interim leader Rona Ambrose says that Trudeau’s actions last May don’t pass the smell test. And maybe they don’t.

But as fans of Asia’s durian fruit know, smell doesn’t tell you everything. While the durian smells like putrid gym socks, its flesh is succulent and sweet.

It is a reminder that things aren’t always as they seem.

Thomas Walkom is a column- nist for The Toronto Star. This column was released on Nov. 28. The Hill Times
Who should our spies spy on?

The Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence can descend into petty politics sometimes, but it shouldn’t on national security issues.

OTTAWA—In the wake of news out of Quebec that police in that province were given court warrants to intercept the communications of journalists, it turns out that CSIS cannot rule out the possibility that sometime over its 28-plus years of existence it too has listened in on some members of the fifth estate. In a session of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence in Ottawa on Nov. 30, Brian Rumiak, a senior CSIS official, noted that the service would never investigate journalists following the lead person happened to be a journalist, but that if that person engaged in terrorist activity, then it would be a different case.

Cue the outrage. This is, of course, coming on the heels of a Federal Court ruling that CSIS illegally held onto metadata it had collected under warrant for use in counterterrorism investigations. Canadians are probably angry at what seems to be yet another overreach by CSIS and we can probably expect calls for more oversight and reining in those cowboy spies.

And, yet, as with most stories on national security and intelligence, the criticism is in this case a bit of a misnomer. Context for instance, and a sober look at the facts and what is really happening here. Some Canadians undoubtedly feel that CSIS uses its mandate to target and investigate communities. And it does so very well and very judiciously. CSIS Act. In other words, CSIS does not target anyone without cause. The service carries out investigations when it gets information that an individual (or several individuals) is engaged in activities that potentially pose a threat to this country as defined in the aforementioned Section 2 of the CSIS Act. CSIS targets behaviour, not people or communities. And it does so very well and very judiciously.

Besides, who says that a journalist (or a professor for that matter) can’t be engaged in activities that pose a threat to our security? Are these people somehow beyond reproach? Are there no “bad apples” in the bunch? I would hope that CSIS would investigate anyone who does things that threaten us, irrespective of their profession, ethnicity, creed, colour, or whatever. Threats are threats, after all, and not limited to specific parts of our society.

Furthermore, do we really want our spies to unilaterally and unprovokedly rule out an investigation on a particular place just because that place is “sensitive”? If they had information that a terrorist cell was forming on a university campus does anyone really expect them to ignore it out of some ill-considered concerns that universities are hallowed halls of freedom of speech and thought? The same goes for secondary schools. Given what we know about the genesis of the Toronto 18, I for one hope that CSIS would do whatever it takes to nip these plots in the bud should another cell take shape in a high school.

I fear sometimes that the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence can descend into petty politics and scoring partisan points. We need committees of this kind to question the heads of our security intelligence and law enforcement agencies and to hold them responsible, but not to resort to headline chasing. Yes, ask hard questions, but do not engage in ill-informed, or uniformly, innuendo. The people of Canada deserve better.

Phil Gurski is president and CEO of Borealis Threat and Risk Consulting. The Hill Times

Ensuring independence for Parliamentary National Security Committee

Bill C-22 is a positive development that creates a parliamentary review capability of the government’s national security policies and activities. What’s needed now are amendments to ensure the committee has the required independence from the PMO.

Bill C-51 was that it did not contain any provisions with respect to creating a special parliamentary committee with the authority to review national security activities and policies, which is something that has been recommended for years, and which Canada’s other “Five Eyes” intelligence partners (U.S., U.K., New Zealand, and Australia) all have.

Several witnesses that appeared on Bill C-51 recommended both independent oversight and review entities, but no action was taken by the government and C-51 passed without either being included. But such a committee would have an important role to play in both policy and specific case reviews. Reviewing how communities and a special parliamentary committee with the authority to review national security activities and policies, which is something that has been recommended for years, and which Canada’s other “Five Eyes” intelligence partners (U.S., U.K., New Zealand, and Australia) all have. Several witnesses that appeared on Bill C-51 recommended both independent oversight and review entities, but no action was taken by the government and C-51 passed without either being included.

The proposed committee is expressly defined as not being subject to the regular committee procedures like power of appointment, election of chairs, scheduling meetings, and filing of reports. Contrary to regular committee practices, the executive branch of government (PM and ministers) has significantly heightened control including the power to authorize investigations or provide information, all expressly without challenge or appeal.

Pursuant to Bill C-22, the PM appoints that potentially pose a threat to the chair’s direction. Committee reports would be provided to the Prime Minister’s Office inexplicably retains functional control. The proposed committee is expressly defined as not being subject to the regular committee procedures like power of appointment, election of chairs, scheduling meetings, and filing of reports. Contrary to regular committee practices, the executive branch of government (PM and ministers) has significantly heightened control including the power to authorize investigations or provide information, all expressly without challenge or appeal.

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The Prime Minister’s Office in Ottawa. Scott Newark says there are several areas in Bill C-22 where the Prime Minister’s Office inexplicably retains functional control over the upcoming Parliamentary National Security Committee.

The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

PHIL GURSKI

OPINION NATIONAL SECURITY & ANTI-TERRORISM

Bill C-22 is a positive development that creates a parliamentary review capability of the government’s national security policies and activities. What’s needed now are amendments to ensure the committee has the required independence from the PMO.

The Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence can descend into petty politics sometimes, but it shouldn’t on national security issues.

OTTAWA—In the wake of news out of Quebec that police in that province were given court warrants to intercept the communications of journalists, it turns out that CSIS cannot rule out the possibility that sometime over its 28-plus years of existence it too has listened in on some members of the fifth estate. In a session of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence in Ottawa on Nov. 30, Brian Rumiak, a senior CSIS official, noted that the service would never investigate journalists following the lead person happened to be a journalist, but that if that person engaged in terrorist activity, then it would be a different case.

Cue the outrage. This is, of course, coming on the heels of a Federal Court ruling that CSIS illegally held onto metadata it had collected under warrant for use in counterterrorism investigations. Canadians are probably angry at what seems to be yet another overreach by CSIS and we can probably expect calls for more oversight and reining in those cowboy spies.

And, yet, as with most stories on national security and intelligence, the criticism is in this case a bit of a misnomer. Context for instance, and a sober look at the facts and what is really happening here. Some Canadians undoubtedly feel that CSIS uses its mandate to target and investigate communities. And it does so very well and very judiciously. CSIS Act. In other words, CSIS does not target anyone without cause. The service carries out investigations when it gets information that an individual (or several individuals) is engaged in activities that potentially pose a threat to this country as defined in the aforementioned Section 2 of the CSIS Act. CSIS targets behaviour, not people or communities. And it does so very well and very judiciously.

Besides, who says that a journalist (or a professor for that matter) can’t be engaged in activities that pose a threat to our security? Are these people somehow beyond reproach? Are there no “bad apples” in the bunch? I would hope that CSIS would investigate anyone who does things that threaten us, irrespective of their profession, ethnicity, creed, colour, or whatever. Threats are threats, after all, and not limited to specific parts of our society.

Furthermore, do we really want our spies to unilaterally and unprovokedly rule out an investigation on a particular place just because that place is “sensitive”? If they had information that a terrorist cell was forming on a university campus does anyone really expect them to ignore it out of some ill-considered concerns that universities are hallowed halls of freedom of speech and thought? The same goes for secondary schools. Given what we know about the genesis of the Toronto 18, I for one hope that CSIS would do whatever it takes to nip these plots in the bud should another cell take shape in a high school.

I fear sometimes that the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence can descend into petty politics and scoring partisan points. We need committees of this kind to question the heads of our security intelligence and law enforcement agencies and to hold them responsible, but not to resort to headline chasing. Yes, ask hard questions, but do not engage in ill-informed, or uniformly, innuendo. The people of Canada deserve better.

Phil Gurski is president and CEO of Borealis Threat and Risk Consulting. The Hill Times

Ensuring independence for Parliamentary National Security Committee

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OPINION NATIONAL SECURITY
Canadian government sending carbon emissions in wrong direction

The prime minister and Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna need to explain how new pipelines and LNG terminals that will be around for 40 or 50 years fit within a coherent national climate change framework.

TORONTO—There is an interesting race going on in Ottawa, between increased carbon emissions from the government approvals for high-carbon energy projects, and reduced emissions from announced climate policies. Right now it’s neck and neck, and the consequences of the final result could be much more dire than any sports competition could ever be.

Last week, the government approved two new tar sands pipelines, Kinder Morgan and Line 3, which together will ship an additional 1.1 billion tonnes of tar sands oil per day. Just two months ago, the green light was given to the second of natural gas (LNG) terminal to be built by Petronas, a Malaysian state company. According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, the three projects will together increase Canada’s carbon emissions by 35 to 42 million tonnes (MT), the equivalent of adding as many as 8.9 million cars to our roads. That’s from extraction only and does not include the vast majority of emissions from these projects, those that occur when the fossil fuels are burned.

The government has also announced new climate change policies: a pan-Canadian price on carbon, a phase-out of coal-fired power by 2030, and a clean fuel standard. Each proposed policy has its weaknesses. For the coal phase-out, for example, it appears that Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia may still be burning coal in the 2030s thanks to federal “flexibility.” But generally these are laudable initiatives, welcomed by Canadians keen on climate leadership. Together, these initiatives aim to reduce carbon emissions by 53 MT.

So who will win the race? Will the pipeline permits or emissions increases from yet more approvals of high-carbon infrastructure? Will those decreases be enough to actually meet Canada’s 2030 target? That is the first challenge for the government. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government needs to credibly show Canadians that its climate framework will allow Canada to meet its international obligations.

Canadians deserve to see the greenhouse gas math. The government needs to lay out in precise detail the policies that will be introduced, the emissions that will be reduced for each, and how it all adds up to those emission decreases beating emission increases by about 200 million tonnes—the gap between Canada’s current emissions and its target.

Right now, the government seems to be tilting the race in favor of energy projects. Research shows that just one new pipeline and LNG terminal would increase emissions so much in the oil and gas sector—already Canada’s biggest carbon polluter—that the rest of the Canadian economy will need to cut its carbon pollution at least in half by 2030. The government in the prime minister and Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna need to explain how new pipelines and LNG terminals that will be around for 40 or 50 years fit within a coherent national climate change framework. Until then, this race will end terribly for much of the world, and any claims of climate leadership will sound hollow.

Dale Marshall is national program manager for Environmental Defence.

The Hill Times

Pan-Canadian framework on climate change: an opportunity for a race to the top

The first ministers’ meeting should signal the start of this race to the top, a clean and honest race, with the provinces paving the way for innovative climate policies and the federal government bringing stragglers into the race by using its jurisdictional and spending powers to deploy those policies nationally. It is time that we all flex our imagination and clean energy muscles and not allow a few laggards to slow us down.

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It’s only the beginning for green growth in Canadian aerospace industry

Green aviation represents a significant opportunity for exactly the kind of achievements the innovation agenda and the Clean Technology Program are seeking to develop.

SYLVAIN COFSKY

During the unveiling of Canada’s innovation agenda, Navdeep Bains, minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, announced that Canada should develop a daring and coordinated strategy for innovation that will produce beneficial results for all Canadians. The agenda stresses the importance of collaborative research and inclusive partnerships among all actors, including industrial companies of all sizes, academic and research institutions, and government agencies. This added value is crucial for the Canadian aerospace industry, which relies on intersectoral action, expertise and the importance of different organizations.

This is especially true when it comes to green aviation. The AirTransport Action Group (ATAG), an international aerospace ecosystem, has set clear climate targets for the industry: improve the aviation fleet fuel efficiency by an average of 1.5 per cent per year between 2009 and 2020, stabilize net carbon emissions from aviation through carbon-neutral growth as of 2020, and reduce net aviation carbon emissions by 50 per cent between 2005 and 2050. Reducing the environmental impact of air travel is imperative for manufacturers and operators around the world, and represents a tremendous opportunity for Canada to lead the way.

With the investment of $1.8-billion per year by the international civil aerospace sector on efficiency-related R&D, as well as the reduction by 75 per cent in perceived noise since the first jets, it is clear that we must accelerate our industry’s green growth by supporting their initiatives.

The Canadian industry has already achieved significant environmental milestones for the aerospace sector through collaborative research projects led by the Green Aviation Research & Development Network (GARDN). Among these are the first commercial flight of a jet powered by biofuel in Canada and the first civilian jet in the world 100 per cent powered by pure biofuel. We have also developed technology that could lead to a 25-40 per cent decrease in fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions from regional and business aircraft. Over the course of the last seven years, we have led 33 completed and ongoing research projects aiming for cleaner, quieter and more sustainable aviation.

These achievements are only the beginning. We share the Canadian government’s goal of promoting the creation and growth of clean technology businesses, and are seeking to increase the country’s competitiveness in the aerospace industry while reducing the environmental footprint of airplanes, engines and avionics systems. By financing research projects with these aims, we, as a network, have succeeded in becoming a leader in green aviation. By working with the government on the development of the innovation agenda, as well as with the Clean Technology Program of the 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy, we believe that the development of a greener, more environmentally sustainable aviation industry can be one of Canada’s great innovation achievements.

Challenges remain, however, and continued collaboration will be essential. Increasingly strict environmental regulations set by international organizations, different regions and airports remain both an issue and a motivating force for the industry. Green innovative transportation, to reduce air pollution to improve Canadians’ lives, is also at the heart of Transport Canada’s strategic plan for the future of transport—transportation—transportation with our efforts and work. We have been working together with other actors in the Canadian aerospace field, including the Consortium for Aerospace Research and Innovation in Canada (CARIC) and the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada (AIAC) to have a positive effect on the Canadian aerospace sector, and our momentum is growing. Green aviation is already a significant component of a large number of dynamic organizations, and both GARDN and CARIC are experiencing increased participation from both Canadian and foreign organizations. Our network already includes more than 50 members from the industrial and research spheres, as well as international organizations such as IATA, and keeps on growing. Canada has a rich ecosystem for aviation innovation, and we bring undeniable expertise for incorporating sustainable development.

All of this creates a strong foundation for continued green aviation advancement. Our work is not only crucial for the growth and competitiveness of the Canadian aerospace industry but also for achieving the government’s goals of being a country that is innovative, prosperous and conscientious about sustainable development. Bombardier’s C Series aircraft, for example, set the bar high for foreign competitors to reach greener technologies. But to maintain Canada’s competitiveness, engaging the innovation process upstream is essential. We need to work towards effective and supportive green R&D with all stakeholders of the aerospace industry.

Green aviation represents a significant opportunity for exactly the kind of achievements the innovation agenda and the Clean Technology Program are seeking to develop. Consolidating a cross-Canada innovation network, as GARDN has done, goes hand-in-hand with this vision and will result in better jobs, leading technologies, and a greener aviation industry in the future. We look forward to continuing to build on our achievements in the months and years ahead.

Sylvain Cofsky is executive director of the Green Aviation Research & Development Network, which is supported through the Business-Led Networks of Centres of Excellence program.
Government’s middle-class agenda at risk in ‘new normal’ economy

With low growth, it is much harder to address fundamental challenges such as the rapid technological change that promises huge upsets to the world of work. Middle-class jobs may be the most vulnerable to technological change.

Low growth is the “new normal” for Canada, but much slower growth than in the past—former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge and former deputy finance minister of Michael Horgan, and former senior trade negotiator for John M. McCallum. Their bottom line is that the Canadian economy will not improve enough this decade to deliver much improved living standards. The outlook could improve more if the incoming Trump administration generates stronger economic growth south of the border, increasing the potential for Canadian exports. But even then, Canada will still be on a low-growth track. But, there is also the risk that the Trump administration will be much more protectionist and create significant uncertainty in Canada, and Mexico, over the future of NAFTA.

In fact, the three former officials urge Canadian business to hold back on new investments until they see a clearer picture of what may happen in the U.S. and from other sources of uncertainty. British capital, for example, is not particularly interested in Canada, given the state of the economy, and other public service providers. They have called for the abolition of the CBC, which competes unfairly with the private sector.

And Kellie Leitch, the highest profile Conservative leadership candidate, has called for the abolition of the CBC in Ottawa, Joly explained her previous opposition to the CBC/Radio Canada in Canada from Industrial Institute of Communications (II) in Ottawa, Joly explained her previous opposition to the CBC/Radio Canada in Canada from Industrial Institute of Communications (II).

Andrew Cardozo writes Andrew Cardozo.

Toronto—Is low growth the “new normal” for Canada and other rich countries that make up the G7? If so, what does this mean for efforts to reduce inequality, strengthen the middle class, and generate the public revenue needed to finance health care, education, and other public services?

David Crane

But even if the government is committed to doing something about this, it is much harder to address fundamental challenges such as the rapid technological change that promises huge upsets to the world of work. Middle-class jobs may be the most vulnerable to technological change.

In their analysis, looking through a lens of the “new normal” the three former senior public officials highlight major structural changes in the economy that occurred in the mid-point of the past decade, around 2004, before the financial crisis hit several years later.

From 1996 to 2007, G7 economies averaged annual economic growth of 2.5 per cent, but since then has averaged 1.5 per cent. These may seem small, but are significant changes. Such as how Britain negotiates its future with the European Union and Mexico, over the future of NAFTA.

The economic slowdown is a result of the “slowdown in productivity growth, which is essential for sustaining growth in living standards over time, even more so since labour force growth is slowing. Without better productivity performance, from innovation and increased business investment in new production systems, as well as more competition, we will be stuck in a low-growth world. The three former federal officials see little prospect for much pickup in productivity over the period to 2020.

The slowdown in productivity growth is a result of the “slowdown in productivity growth, which is essential for sustaining growth in living standards over time.” So the aging of society means slower growth in the labour force and rising social and health costs. The aging of society also curbs overall consumption growth, from consumer spending and saving by households and potential output would now be lower, or at least more uncertain, than perceived before. So the “new normal” will likely persist to at least the end of this decade, and perhaps beyond, absent better policies and less uncertainty.

NEW COMMUNICATIONS CBC

CIBC, the innovation agenda, and making America Great again

No government wants to hear that its public broadcaster wants hundreds of millions of dollars more in subsidies in the same week a political opponent has called for the abolition of the said corporation.

Andrew Cardozo writes Andrew Cardozo.

O h my! What do you do with this? The CBC wants more dollars. Four hundred million dollars more, to be precise. No government, no matter how supportive, wants to hear that from the public broadcaster, especially when the government has a growing budget deficit.

And no government wants this message in the same week when Kellie Leitch, Conservative Party leadership candidate, has called for the abolition of the CBC. Joly observed that Canadian “cultural industries are entering an era of mass creation in cultural products,” noting that “virtual reality is the biggest technological change since motion pictures.” She said her government sees “a clear link between culture and economic growth,” and this is where her focus is on digital innovation to link the government-wide quest to advance innovation across many sectors, making it the key driver of the economy development for Canada.

This search is being led by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The department is renamed Innovation, Science and Economic Development.”

Andrew Cardozo is president of Pearson Centre and an adjunct professor at Carleton University. He is a former CRTC commissioner.

Photograph by Andrew Meade.

The Hill Timesphotograph by Andrew Meade

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THE HILL TIMES, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016

Canada & the 21St Century Middle Class

"New Normal" for Canada and Other Rich Countries

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"New Normal" for Canada and Other Rich Countries
Does Canada need to worry about the same festering malaise that has disrupted the United States?

Without more vigorous actions to counteract increasing inequality among Canadians, we risk growing the same kinds of resentment and malaise here.

For many Canadians, the outcome of the United States election has been a shock. Trump’s campaign, as inarticulate and venal as it was, tapped into important and deeply rooted realities, realities that may contain lessons for Canada too.

Does Canada need to worry about the same festering malaise that has become so dramatically evident in the U.S.? Powerful international data on income inequality offer significant insights.

Branco Milanovic, a leading economist, has been producing some of the best research on world income inequality, drawing on detailed data from his years at the World Bank.

Milanovic has produced a remarkable graph—he calls it his “elephant graph” for the shape it takes. It includes income distribution data from almost all of the world’s 200 countries and asks a simple question: how much have individuals’ incomes grown between 1988 and 2008?

To answer this question, Milanovic divided each country’s population into smaller groups, determined each group’s income measured in standardized U.S. dollars in 1988, and then sorted them in increasing order of their income. In other words, the world’s population has been ranked from poorest to richest, regardless of nationality. The graph then shows how much each group’s incomes grew over the two decades from 1988 to 2008.

The global average income growth for all the income groups was about 25 per cent—not bad at about two percent real growth per year. But these improvements were very far from being evenly distributed.

Among the bottom fifth of the world population, incomes grew at rates between 20 and 40 per cent—lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty. Incomes around the mid-point of the world’s income spectrum grew twice as fast over this two-decade period, at 80 per cent. This growth signals dramatic improvements in living standards for many living in what we used to call the less-developed world, and it reflects the emergence of a much larger middle class in many countries. This is all very good news.

But there is a dramatic drop in the income growth rates for individuals in the upper ranges—except at the very top. For individuals whose incomes placed them in the top 75 to 85 per cent, their incomes hardly grew at all, and those whose incomes are in the top 85th to 95th percentiles of the world’s population saw their incomes grow by only 10-15 percent over a 20-year period—almost stagnant, in other words.

Only for the top five percent of income recipients was income growth above 20 percent, and it was most dramatic among the top one percent of the world’s population—at a staggering 60 per cent or more. So who exactly are these big winners and losers?

Milanovic’s analysis places the newly emerging Chinese middle class at the peak of this curve (near the elephant’s head), with a growth rate in their incomes around a dramatic 80 per cent. At the trough of the income growth curve you’ll find the U.S. lower-middle class—many of Trump’s core supporters—with essentially zero growth in their incomes.

In other words, the Chinese middle class has blossomed economically while working class America has stagnated.

Where does Canada fit on the curve? Canada is very well-off in global terms—even those in our lowest income groups have an average income well above most of the world’s population. Unpublished data provided to me by Professor Milanovic show that Canada’s median incomes would put us at about the 50th percentile of the world’s income distribution.

From this view, it may seem Canadians should have no complaints. But look more closely and there is pause for concern. Our pattern of income growth and inequality largely mirrors what is happening globally—dramatic income growth at the top, with only modest gains lower down the income spectrum.

The bottom three fifths of families saw their incomes grow by nine to 15 percent over this same 20-year period. The second highest fifth did a little better with their income growing by 19 per cent—while the top fifth saw their incomes expand by 35 per cent, two to three times as much growth as those in the bottom 60 per cent. There is some comfort. Canada’s income inequality is considerably less than that of the U.S. We have stronger social safety nets, greater longevity and significantly more equitable education.

But in this global context, we cannot afford to be complacent.

Without more vigorous actions to counteract increasing inequality among Canadians, we risk growing the same kinds of resentment and malaise here.

Michael Wolfson is an expert adviser with EvidenceNetwork.ca and holds a Canada Research Chair in population health modelling/populomics at the University of Ottawa. He is a former assistant chief statistician at Statistics Canada, and has a PhD in economics from Cambridge.
A betting person might reasonably wager that Justin Trudeau will not want to open another front in the pipeline wars between now and the 2019 election. And that probably makes Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, who could be facing an uphill re-election battle in less than two years, a collateral winner of this week’s developments.

Montreal—It is a rare government decision that involves a lot of predictable political pain for little obvious electoral gain. For better or for worse, the approval by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of the controversial Trans Mountain pipeline falls into that category.

It is unlikely to win him support from within the ranks of those who might support the pipeline agenda. They tend to be spoken for by the Conservatives—those who, and for the most part, have no appetite for Trudeau’s pro-active climate-change agenda.

On the other hand, at least some of the seats of the 17 Liberal MPs elected in B.C. in the last election could be on the line. The approval of this pipeline plan will not sit well with many of the constituents. Even if he wanted to, Trudeau could not get all his causes to a song in the same key. A handful of them have already broken ranks with his decision.

The Liberals are not the only ones potentially at risk on what is probably a Canada-wide front these days.

Take the case of former Premier Christy Clark. She will be campaigning for re-election in the spring. If she supports Trudeau’s move, it will be her provincial Liberals who will first test the post-announcement waters. She could be in for a choppy crossing. There’s widespread expectation on Parliament Hill that Clark will at some point publicly sign off on the Trans Mountain project. The federal government has been playing nice with its B.C. counterpart, delivering a much-wanted green light for a major liquefied gas development and promising billions of federal dollars to improve marine safety.

But Clark would not be the political survivor that she is if she did not have a well-honed instinct for self-preservation. B.C. Elections are won or lost in the greater-Vancouver area, the site of the pipeline whose capacity to carry bitumen oil to the coast is Trudeau’s Kinder Morgan plans to expand. On Wednesday, she said that Trudeau was close to meeting all of her conditions for supporting the pipeline. She invited the prime minister to come to B.C. to sell the decision. By all indications, she wants to see how all plays out before taking a definitive stance.

There is the NDP where Alberta Premier Rachel Notley was celebrating a big win alongside Trudeau on Tuesday. Thomas Mulcair was calling the federal decision a betrayal of the trust many B.C. voters placed in the prime minister.

The B.C. New Democrats are also critical of the federal decision. The cracks between the ruling NDP in Edmonton and their opposition cousins in Parliament and in Victoria are becoming too wide to be papered over.

Whichever succeeds Mulcair will be hard-pressed to square the pipeline circle.

In any event, as of now, Trudeau and Notley are joined at the hip. On Nov. 29, the prime minister argued it was the premier’s determination to re-in in Alberta’s carbon emissions that made his approval of a pipeline consistent with Canada’s climate change commitments.

But if she fails to win re-election, the quid pro quo is unlikely to survive her NDP government, decision making then potentially at risk on what is probably a Canada-wide front these days.

The Liberals are not the only ones potentially at risk on what is probably a Canada-wide front these days.

That being said, it might be prudent for TransCanada—the company behind the plan to link the oilfields to the Atlantic Coast through the Prairies and Central Canada—to not take this week’s federal “yes” to Kinder Morgan as a sign that its pipeline will be good to go any time soon, if at all.

A betting person might reasonably wager that Trudeau will not want to open another front in the pipeline wars between now and the 2019 election. And that probably makes Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, who could be facing an uphill re-election battle in less than two years, a collateral winner of this week’s developments.

Chantal Hébert

The dispute between the CBC, private broadcasters and the private broadcasters over the right to collect advertising looks like the fight between tired old dogs around a shrinking bone. Private broadcasters believe their revenue shrinks because of the CBC’s “unfair competition,” being publicly subsidized and, at the same time, selling commercials.

The reality is that they lose advertisers because they lose viewers.

The CBC, however, pretend to buy into that argument, is willing to become commercial-free, asking in return to be fully subsidized by taxpayers. The price tag is extra $400-million. Basically, the government would take money from the taxpayers' reluctance to finance old problems. To circumvent new technology or, in this case, the CBC.

The typical question asked by CRTS is: what’s the benefit for the taxpayers who would foot the bill for this operation?

Nothing. Real action against a promise to do better in the future from organizations built on a structure that has no future. Broadcasters are unable to run their businesses that are losing customers and have no plan to turn things around.

Whenever private broadcasters have a problem running a profitable business because viewers leave them in droves, it is never their fault. Sometimes they blame American competitors, new technology or, in this case, the CBC.

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Angelo Persichilli

I am not against a national publicly financed broadcaster. I am against the CBC using moral blackmail to get funding rather than simply proving its capacity to do its job.

I am not against the CBC The National’s new anchor Pete Haydon, but I am against the CBC using moral blackmail to get funding rather than simply proving its capacity to do its job.

In conclusion, CBC would let us believe that with Canadians giving them $400-million more, it would solve its transition to the digital era, eliminate the problem, and the private broadcasting, and improve Canadian programming. Wow, they just solved a lot more than simply proving its capacity to do its job.

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When private broadcasters have a problem running a profitable business because viewers leave them in droves, it is never their fault. Sometimes they blame American competitors, new technology or, in this case, the CBC.
Members of the all-party Special Committee on Electoral Reform speak to the media on Dec. 1 after tabling its report, which recommended holding a national referendum on a proportional representation system. Bloc Québécois MP Luc Thériault; NDP and vice-chair MP Nathan Cullen; Green party leader Elizabeth May; and Liberal MP and chair Francis Scarpaleggia; NDP and vice-chair MP Nathan Cullen; Green party leader Elizabeth May; and press gallery moderator CBC reporter Elizabeth Thompson. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade.

Liberal government may have just set its own electoral-reform promise ablaze

The weeks ahead may yield some surprises yet, and Canadians may finally get truly fair and democratic elections by 2019, as was promised to them. But if the tack taken last week by the government in response to the final report of the special parliamentary committee on electoral reform is any indication, I won’t hold my breath.

The first course of action is to have the government—in this instance, a special parliamentary committee on electoral reform with membership proportional to a party’s level of support in the election—decide to cooperate and compromise. The result is a road map for the government to make good on its promise, wrapped up in the recommendations in a majority report.

The next element in the plan is to send the minister leading the file, Maryam Monsef, to attack the committee for failing to do its job, even though it did exactly what the minister asked of it. It just happened to come up with an answer the government didn’t like: in Canada, it’s time for a proportional voting system with local representation, but first, ask the people through a referendum.

If you’re a headline writer in the news section working within the rules of fair and balanced journalism, you’d write, as The Globe and Mail did: “Liberals urge Trudeau to break promise on electoral reform.” If you’re a columnist with a bit more leeway, you’d say that the file has reached “tire fire” status, as CBC’s Robyn Urback did.

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One more thing: on the matter of a referendum, cite the overwhelming expert testimony you heard about how it’s both not necessary and how it favours the status quo, while simultaneously ignoring the overwhelming expert advice you heard at committee calling on the government to bring in a proportional voting system that incorporates local representation, like the vast majority of democracies in the world.

Following the incoherence? Wait, there’s more.

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The CF-18 is viable to beyond 2025, according to the commander of the RCAF. Why didn’t we listen to him and CF-18 operators and maintainers? The numbers have been fudged and the capability gap simply does not exist. We should not be trying to justify bad judgment.

LAURIE HAWN

The government’s fighter-jet decision puts our sovereignty, economy and foreign relations at risk. The government has decided to buy 18 F/A-18 Super Hornets as an interim solution to Canada’s longer-term requirement for a next-generation fighter aircraft, but the decision is based on false premises of a capability gap, that it is a cheaper solution, the F-35 doesn’t work, that a single-engine fighter is unsafe, and that Canadian industry will not suffer.

The CF-18 is viable to beyond 2025 according to the commander of the RCAF. Why didn’t we listen to him and CF-18 operators and maintainers? The numbers have been fudged and the capability gap simply does not exist. We should not be trying to justify bad judgment.

We will waste billions of unbudgeted dollars and will not get much additional capability. Our USAF NORAD partners will use fifth-generation fighters and will resist a mix of less capable aircraft. The USAAF won’t hesitate to use the Canadian bases that they largely paid for, and we will risk losing the ability to conduct air sovereignty of our own airspace.

The Super Hornet is becoming more expensive than the F-35. Denmark quoted Super Hornet life-cycle costs at 43.6 per cent higher than the F-35, and rated F-35 the hands-down winner in all areas. Kuwait is buying 40 Super Hornet for $335-million per aircraft, which does include a lot of additional equipment, but much of which is already available on every F-35. Ongoing cost reductions will make F-35 our cheapest viable option, at about $85-million around 2020, and be part of a worldwide fleet of over 3,000 aircraft with significant advantages in supportability and economics of scale.

F-35 is proving itself with USAF and USMC operational readiness and successful deployments. F-35, with the whole range of fifth-generation capabilities, is proving clearly superior to older aircraft: hundreds of F-35s are flying; and hundreds of pilots and support personnel from many air arms are training trails.

U.S., U.K., Australia (their purchase of Super Hornet is to replace their retired F-111), Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Italy, Turkey, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Israel all chose the F-35 after weighing alternatives; and others are poised to join. That is no coincidence, and an independent review panel on Canada’s horizon came to same conclusion in a regretfully unreleased report.

Advanced engine technology has rendered moot single-engine criticism about the F-35. Single-engine F-16s have a better overall safety record than twin-engine F-18. The U.S. Denmark, Norway and Canada will operate F-35 in the North and the U.S. from ships a long way from nowheres. Canadian aerospace industries, jobs, and the economy will be big losers. More than 100 Canadian companies have done very well winning F-35 contracts, worth over $1-billion. For any new contracts, that ends with Super Hornet, as Lockheed Martin will not likely sign new contracts with companies in countries that haven’t “signed on the line.” We will be out-of-step with future technologies, and this may well be an industry-killing Avro Arrow redux and/or a costly Sea King redux.

The bottom line is that a Super Hornet buy will not be interim. We don’t have the budget or personnel to support a mixed fleet of CF-18s and the significantly different Super Hornet; and we will surely not have the budget or personnel to support a mixed fleet of Super Hornets and any other new aircraft. We will be “forced” to buy more Super Hornets and be left with an orphan fighter that can’t compete with then-current threats, a less credible Air Force, and status as a weak and unreliable ally.

The only acceptable course of action would have been to hold an immediate, fair, and open competition for the Liberals pressed for in opposition. Such competition must be done with a realistic statement of requirement (SOR) and request for proposal (RFP) that address anticipated threats well past mid-century. This is about the USASF should have gotten it right. To expect less is to commit our people in uniform and our country to unacceptable and unnecessary risk.

Former Conservative MP Laurie Hawn is a former parliamentary secretary to the minister of National Defence, a former CF-18 squadron commander, and member of previous New Fighter Aircraft Program. Additional signatories: Maj. Gen. (Ret’d) Lewis Mackenzie, former diplomat Ferry de Kerckhove, Dr. Douglas Bland (Col. Ret’d), Dr. Howard Coombs (Col. Ret’d), Brig.-Gen. (Ret’d) Don Macnamara, Col. (Ret’d) Alain Pellerin.

**Feds’ fighter-jets decision puts a lot at risk**

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Eugene Lang. The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright.
Canadian security agencies ‘consulting’ with U.S. Homeland Security to vet all Syrian refugees

Opposition parties say they don’t have any objections Canadian security agencies consulting with the U.S. Homeland Security databases to screen Syrian refugees coming into Canada.

Canadian government received help from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to identify these refugees. In an effort to minimize security risks and provide a new home for vulnerable refugees, Canada has asked the UNHCR to prioritize vulnerable refugees who are a low security risk, such as women at risk and complete families,” the backgrounder states. “This is consistent with Canada’s overall approach to refugee resettlement.”

Canada and the U.S. signed a bilateral treaty in late 2012 to share fingerprints and personal information such as name, nationalities, birthdays and photos, of refugee and visa applicants to either country. The treaty was signed to weed out fraudulent applications and to share information on individuals deemed security risks.

Canada is also a member of the Five Country Conference, a group of five countries that share information on migration security issues. Other countries in this group include the United States, New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom.

The government officials of countries in this group can consult each other to seek information on applicants suspected of applying for immigration or refugee status under a different name in other countries in any of the five countries.

Meanwhile, the Syrian refugee crisis is one of the most serious in decades, and according to the Canadian Red Cross, “nearly two million Syrians are estimated to have fled to Turkey, while 1.2 million have gone to Lebanon. 625,000 have sought refuge in Jordan and 245,000 went to Iraq.”

In interviews last week, opposition MPs on Public Safety and Immigration committees said they support the government’s decision to screen refugees on both Canadian and the U.S. databases.

“I don’t have a problem working with our allies and if we can share and help each other, I don’t see that as a bad thing,” Conservative MP Larry Miller (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Ont.) told The Hill Times last week.

“Some might say that it could be abused. We have to put some faith in our intelligence and security of people and, at the same time, have some kind of safeguard in there to make sure that they are [safe]. The principle that should be just all of us and not use information from our allies, I don’t think in this day and age would [apply],” said Mr. Miller.

NDP MP Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, B.C.) said she also had no objection to the Canadian security officials consulting with U.S. counterparts. She, however, said Canada should do more to expedite processing the applications of privately sponsored Syrian refugees. One of the reasons why the application processing is slow, she said, is because of the security situation in the region and the Canadian immigration officials can’t reach the areas where the refugee applicants are located. Ms. Kwan said that Canadians can help the UNHCR help in processing these applications and also some of the personal interviews could be done using video conferencing.

Ms. Kwan said she has consulted the UN officials and they said they can help Canada in processing these applications but to do that would require legal authority from the Canadian government.

“All that they needed was for the Canadian government to delegate authority to them,” said Ms. Kwan.

She said she wrote a letter to Mr. McCallum to delegate this authority to the UN officials but the minister declined her request saying the privacy of applications can only be done by the designated government of Canada officials.

“I regret that we’re not in a position where we can make it easier for visa officers employed and designated by the Government of Canada,” Mr. McCallum wrote in a letter in August in response to Ms. Kwan’s letter. aruna@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times
### Natural Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline decisions about getting resources to market sustainably</td>
<td>Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada’s natural resources sector suffering</td>
<td>Conservative MP Mark Strahl</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s a path forward for natural resources sector</td>
<td>NDP MP Richard Cannings</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a mining ombudsman on horizon</td>
<td>Liberal MP championing the cause</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal government’s $1.5-billion marine safety plan may fall short</td>
<td>Denis Calnan</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with increased tanker traffic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s no real evidence natural resource partnerships are actually</td>
<td>Bonnie Campbell and Claude Prémont</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefitting aboriginal peoples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources and governance shifts in Canada</td>
<td>Ryan Bullock</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining the gender gap: how do aboriginal women perceive mining in</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pipeline decisions about getting resources to market sustainably, says Natural Resources Minister Carr

‘In the context of any particular decision, there will be people who like it and people who like it less well, but governing is the business of making choices for which we will be held accountable,’ says Carr.

BY RACHEL AIELLO

The government’s decision to approve the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain and Enbridge Line 3 pipeline projects “speaks volumes about what the government of Canada thinks of the necessity of building infrastructure to get our resources to market sustainably,” Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr told a crowd of Alberta businesspeople at a Calgary Chamber of Commerce event the day after his government announced the approval of Enbridge’s Line 3 and Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline and rejected the Northern Gateway.

Mr. Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Man.) said building the projects were “critical” to moving resources outside of Canada and bringing “much needed hope” to the energy sector’s thousands of employees.

Last Tuesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), flanked by Mr. Carr, Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna (Ottawa Centre, Ont.), Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, B.C.), Transport Minister Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Westmount, Que.), and Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.), announced that the government would give the two major pipeline projects the go-ahead, while dismissing Northern Gateway, another project of Enbridge.

“We consulted widely, we fundamentally changed our relationship, and we continue to with indigenous peoples,” Mr. Carr said.

During the announcement, Mr. Trudeau said their decision was a “major win” for Canadian workers, families, and the economy, and was not swayed by “political arguments” at any level of government.

“This is all about demonstrating that we understand that getting resources to market safely in a way that respects our responsibilities towards the environment, towards future generations, but does it in a way that is anchored in science and not rhetoric is at the heart of it,” Mr. Trudeau said.

The Conservatives were quick to say the government didn’t go far enough, pointing to the jobs lost by not approving Northern Gateway, while the New Democrats and Green Party alleged Mr. Trudeau misled British Columbians, and warned of the political fallout from activists and indigenous communities on the West Coast.

However, the provincial NDP in Alberta has taken a different stance. Alberta Premier Rachel Notley, who was a central part of the announcement, met with Mr. Trudeau in his office following the announcement last Tuesday and held her own press conference afterward, applauding the federal Liberals for their leadership on the projects that will be a boon for her province.

Enbridge’s Line 3 is a 1,067-kilometre, $4.8-billion pipeline replacement to an existing pipeline between Edmonton and Hardisty, Alta., to Superior, Wis. It was approved by the National Energy Board in April with 89 conditions, and once in place is project to create 15,000 jobs while it’s being built, and will raise $4.5-billion in provincial and federal government revenues.

Northern Gateway was a proposed 1,177-kilometre, $7.9-billion pipeline that would have carried diluted bitumen from the Bruderheim, Alta., to an export port in Kitimat, B.C. It was approved with 209 conditions by the National Energy Board, but the Federal Court overturned the approval in June, finding the project had not adequately consulted on or near the areas.

In addition to announcing the pipeline decisions, the government also put in a moratorium on crude oil tankers along the north coast of British Columbia and will be introducing legislation to that effect by spring 2017.

In a Q&A with The Hill Times ahead of the government’s announcement, Mr. Carr said in making the decision, he considered the views of indigenous communities, local communities, and even the projects’ critics.

“We also know that in the context of any particular decision, there will be people who like it and people who like it less well, but governing is the business of making choices for which we will be held accountable,” said Mr. Carr.

The following interview has been edited for length and style:

Your government has announced the phasing out of coal power. What impact is this decision having on the pipeline conversation with the provinces?

“I think people like certainty and they like a plan and Minister McKenna announced a plan with flexibility, and I think that certainly the provinces and industry appreciate that and that is what has been motivating the decisions we’ve been taking, and also the road that leads to decisions.

“It’s consistent with our international obligations and it’s consistent with a strategic plan that will place Canada at the forefront on climate change, also an understanding that we have an obligation at the same time to develop our resources sustainably, and flexibility for the provinces, which is another important principal.

“So I think, all in all, it was a very positive announcement and should be well-received.”

With Northern Gateway, what are the factors that went into the decision on whether to drop approval or go forward with more consultations?

“The factors in the decision are really what the Court of Appeal has laid out for the Government of Canada, and we took the decision not to appeal that judgment to the Supreme Court of Canada. So we will look at the options that were presented to us by the court and make a decision based on those options.

What are you hearing would be the arguments for and against approving Enbridge’s Line 3?

“Line 3 is a replacement line and we have had extensive consultation with indigenous peoples, which is important.”

On Kinder Morgan, you’ve got a local Liberal MP and the mayor of Vancouver speaking out against the decision-making process, whose input are you prioritizing, industry, or community?

“Everybody’s voice would have noticed that we had 35,000 opinions expressed online from every region of the country, and the ministerial panel and the summation soliciting opinions in Alberta and British Columbia. A variety of views were expressed. We’ve had individuals from all over the place giving us advice on these projects, and it’s ultimately the job of the Government of Canada to weigh all of the factors respecting the opinion of those who have taken the trouble to express it, and...
ultimately making a decision for which we’ll be held accountable.”

Are you looking at ways to mitigate political risk? If you’ve got caucus members speaking out, and considering your government is well on budget, how is the relationship with provinces and city mayors? How are you trying to strike that balance?

“We’re talking to people with an interest in these projects all the time and it’s not just an issue of developing relationships over time, and this is particularly true with indigenous people and communities. These are relationships that we want to establish.

“So while the interest of communities is very important, project by project, it’s also very important as we develop a nation’s resources together. These are ongoing relationships that we’re building. I think that it’s going very well. And we also know that in the context of any particular decision there will be people who like it and people who like it less well, but governing is the business of making choices for which we will be held accountable.”

Do you see the new marine safety plan as an adequate compromise, to pave the way for Kinder Morgan’s approval, as many are hinting?

“I wouldn’t see that as a compromise, I would see it as a very important piece of public policy that is designed to facilitate Canada as the emergence of a global leader on ocean protection. I think it’s very important in its own right. And I hope a long way to go, we still do, but I think the prime minister’s announcement will indicate the objective, and the interest of the Government of Canada to improve considerably our response, and, by the way, to co-develop that response with indigenous people up and down the coast, which is also a very important commitment as we build the nation-to-nation partnership.

“You’ve said a goal to expand Canadian export markets. Where are you looking to expand, and why?

“We know that the world is interested in Canada’s natural energy. Canada has been an exporter of its natural resources for a very long time in a very consistent, consistent and economic sense for us to expand export markets.

“We know that there is an interest in Asia. We know there is an interest in Europe. So Canada is keen to look at all of the options in a sustainable way to move our natural resources to those emerging markets around the world.”

Earlier this month, job numbers showed that the natural resources sector is down 20,000 jobs compared with last year. Pipeline approvals might be one way to create more jobs in the sector. But are there other areas your seeing, like clean-energy, that could bring in more jobs soon?

“Yes, we’ve announced a significant investment and there will be more. We await of course Mr. Morneau’s decisions on budget 2017, but it is a commitment of the Government of Canada to invest in clean infrastructure, in clean growth within the natural resource sectors.

“There are a number of commitments that have been made in Budget 2016 that we’re implementing now, and I’m sure there will be more as we move forward, but the crucially true that as we look at the transition to a low-carbon economy, that the Government of Canada has a role to incent the private sector and to work with the provinces to position ourselves well as this transition moves forward.”

Will these budget measures next year just extend what was announced in last year, or are these new ways to incentivize industry?

“The commitment is to investments in green infrastructure, clean growth, investments in renewable sources of energy across the regions of the country. That’s the commitment that is one that the government takes seriously and one that we will reflect in our investment decisions we make down the road.”

What kind of conversations have you had with your American counterparts following the election of Donald Trump and does the energy conversation go, considering the next president seems to want to take energy policy in a different direction?

“There isn’t a new administration yet. I developed a very close working relationship with Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and [Mexican Energy] Secretary [Pedro Joaquin] Coldwell, and as you may remember, we signed a memorandum of understanding in Winnipeg on a North American climate/clean energy strategy. We will reach out to the Trump administration once it has been formed and we will defend Canada’s interests as we look way to develop the energy relationship with our American neighbours on continental energy issues.”

Are you concerned about the North American clean energy and environmental agreement?

“We are committed to it and we will put this very high on our agenda as the Trump administration is formed, and I’m sure I will be involved in early conversations with the secretary of Energy once he or she is appointed.”

There has been a lot of concern raised about what a Trump presidency means for things like climate change and environmental policy and how far he can change things. Do you think the concerns are accurate or overblown?

“I think we have to wait and see what policies are announced by the administration, always mindful of promoting Canada’s interests. It’s too early to respond. We’re certainly not going to respond to what might change. We have said what policies may be implemented or approved. We will wait for those policies. Meanwhile, we continue to work with our colleagues in the United States at all levels of the government and with NGOs and with civil society with whom we will engage right away.”

Do you think the change in Canada about our energy policy direction?

“You’ve heard Minister McKenna, you’ve heard Prime Minister Trudeau that we have commitments—international commitments and domestic ones—on climate change. We have made commitments to our North American partners on, for example, reduction of methane. We will continue down that path, and when the American administration makes clear its positions and the people who will be responsible for advancing those positions, we will be very pleased to engage with them.”

Jeffrey Davidson, Canada’s corporate social responsibility counsellor for the natural resources sector, recently told The Hill Times the government is “seriously reviewing” creating an ombudsperson to investigate Canadian mining companies. Is that something you think of so when you hear that?

“We’re committed to corporate social responsibility within the mining sector. We focus on ensuring Canadian mining companies act responsibly in doing business internationally, and that’s the position we’ve taken and that we continue to take.”

So is the way it is now adequate or do more steps need to be taken?

“We’re always prepared to look at better ideas. Our mind is open to doing things better. We can always do things better.”

RYAN BULLOCK

The drive for natural resource development is putting new incentives and pressures on communities and industries to increase production in resource-rich areas. In Canada this often involves aboriginal lands. Unprecedented growth in major energy, forestry, and mining projects aimed at strengthening Canada’s economy has produced new partnerships with aboriginal peoples under the promise of increased royalties and employment. But does it deliver the anticipated advantages?

A recent study completed by researchers at the Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Winnipeg and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council reviewed existing evidence to verify claims of aboriginal benefits from natural resource partnerships. Researchers used well-known academic databases—ISI Web of Science and Scopus—to identify and systematically review research on energy, forestry, and mining partnerships involving aboriginal groups between 2005 and 2015.

Analysis of 49 peer-reviewed articles showed that research on natural resource partnerships increased over the past decade, with 2013 and 2015 being peak years. However, only 24 of the 49 articles included research findings from specifically local projects. Most of these papers—22 of 24—did give examples of actual benefits of natural resource development partnerships. The most cited benefits were employment, found in 12 of 24 articles; and financial support, found in eight of 24 articles. Yet, in-depth investigation found great variation in how research was conducted, reporting standards, and definition of terms, which made quantification and comparison of benefits across cases and sectors impossible.

Though rich and diverse, evidence of aboriginal benefits from current peer-reviewed research is inconclusive. The question of aboriginal benefits is interesting to consider alongside trends in research leadership. Top contributing universities were University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of Manitoba, and York University. When the locations of researcher institutions and research sites were compared, a distinct pattern emerged. It is not surprising perhaps that researchers—and associated jobs, decisions, funding, and knowledge outputs—were concentrated in southern and urban Canada, whereas most research sites, like communities and development sites, were located in northern, rural, and remote locations.

Study findings point to another relationship that will need to be redessed as Canada moves towards reconciliation. The core-periphery dynamics that have long shaped natural resource industries and communities exist between some institutions, researchers, and communities, more often than not, aboriginal and northern communities remain the subjects of research rather than being recognized as knowledge-holders and leaders.

Such gaps in current evidence and disparities in research leadership point to an opportunity to improve understanding of natural resource development and research collaboration with Aboriginal communities. Only with more robust research and reporting on how natural resource development partnerships are benefiting Aboriginal peoples will we be able to craft policies that increase these benefits. Until we have this information, policy making will remain a best guess scenario.

Communities, governments, and industries need to have a common framework for Aboriginal natural resource development and research. A targeted federal call for research that focuses on characterizing the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and natural resource development would be valuable. There is a real need for coordinated research designs and resources to understand development and research impacts across sectors and regions. This would help identify recurring needs as well as prioritize policy actions according to local experiences of actual benefits, objectives, and moral needs.

Ryan Bullock is an assistant professor of environment studies and sciences and director of the Centre for Forest Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Winnipeg.

The Hill Times
Creation of a mining ombudsman on horizon, says Liberal MP championing the cause

MiningWatch Canada says the industry is operating on an outdated, weak corporate social responsibility strategy and needs an ombudsman paired with government commitment to enforce sanctions against offending extractive companies.

**By Denis Calnan**

Canada may soon have an extractive resources ombudsman who would ensure that Canada’s mining companies act ethically, according to the Liberal MP who has been championing the cause.

In an interview with The Hill Times, Liberal MP John McKay (Scarborough - Guild- wood, Ont.) said he expects to see a clear plan in place by March 2017 for creating an ombudsman for the extractive sector.

“I have every assurance, shall we say, that this is a high priority item for the minister of international trade,” said Mr. McKay, who added that he would like to see it done earlier rather than later.

Having an ombudsman for the sector is something that many observers have been demanding for a long time, stating that it would help improve ethical standards for the Canadian mining sector, which some say has a tarnished international reputation for poor human rights and environmental practices.

Mr. McKay said that while he thinks the Canadian mining sector has been making improvements in its modus operandi, an auditor is still very much needed to raise corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the Canadian extractive industry in developing countries.

A CSR strategy was developed without the marks, that the “extractive sector CSR counsel- lor” lacks any weight or teeth in enforcing rules on mining companies.

Ms. Coumans said the first counsellor, Jeffery Davidson, when she was there, because the mining com- panies didn’t take the process seriously. She notes, they made a commitment to cre- ate “an independent ombudsman office to provide advisory services, fact finding and reporting regarding complaints with respect to the operations in developing countries of Canadian extractive companies.”

A CSR strategy was developed without an ombudsman in 2009, and was readjust- ed, again without the role, in 2014. “Back in 2007, we created this report for an ombudsman, but by that time we were into the [Stephen] Harper government and instead we got these very weak CSR strate- gies,” said Ms. Coumans.

She added that the current strategy is “simply not effective” and notes that although the then-Conservative government created a posi- tion, called the “extractive sector CSR counsel- lor,” it lacked any weight or teeth in enforcing rules on mining companies.

One of the main recommendations was to create an independent ombudsman office to provide advisory services, fact finding and reporting regarding complaints with respect to the operations in developing countries of Canadian extractive companies.”

In 2009 CSR strategy, which some say has a tarnished international reputa- tion for poor human rights and environ- mental practices.

Mr. McKay said that while he thinks the Canadian mining sector has been making improvements in its modus operandi, an auditor is still very much needed to raise the industry’s ethical bar.

“I don’t know if it’s my imagination or whether we are actually making progress,” he said. “It seemed to me that when we started this, that there wouldn’t be a month go by where some Canadian mining company wasn’t accused in something really awful, like using slave labour, or mining underneath a glacier, or using rape as a security technique,” he said.

Admitting he hasn’t kept stats on these allegations, he said he’s hearing fewer reports about them than he once did. However, he noted that the downturn in claims against Canadian mining companies could be a result of a weaker market, meaning fewer Canadian businesses are engaged in international extractive operations.

MiningWatch Canada is one of the groups that has been lobbying for an ombudsman for many years.

“We’ve lost ten years,” said Catherine Coumans, the research coordinator, and is responsible for the Asia-Pacific program at the organization, speaking about the lack of progress in the last decade. In 2007, an advisory group released a report on the national roundtables held on
FOREST SECTOR INNOVATION:
LET’S BUILD ON WHAT WE’VE STARTED

Canada’s forest products sector needs a renewed federal partnership to build on the momentum of innovation and transformation as we help mitigate climate change and provide well-paying jobs in rural and northern Canada.

Learn more about our proposal for a renewed partnership at: FPAC.CA/ADVOCACY
Canada’s natural resource sector suffering

Since the election of the Trudeau government, 100,000 energy workers alone have lost their jobs and face a very bleak Christmas.

The challenges facing our oil and gas sector are well known. Our land-locked oil and gas sector is constrained by a lack of pipeline capacity to tidewater waters that both restricts the amount of resources that can be exported overseas and reduces the prices Canadians receive for these resources.

Building new pipelines, by far the safest way to move oil and gas, hold the promise of creating tens of thousands of jobs and generating billions of dollars in economic development in an industry that is clearly hurting. It is against this backdrop that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his government’s decision last week on three pipeline projects previously approved by the nation’s independent regulatory, the National Energy Board (NEB).

The decisions that the prime minister made on these pipelines—approve the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and the Northern Gateway—were based on science, not on evidence or the advice of the NEB but solely based on what the prime minister thinks he can sell politically.

Under our previous Conservative government, all decisions on resources projects were made based on the recommendations and conditions imposed by the independent National Energy Board.

This was never going to happen with this Liberal government, who prejudged the Northern Gateway pipeline project before they had ever seen the evidence or reviewed the NEB’s recommendation. In slamming the door shut on Northern Gateway, the prime minister is playing politics with people’s livelihoods. He is destroying the prospects of creating 4,000 middle-class jobs, $2-billion in investment in aboriginal communities, and the hopes of thousands of other unemployed energy workers without any scientific based evidence.

Cancelling the Northern Gateway project, a pipeline that had already been approved, sends a terrible message to the business community and will put a major chill on investment in an industry that is already suffering. The policies of this prime minister will hinder our country’s energy sector.

When it comes to getting Canadian oil to foreign markets, it was a major strategic error for the prime minister to put all of his eggs in the Trans Mountain basket. Let’s not forget that our previous Conservative government had given the Northern Gateway project approval and now, thanks to this Liberal government, the project is going nowhere.

By failing to re-engage with First Nations communities along the route, the government sends a message that it is willing to walk away from scientifically sound projects when future obstacles are placed in the way of their construction.

It is for this reason that we have expressed concern that, even with the approval of this government, the Trans Mountain Expansion could still be derailed if the government is unwilling to champion it. The fact is, without further action by this government, the approval given to Trans Mountain, on its own, won’t generate a single job.

As for the northern tanker ban, this too is entirely a political decision by the prime minister with costs for the nation.

It sends the message that foreign oil imports into Canada from countries like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela on the East Coast are perfectly fine, while Canadian oil exports going to foreign markets are dangerous and should be banned.

Since his election, this prime minister has failed to create a single, net new full-time job. His arbitrary and entirely political decision to cancel the Northern Gateway, a pipeline already approved by the National Energy Board, will result in the loss of thousands of jobs, cost the Canadian economy billions of dollars in lost revenue, and will act as an investment chill in Canada’s natural resource sector.

The Liberal economic plan is a complete failure. An out-of-control deficit, rising payroll and small business taxes, and the promise of a national carbon tax are killing jobs and economic opportunity across Canada.

Making the right decision on pipelines was an opportunity to make a real difference.

By playing politics with pipeline projects the prime minister has missed a real opportunity to bring certainty and confidence to Canada’s natural resource sector and help put Canadians back to work.

Conservative MP Mark Strahl, who represents North Okanagan—Shuswap, B.C., is his party’s natural resources critic.

TORY MP MARK STRAHL.

There’s a path forward for natural resources sector

Canada’s natural resource industries have a very bright future. Our natural resources and our know-how in this sector will continue to play a big role in our economy. But, to ensure that future, we need to take the correct steps today.

Canada’s natural forest industry new domestic markets, but could significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Oil and gas companies are investing in wind and solar power projects, using their resources to help make the shift to a renewable energy future.

The federal government has a role to play in helping bring these new techniques and technologies from concept to commercialization. Growing that expertise will help to diversify our economy and better protect the natural resources sector from the shocks that come from fluctuations in world commodity prices.

Another common theme I’ve heard from the sector has been engagement with indigenous peoples. Most natural resource corporations now accept that they can no longer ignore the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. Successful companies have embraced the opportunities that this presents. But the federal government needs to help build the capacity in indigenous communities to fully participate in consultations, to properly fund education at all levels to help indigenous peoples work in the sector if they choose. Perhaps most importantly, the government needs to take its duties as the Crown to consult and accommodate more seriously.

The Liberals promised to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) but have since appeared to backtrack. That has created uncertainty, and uncertainty is never helpful in industries that are making significant investments with long lead times. Many companies are losing confidence in the concept of ‘free, prior, and informed consent’ when it comes to working with indigenous governments. At the Natural Resources Committee, Ontario Power Generation officials recently testified that they would not proceed with a nuclear power project on Lake Huron without the consent of local First Nations. They made it clear it wasn’t feasible to try to force such a project on a community. The committee also heard testimony from Bob Rae, who stated that “there has to be consent” for any project to move forward.

Right now in North Dakota we are seeing what development without consent looks like. That approach is one we should avoid at all costs and the Liberals should support NDP MP Romeo Saganash’s Bill C-262 to implement UNDRIP to put us on the right path.

Finally, for all of this to work, we must have the proper infrastructure to support these industries and the communities in which they work. In committee, we’ve heard examples like the lack of appropriate hydroelectric infrastructure in Northwestern Ontario to support the growing mining sector, the proposed Grays Bay Road connecting Nunavut to Manitoba and a new infrastructure service corridor to support the Ring of Fire and the communities within it. Historically, the federal government has helped make these kinds of projects happen with financial support, but, so far, this Liberal government hasn’t. One move that they can make right away is grant Ontario’s request for $1 billion to help build much-needed infrastructure into the Ring of Fire.

Canada’s natural resource industries have a very bright future. But, to ensure that future, we need to take the correct steps today.

NDP MP RICHARD CANNINGS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured in this file photo, last week approved the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline and Enbridge’s Line 3, but rejected the Northern Gateway. The Hill Times photographer Jake Wright.

The Hill Times
Natural resources and governance shifts in Canada

By Bonnie Campbell and Claude Prémont

Our knowledge synthesis report, produced with the support of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant, covers two major sectors of natural resource development in Canada: mining and the generation of power from renewable sources, namely hydroelectricity and wind energy.

It highlights ongoing transformations in current modes of governance of these sectors: persistently deficient public regulatory capacity; shifts in multi-level governance; and the devolution of responsibility for natural resource development to industry. Our dual perspective based on legal and political economy literature revealed three strong indicators feeding these transformations: the search for local community acceptance, embedded taxation flaws, and the development of “negotiated justice.”

The search for local community support is expressed through different concepts: social acceptability (or acceptance), social acceptability, embedded taxation flaws, and the development of “negotiated justice.” The concept of social acceptance or social license to operate has no explicit legal grounding in Canada and is expanded over two polar opposites.

The first pole is structured by the fact that the mining industry has been structured by the facts that the mining industry itself, and international financial organizations in the context of natural resources extraction projects.

This perspective seeks mainly to overcome opposition in order to manage risk and if necessary, to silence opposition opponents. On the other side, citizen groups and scholars have tried to re- appropriate the concept in order to push for which interests and involve citizen participation in decision-making. In reality, it is the duty to consult indigenous people has constitutional grounds in Canada when projects infringe on aboriginal lands or claims, the literature reveals that communities have no veto powers and are most often unable to prevent resource extraction projects. As a result, these concepts are entirely subject to asymmetrical relations of power, and thus often serve the most powerful actors, including industry, in an approach which has been defined as “negotiated justice.”

The “negotiated justice” approach is materialized both in mining and renewable energy by the absence of impact and benefit agreements (IBA). Although the details of most agreements remain unknown as they are often confidential, the literature reveals six main categories of clauses, one of which explicitly in formal negotiating agreements, or implicitly in formal negotiating agreements, project before public authorities and forbids any further challenges and protest. Flaws in the taxation of the mining industry have been consistently underscored by the offices of various auditor generals, such as in Ontario and Quebec. As a rule, they stress the strong imbalances between poor mining royalties, generous revenue taxation breaks to the mining industry and heavy public liabilities over abandoned contaminated sites. Most exempt traduction systems are free of property taxes in Canada, regardless of public or private ownership, therefore benefitting the industry which tends to be the preferred owner of new renewable energy production sites and leaving local communities with lean benefits. Hence the overall pressure to settle for IBAs with monetary clauses for communities.

Regulatory stalemate is obvious in the mining sector where both federal and provincial legislations are amended with much difficulty only peripherally and over a long time period. Free mining remains an entrenched taxation system to communities. Multi-level resource governance in Canada remains a hierarchical governance where top public authorities—at the federal and provincial levels—use, or choose not to use, their powers in order to promote the interests of private industry resource extraction, rather than that of communities, even the overall population.

As a result, it becomes difficult—if not impossible—to localize communities to put forward alternative development options. They have often opted for a “no deal” strategy or agreed to projects under circumstances in which they can only marginally negotiate the terms, or resign themselves to missing out on any other form of development.

The scientific literature on the Canadian mining sector devotes limited attention to the potential for the social and economic development at the local, regional and national levels. Such transformative processes depend on the introduction of public policies that would enable the sector to act as a catalyst for local shifts between sectors— like energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, and transport—and industrial links, both upstream and downstream, as well as encourage more local transformation instead of merely exporting materials in a nearly raw state.

The adoption of more holistic approaches has led some authors to address the key question of the degree of, and even overlooked roles and responsibilities of public actors, due to Canada’s historical and regulatory history, to decrease pre- dence to the role and powers conferred to industry. Such approaches draw attention to the underlying political processes that should be taken into account instead of “depoliticizing” the fundamental questions of access, control, and development of natural resources.

Mining the gender gap: how do aboriginal women perceive mining in Canada

A policy path forward, then, is to include aboriginal women as decision-makers in all stakeholder engagement practice, not just as token voices in the formulation of impact agreements.

Aboriginal women are affected in different distinctive ways that do not receive a great deal of attention, but that have long term impacts on both community and productivity. With the Canadian mining industry is expanding and feeding an increasing global need for natural resources, it behooves us to take steps to address the concerns of these women, to minimize the negative impacts and cultivate the positive ones.

Our recent study collected previous researchers’ interactions with aboriginal women, and re-analyzed them with an eye toward elucidating those women’s unique perspectives on the Canadian mining industry. Our findings suggest that there is a constructive path forward for all stakeholders: aboriginal women and their families, government, and mining companies themselves.

In short, aboriginal women are concerned about the impacts that mining has on their communities, most prominently the uneven distribution of employment and remuneration opportunities between the two genders, the aggravation of existing social ills, and the increased erosion of traditional ways of life.

Jobs for aboriginals created by the mining industry are more often than not, women and men, with the latter receiving comparatively high-paying, and often high-risk jobs. With mining operations, women are often relegated to lesser- paying culinary, clerical or custodial roles. In other words, societal gender divides are being reinforced by the arrival of the mining industry in these communities. This is an impediment on the road toward gender equality not only in aboriginal communities, but also within Canada as a whole.

In terms of social ills, the perception is strong that the sudden influx of employment, income, combined with the time constraints that come with it, is leading to challenges in parenting. An older in one study opined, “the kids really run the show. I think that there is more money in town because of the mine. But now parents are hardly ever at home. … They have replaced parenting and guidance and caring with money.” Many women also fear that the increased income is fuelling pre-existing substance addictions. But this is balanced against a general overall appreciation for the money entering the community.

Shift work is also seen as contributing to the decay of traditional lifestyles. With less time to hunt, prepare and preserve food, women feel that their families’ diets are shifting toward processed foods, causing both poor health and a rapid decay in their traditional family dynamic.

Shift work is a special cultural challenge to people used to being in constant close proximity to one another. Indeed, one woman believes that the arrival of mining has led to more marriage failures, because “they’re not spending enough time together, for special meals and activities.” This has led, again, to stresses in parenting. For example, due to rotating and uncoordinated work schedules, parents are finding it difficult to provide consistent discipline for their children in a single uncontested voice. There is therefore a perception of increased intergenerational conflict flowing from the arrival of commercial mining.

From our findings, even when the concerns of aboriginal women are included explicitly in formal negotiating agreements, the women often feel as if such inclusion is merely window dressing, intended at most to fulfill the legalistic stipulations of impact benefit agreements; the spirit of such agreements is ignored.

A policy path forward, then, is to include aboriginal women as decision-makers in all stakeholder engagement practice, not just as token voices in the formulation of impact agreements. There is a role for government in assuring that these women’s concerns are considered when mediating mining activities. Research, required by research, is also needed in exploring new models of employment for women, beyond gender stereotypes, to socialize detrimental shift work and wage labour.

Raywat Deonandan is an assistant professor in the interdisciplinary school of health sciences at the University of Ottawa. Brennan Field is an associate professor of political studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Brennan Field has a theoretical and methodological interests and is currently pursuing a PhD in geography at the University of Saskatchewan.

The Hill Times
House Public Accounts Committee ‘stretched in playing ‘crucial role’ of holding departments accountable: AG

‘Certainly none of this is going to get any better over the next five years of my mandate if we’re just waiting for the committees to deal with it all’: Michael Ferguson.

Continued from page 1

While Mr. Ferguson commends the work the House Public Accounts Committee has been able to accomplish this Parliament, considering it a marked improvement from years past, he said he still thinks the government could do more to boost the profile of the committee’s work and to set the tone of expecting that departments take his recommendations seriously.

“We just released seven audits, for example, so part of it is to have the hearings on all of those, and write reports on all of those, and go through all of those steps, take quite a bit of time,” Mr. Ferguson told The Hill Times last week, adding that every six months departments and write reports on all of those, and go through all of those steps, take quite a bit of time.

Mr. Ferguson said the current House and the Senate play a “crucial role” in challenging departments and holding them accountable by bringing them before Parliamentarians multiple times until they can demonstrate real improvements.

“If the committees with the specific expertise in those specific areas are also trying to get those departments and it should be in their interest to try to get those departments to improve on these processes, then I think that will end up with a better result all around,” Mr. Ferguson told The Hill Times.

Former chair of the House Public Accounts Committee, and NDP MP David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, Ont.), vice-chair of the committee, said Mr. Ferguson’s call-out of federal departments being slow to follow-up. And even if it’s a year and a half later, we’re still going to be on them. So we’re going through major fundamental sea change in terms of how we do our work and how we review keeping the government held to account and we’re putting the government on notice you better start changing the way you do things or the sparks are just going to continue to fly more often and they’re going to be more intense.” Mr. Christopherson told reporters.

Mr. Ferguson said he thinks his committee is doing a good job with what it has, but wouldn’t discourage other committees from picking up on some department-specific issues raised in the auditor general’s reports for further follow-up.

“I was in government; I know it’s in the government’s best interest always to have a department that follows up on their policy. Listen, I may disagree with a lot of the Liberal government’s policy but the departments owe it to the government to follow through on those policies,” he said.

Boosting funding for committees is something the Liberal government wanted to do from the outset. However, after committees accumulated $1.8 million in travel costs, the House Liaison Committee—the committee in charge of approving House committee budgets—recently advised House committee chairs to cool their jets until the new year.

Public Accounts was one of the committees denied extra money for a trip it had planned to meet with public accounts committees in other countries. “We recognize that there are budgets and we will work within the budget we’re given,” Mr. Sorenson said, adding that the committee has added a second researcher this Parliament and that has helped, but the committee has yet to see a substantive increase to its resources.

Mr. Ferguson told The Hill Times government to follow through on those policies,” he said.

“We are, as a government, the first government to actually take a horizontal approach to the delivery of results,” said Mr. Brison. “This is a game changer … We have a lot of work to do. We’re undertaking that work, and we will do—do better.”

Mr. Ferguson said the government’s response to his latest audits that it will take more than hopeful promises, adding that many times he’s seen good intentions from governments that don’t pan out. He said he expects his office would have the authority to audit the PCO’s agenda and results wing, with the exception of cabinet conferences.

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Mr. Ferguson said the government’s response to his latest audits that it will take more than hopeful promises, adding that many times he’s seen good intentions from governments that don’t pan out. He said he expects his office would have the authority to audit the PCO’s agenda and results wing, with the exception of cabinet conferences.

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PARLIAMENT HILL—Under construction since 2010, the Wellington Building’s rehabilitation wrapped up earlier this fall, with its first occupants having moved in from the East Block in September.

The building at 180 Wellington St. includes 70 MP offices, 10 committee rooms (three of which are multipurpose), eight MP meeting rooms, a new Library of Parliament branch and a large cafeteria on top of staff dining area. It’s set to be in full use by the time the House of Commons resumes on Jan. 30.

The entire renovation of the building, which was originally built in 1926, cost roughly $425.2-million. Measures to make the building more environmentally-friendly—including its green wall in the lobby—have reduced energy consumption by 25 per cent. Media were given a full tour of the building ahead of a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Dec. 1.

By Laura Ryckewaert

The entrance lobby off of Wellington St., through which MPs will access the building, is adorned with a Byzantine-style mosaic designed by Barry Faulkner. The building was originally built for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company back in 1926 and the mosaic is an allegory of mother insurance. It’s made up of almost one million tiles which have been cleaned and preserved.

The heritage lobby of the Wellington Building, with a restored original ceiling. The mosaic-adorned lobby through which MPs will enter the building lies through the far glass doors, with an elevator bank to the left. The building’s Beaux Arts heritage was kept front and centre in designs.

The atrium lobby of the building includes a new spiral staircase and green wall. The public entrance lies to the left, with escalators up to the third-floor committee rooms to the right.

Of the 10 committee rooms in the building, three are multipurpose and can be arranged into different set ups, like the one pictured above.

The new branch of the Library of Parliament, accessible on the fifth floor of the building. It’s two storeys in height and includes a skylight, referencing the fact the space used to be a light well. Recycled copper from roofing surrounds the rooms and helps with acoustics, along with adding to aesthetics.

A waiting area outside the committee rooms, facing north, on the third floor of the building. The original windows of the building have been restored, with more energy-efficient glass.

A look at one of larger, broadcast-capable committee rooms in the Wellington Building, above. Committee rooms can be found on the third and fourth floors.

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Feds’ electoral reform in doubt, but pollsters say a broken promise won’t sink Liberals

After six months of work and an almost $700,000 price tag, Democratic Minister Maryam Monsef said she was ‘disappointed’ in the House Electoral Reform Committee. She later apologized. Meanwhile, the government has sent out more than 13 million postcards asking Canadians to participate in an online survey on electoral reform.

“This is not a government-kill ing promise, by itself,” he said, as it’s an outspoken, but “small minority” who think major changes are needed.

The issue of electoral reform is one that’s “very difficult to get Canadians excited” and “passionate” about, he said.

That being said, where I do see some risk for the government, in my view, is around the narrative that could develop that the government’s not keeping its promises, that this could be one of many to come … it might start a media narrative and a broader discussion about how the government can’t achieve its objectives and that becomes more risky or creates more vulnerability,” he said.

Mr. Coletto said if the government declared its commitment at the end of four years.”

It comes down to a question of either lying” or didn’t understand the complexity outlined. He said “a lot of members hadn’t worked hard, and said,”I used words that I deeply regret.”

Mr. Cullen said the committee’s mandate was “clear,” and that it was mandated to study viable alternative voting systems and examine the question of online and mandatory voting, with principles outlined. He said “a lot of work and a lot of sacrifice” went into the study, which ultimately outlined pros and cons of various systems for the government and recommended proportional voting be pursued. Ms. Monsef is “either lying” or didn’t understand what the committee was doing, he said.

A 333-page “majority report” was released along with “supplemental” reports, including one from Liberal MPs, which actually came out against major recommendations from the committee, including the recommendation that a national referendum should be held and the suggested method by which the government should design a new system.

The main committee report made 13 recommendations, including that a national referendum on the issue be held with a choice between first-past-the-post and a proportional system designed by the government, which it recommended should achieve a score of five or less on the Gallagher index—a method to measure the proportionality of a system between votes case and seats allocated. It also recommended against implementing online or mandatory voting, among other things.

In Question Period on Dec. 1, Democratic Institutions Minister Maryam Monsef (Peterborough-Kawartha, Ont.) took the unusual step of criticizing the committee’s work, saying she was “disappointed” that it “did not complete the hard work we had expected it to,” by not recommending a specific voting system to replace first-past-the-post.

“We asked the committee to help answer very difficult questions for us. It did not do that,” she said in QP. “In the coming days we will be taking specific actions to continue this conversation with Canadians.”

Reacting to Ms. Monsef’s comments, NDP MP Nathan Cullen (Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.), a member of the committee, said he didn’t think he’s “ever seen a performance like that in Question Period before,” and said her comments were “incredibly disappointing and certainly insulting.”

On Dec. 2, Ms. Monsef apologized to the committee for her comments in the House, saying she didn’t intend to imply members hadn’t worked hard, and said, “I used words that I deeply regret.”

Continued from page 1

“Is it over: Members of the House Special Committee on Electoral Reform presented their final ‘majority’ report at the National Press Theatre in Ottawa on Dec. 1.Bloc MP Luc Thériault, left, Conservative MP Scott Reid, Electoral Reform Committee chair and Liberal MP Francis Scarpalegga, NDP MP Nathan Cullen, and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

NEWS ELECTORAL REFORM
While citizen's assemblies have been mentioned as an option, Mr. Reid said past ones on electoral reform in both British Columbia and Ontario have ultimately led to referendums. He said he was "unsurprised" by the minister's response to the committee report on Dec. 1.

"One of the arguments about referendums is they're too expensive, but evidently mailing out 13 million questionnaires is an allowable or a manageable expense," he said.

Almost $9 million has been spent on electoral reform efforts in 2016, including $8 million allocated for the minister under the last federal budget—which in part would have been spent on the minister's tour—and more than $670,000 for the committee's study.

Speaking with The Hill Times on Dec. 1, after PQ Liberal MP John Aldag (Cleverdale-Langley City, B.C.), a member of the electoral reform committee, said he wasn't taking Ms. Monsef's comments personally. He said he would come up with this new system, whatever that be, "and say he 'shares' the minister's 'disappointment.'" But overall, he said he was "really proud" of the committee's work.

We had hoped that we could get through a very complex issue in a very tight timeline and frankly we didn't get there, and I'm OK with that. If it just means in my mind, it solidifies the thought that I had that we need to have a greater consultation with many, many more Canadians than we engaged with this process," he said.

"I would encourage the minister to take a hard look at timelines and realistically how far can we move this on an electoral reform in time for 2019."

"We have to get ahead of this. If we don't we will lose the next election because the question of how to improve the accessibility of voting for Canadians with disabilities nonetheless still time for the Liberals to act on electoral reform if they want to, as there are 34 months until the next election and that it could take less than two years to implement change if a full redistribution of ridings isn’t needed.

"If you just merge together existing early voting, you can do under STV [Single-transferable vote]…you can have an expedited process that takes place much faster," he said.

Electoral Reform Committee Chair and Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia said only 500 people took part in open mic sessions undertaken by the committee and Canadians were not sufficiently engaged. Asked about the government’s promise on reform by 2019, he said election platforms are an attempt to engage voters. Conservative MP Scott Reid, a member of the committee, is pictured right on Dec. 1. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Muise

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**ELECTORAL REFORM**

**ELECTORAL REFORM EFFORTS: BY THE NUMBERS**

Ultimately, three reports were produced on electoral reform recommendations by the House Electoral Reform Committee. a majority report, a dissenting report from Liberal members, and a supplementary report in support of proportional representation from the NDP and Greens.

| **Cost of the House Electoral Reform Committee:** |
| $678,560 |
| **Briefs submitted to the committee:** |
| 774 |
| **Witneses heard by the committee:** |
| 573 |
| **Meetings held by the committee:** |
| 60 |
| **Responses to the ERRE committee’s e-consultation:** |
| 22,247 |
| **MP townhall reports submitted to the committee:** |
| 172 |
| **Pages in the final major report:** |
| 333 |
| **Recommendations made in the majority report:** |
| 13 |
| **Money for electoral reform allocated:** |
| $8 million this year, out of $10.7 million over four years** |

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**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELECTORAL REFORM COMMITTEE:**

Thirteen recommendations on electoral reform were made in the majority report from the committee.

1. The government should design a new electoral system that achieves a Gallagher index score of five or less.*

2. Systems of pure party lists should not be considered by the government.

3. Mandatory voting should not be implemented “at this time.”

4. Online voting should not be implemented “at this time.”

5. Elections Canada should explore, with stakeholder groups, the use of technologies to promote greater voting accessibility while ensuring the integrity of the process.

6. The question of how to improve the accessibility of voting for Canadians with disabilities should be referred to the Procedure and House Affairs Committee.

7. Any reform should seek to enhance the likelihood of improving voter turnout and increasing the possibility for more underrepresented and disenfranchised groups—including visible minorities, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities—to get elected.

8. The Canada Elections Act should be amended to create a financial incentive for political parties and candidates, including more female candidates and more towards party in nominations.

9. The government should work with the provinces and territories to explore ways in which youth under 18 years of age could be registered in the National Register of Electors up to two years in advance of reaching voting age.

10. Elections Canada be given the mandate and resources to encourage greater voter participation, including through initiatives like Civic’s Student Vote and “better raising awareness” of existing early voting options.

11. Electoral system reform should be accompanied by a study on the effects of other aspects of Canada’s governance system, including the relationship between legislative and executive branches of government, the relationship between the House and Senate, the impact on political party operations, and “parliamentary procedure and conventions related to government formation and dismissal.”

12. A referendum should be held, with the current system on the ballot and a proportional electoral system that achieves a Gallagher Index score of five or less, with the government’s design of the alternate system completed before the referendum starts.

13. Elections Canada should produce and make publicly available materials describing options, including any related maps showing potential riding boundaries and a sample ballot design, before the referendum starts.

A “supplementary” report from Liberal members states that the majority report recommends are “too radical to impose at this time as Canadians must be more engaged,” and it wasn’t a “dissenting” report. (Ms. Monsef described it as such in PQ Dec. 1).

Mr. Reid said he thinks there’s nonetheless still time for the Liberals to act on electoral reform if they want to, as there are 34 months until the next election and that it could take less than two years to implement change if a full redistribution of ridings isn’t needed.

“If you just merge together existing early voting, you can do under STV [Single-transferable vote]…you can have an expedited process that takes place much faster,” he said.

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* On top of this, the Conservative and NDP caucuses submitted their own, separate, reports on electoral reform.

** This figure includes times when meetings were suspended for breaks.

*** This figure includes the cost of Democratic Institution Minister Maryam Monsef’s cross-Canada tour.

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Compiled by Laura Ryckewaert.
Liberal MPs want per-vote subsidies for political parties back

Taxpayer-funded subsidies for parties would eliminate the perception that money can influence public policy, says Liberal MP Alexandra Mendès.

continued from page 1

Hill Times. “[The per-vote subsidy] is perhaps the fairest and the most legitimate way of supporting political parties.”

A former president of the Liberal Party of Canada in Quebec, Ms. Mendès was first elected in the 2008 federal election, lost her seat in 2011, but was elected again in last year’s general election. She said that Liberal MPs have been discussing the subject of bringing back per-vote subsidies informally with each other and predicted that soon this conversation will take place in the national Liberal caucus. Her main argument for reinstating subsidies is to eliminate the perception that money can influence party policies.

When asked about critics who say these discussions around vote subsidies are about trying to deflect controversy over the so-called “cash for access” events Liberals have been in the news for, Ms. Mendès said: “They can conjure anything they want, but for me that’s not the reason. If they see it that way, it’s their right.”

Rookie Liberal MP Robert Falcon-Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Man.) in an interview said he supports the idea of bringing back per-vote subsidies. He said Canadians should have total confidence that their representa-tives will not be moved by individual or any specific group on public policy issues because they’ve do-nated money to a party. For that, he said, per-vote subsidies could be an effective tool.

“We need to have a way of reassuring people, that when they look upon a politician, that they feel comfortable and they know that the politician is working for them, not for someone else,” said Mr. Ouellette. “I don’t know if we can get rid of political donations altogether, but at the end of the day, some form of public subsidy should occur and it’s a good idea.”

Former Liberal MP David Lukiwski (Bruce-Grey–Owen Sound, Ont.) told the Hill Times “It’s important that this be an effective tool.”

In recent weeks, the Liberal Party has been criticized by the opposition parties about their fundraising work. The most recently reported event was a fundraiser in Toronto that happened on April 28. The Globe and Mail wrote that two members of the Cannabis Friendly Business Association (CFBA) went to a $150-per-ticket event where Liberal MP Bill Blair (Scarborough Southwest, Ont.), the prime minister’s point man on recreational pot legalization file, was the chief guest. Mr. Blair is the parliamentary secretary to Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould (Vancouver Granville, B.C.). The fundraiser took place at a Toronto law firm that advises clients in the cannabis business.

A Liberal Party spokesman, in an interview with the Globe, denied any ethical wrongdoing but said the party would refund dona-tions from representatives of the Cannabis Friendly Business Association.

Before this news report, The Globe and Mail also reported a number of other fundraisers that were attended by senior cabinet ministers.

In criticizing the Liberal Party’s fundraising events, critics point to Mr. Trudeau’s own guidelines that he issued after becoming prime minister. One of the principles mentioned in the “Open and Accountable Government” document released by the prime minister in November 2015 states: “Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries must ensure that political fund-raising activities or considerations do not affect, or appear to affect, the exercise of their official duties or the access of individuals or organizations to government.”

In outlining the next principle in the same document, Mr. Trudeau said: “There should be no preferential access to government, or appearance of preferential access, accorded to individuals or organizations because they have made financial contributions to politi-cians and political parties.”

Meanwhile, Ms. Mendès insisted that the federal Liberal Party did not break any rules in any of the fundraisers and are following the law. She dismissed criticism that attendees at these Liberal fundraisers are gaining preferential access.

“We’re doing what the rules permitted us to do,” she said. “As the prime minister said, I don’t know who will be bought by $1,500. I really don’t know.”

Liberal MP Bill Casey (Cumber-land-Colchester, N.S.) told The Hill Times that he is in sup-port of reinstating the per-vote subsidy. He said if the government brought this measure back, it would help MPs focus more on the parliamentary and policy work and would reduce the pressure of raising funds for the next election. Also, it would eliminate the perception that money influ-ences politics.

“I prefer it for a whole lot of reasons. For one thing, raising money takes time and you don’t want to put yourself in a position where there’s a perceived obliga-tion or anything,” said Mr. Casey. “So, it’s better.”

Mr. Casey said that only op-position parties and the media are talking about “cash-for-access” controversy and he has not heard about it from any of his constitu-tents. “So, I think the controversy has nothing to do with his position on per-vote subsidies.”

The prime minister’s support was one word about contributions. I just was home all weekend and I didn’t hear a word about it last week.

Rookie Liberal MP Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-le-des-Soeurs, Que.) told The Hill Times that bringing back per-vote subsidies is currently not on the government agenda, but he’s in favour of this idea. “There’s some attractiveness to it. It’s worth examining,” said Mr. Miller.

Conservative MP Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lewvan, Sask.) said he has mixed feelings about it. He said if the government chooses to pursue this idea, his support would depend on the details in the pro-posal. “I think it’s a really Nice idea, the details,” said Mr. Lukiwski.

Conservative MP Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Ont.) also said he would be able to offer an opinion after taking a look at what the government is proposing. However, he said the current laws in place that bar businesses from making any donations to parties should be repealed and they should be allowed to donate the same amount that an individual can.

NDP MP Irwin Mathiassen (London-Fanshawe, Ont.) said she’s in favour of reinstating subsidies to eliminate the perception that money affects national public policies. Also, she said it would provide resources to all parties to run a competitive campaign.

MPs of all parties said that one of the toughest parts of their job is raising money to ensure they have adequate resources for elec-tion campaigns.

“It is a complete struggle,” said Mr. Lukiwski. “There’s only a fi-nite number of donors who’ll give money and only a finite number of parties, and even a less amount of people will give to the Conservatives or the Liberals, so it’s a chal-lenge. It’s always been difficult.”

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The Hill Times
“The feds are buying 18 Super Hornet fighter jets in the interim until a competition for the full fleet replacement is held. What do you think?”

“A modern fighter jet fleet is essential for defending our country and our sovereignty. Our fighter jets are an important part of our contribution to our international alliances—especially our most important ally, the United States. Last week, we announced our plan to launch, within the current mandate, an open and transparent competition to replace our aging fleet of CF-18s. After a decade of mismanagement from the previous government, this competition will make sure that Canada gets the right aircraft for our women and men in uniform, at the right price, with the best economic benefits for Canadians.

“Today, our current fleet is more than 30 years old and is down from 138 aircraft to 76. The Royal Canadian Air Force faces a capability gap. We have important obligations—to NATO and to NORAD—to have a certain number of fighter jets mission ready at all times. Right now, our air force does not have enough jets ready to meet both of those obligations at the same time.

“To address this, Canada will also immediately explore the acquisition of 18 new Super Hornets to supplement our fleet until the permanent replacements arrive. Taken together, these steps will ensure that our men and women have everything they need to do their jobs and protect Canadians, while maximizing economic benefits for the middle class and those working hard to join it.”

“I think it’s a bad decision by the prime minister and his Liberal government. It’s not looking out for the best interests of our men and women in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Rather, it’s simply a political decision undertaken by a dangerously naïve prime minister who is delaying any decision on a new fighter jet for five years. The Liberals announced to the world that it will be buying a plane for which it has absolutely no idea how much it will cost—the exact opposite of openness and transparency.

“The men and women in the Royal Canadian Air Force deserve the best equipment to help them protect us all. Experts agree that operating an interim aircraft is expensive and unnecessary. The Liberals will tell us we face a capability gap. What they won’t tell us is that it was completely of their own making, something the Chief of Defence Staff called ‘a false deduction.’ The only gap we actually face is the biggest bang for their buck. It’s common sense because everybody wins. Instead they’re using the same approach they criticized the Conservatives for in their dealings with the F-35s—the handpicking of the Super Hornet without a transparent competition and without ensuring Canadians get the biggest bang for their buck.

“If the same approach Harper took, just a different jet. Sole sourcing is the best way to get the worst price for taxpayers and nothing else. The Liberals’ commitment to an open and transparent competition to replace the CF-18 fighter jets won’t be worth the paper it was written on.”

“The sole source purchase of fighter jets by the Liberal government is another case of saying one thing while in opposition and then doing the exact opposite when in power. It’s a broken promise piled on top of the many before it, without any care for the cost to taxpayers.

“An open competition would have allowed the government to set the parameters for awarding the contract such as guaranteeing jobs and maximum benefit to the Canadian economy. And then would have awarded the contract to the lowest conforming bidder. It’s common sense because everybody wins. Instead they’re using the same approach they criticized the Conservatives for in their dealings with the F-35s—the handpicking of the Super Hornet without a transparent competition and without ensuring Canadians get the biggest bang for their buck.

“If the same approach Harper took, just a different jet. Sole sourcing is the best way to get the worst price for taxpayers and nothing else. The Liberals’ commitment to an open and transparent competition to replace the CF-18 fighter jets won’t be worth the paper it was written on.”

“The first thing the Department of Defence needs to do is release a report on the condition of the F-18 fleet. The House needs to be aware of the condition of the current aircraft before committing to buying new ones. Then the minister needs to tell us what objectives the air force wants to meet with new aircraft.

“Afterward, if the minister is serious about launching a competitive bid process, he must reconsider the interim purchase of 18 Super Hornets. How can he claim to be seriously considering competitive bids if we have already bought 18 aircraft through the back door without looking at the price tag? The way the minister wants to proceed will obviously give the Super Hornets a big advantage—the air force will already have expertise on the already purchased aircraft, which will lower the cost.

“Such a large and costly purchase must go through an open and transparent bidding process. We have been talking for over 10 years about renewing Canada’s air fleet. A competitive process could be launched quickly and a decision made by 2017. The minister must also consider the fact that much of the aerospace industry is in Quebec. The aircraft purchase must generate economic benefits for Quebec.”

“The Green Party supports members of the Canadian military, including women, who should be properly equipped while in service and properly cared for as veterans. But big-ticket procurements like fighter jets require greater public debate than they are currently receiving. Under the Trudeau administration, the long-delayed procurement measure for fighter jets has been met with a stop-gap measure of 18 Super Hornets to cover operational needs, according to Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan and top military brass. But as we learned from the F-35 fiasco, delaying procurement always ends up costing more, not less.

“In military procurement, the benefits of new assets can be overhyped and the costs low-balled. The Green Party of Canada opposes the full replacement of our fighter jets until Canadians are provided with an opportunity for a full and transparent discussion about necessary procurements and when they can be justified. We need to pursue a revised vision for Canadian defence policy with a focus on disaster response, search-and-rescue and peacekeeping. In particular, we need to move ahead with the purchase of Arctic icebreakers, fixed-wing search and rescue (SAR) aircraft, and Coast Guard vessels.”

“Canada’s defence and security companies provide in-service support that maintains, repairs and upgrades equipment like aircraft, ships and vehicles. Our expertise keeps our aircraft ready so that Canadian troops can be deployed abroad on missions and return home safely.”

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Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries
St. Germain played a key role behind the scenes in conservative movement

Vancouver Sun


By Kate Mallow

Parliament Hill—Vancouver Sun Hill reporter Peter O’Neil is a sharp, unassuming journalist, who has been breaking exclusive news stories since he started with the newspaper almost 30 years ago. He likes a good story and found one in former Conservative Senator, MP, and Mulroney-era cabinet minister Gerry St. Germain who he describes as “a kind of Forrest Gump character in Canadian politics,” but once an important backroom political player.

First elected in a by-election in 1983, and re-elected in Brian Mulroney’s massive majority win in 1984, but defeated in 1988, Gerry St. Germain is a former trapper, construction worker, air force pilot, police officer, union leader, and “was a key behind-the-scenes broker,” and “was naturally sensitive to Canada’s linguistic duality. Mulroney, who once told me that there was a huge factor in his decision to name him caucus chair, or as Mulroney put it in my interview with him, ‘his caucus CEO.’ It was a great choice in large part because Gerry is a workaholic and is very personable, yet could be intimidating with his police-man’s build and direct manner. He could cajole MPs with his charm or go with him from ‘The Boss’ when that was necessary.”

Why does Gerry St. Germain’s life story warrant a book? Most Canadians, especially off Parliament Hill and outside B.C., have never heard of him. “I covered Gerry off and on from the day I first arrived on Parliament Hill in the spring of 1988, which coincided with his appointment into Brian Mulroney’s cabinet, until his retirement in 2012. And, honestly, it never crossed my mind that there was a book to be written. He was a kind of Forrest Gump character in Canadian politics. He never struck anyone as a high roller kind of politician, he wasn’t at all slick with the media. Most people were aware that he was a key behind-the-scenes figure in the early days of Mulroney and flunting and fluently bilingual. Mr. St. Germain is a big man who knew how to charm and how to fight while he was on the Hill. So Mr. Mulroney put him in charge of his massive national Progressive Conservative caucus from 1984 to 1988 and later brought him into cabinet, one of the first aboriginal cabinet ministers. He was also the parliamentary minister for British Columbia. Defeated in 1988, he was later elected president of the Progressive Conservative Party and was summoned to the Senate by Mr. Mulroney. In the Senate until 2012, the black Stetson-wearing millionaire played a critical role in Canada’s Conservative movement, was a ‘crucial behind-the-scenes broker,’ and “was a quiet hero to Canada’s aboriginal community,” writes Mr. O’Neil.

“During an hourlong interview just before he retired in 2012 I realized he had a pretty great story to tell. Here was a guy who was the son of a Métis trapper, born poor on the outskirts of Winnipeg. He was a fighter pilot, a policeman with some harrowing stories to tell, a union leader, if you can believe that, and a self-made millionaire. I actually being an outspoken fiscal conservative who viewed the NDP as the ‘barbarians at the gates,’ actually got very wealthy as a result of a provincial government brought in after Dave Barrett’s historic NDP victory in 1972. He was instrumental in the Mulroney government, played a key role in uniting the Canadian Alliance and PC parties, and in later years this guy, who was once too ashamed to admit he had an aboriginal heritage, got a lifetime achievement award for his work helping First Nations.”

How did that lead to a book deal? “St. Germain never suggested the 2012 people might suggest to me, to write a book. I pitched the idea to a B.C. publisher who immediately offered me a contract. However, it took Gerry almost three years to agree to the idea. I went back to him and said ‘St. Germain was still keen, but then Harbour Publishing/Douglas & McIntyre came in with a better offer so I went with them.’”

What kind of conservative is he? “He’s a fiscal conservative in that he always thought small businessman and therefore naturally a person suspicious of big government. He is a bit of a traditional conservative. And as an ex-cop he takes a hard line on law and order issues.”

What made him an important insider? “It began after the 1984 landslide Tory win when Mulroney made him chairman of the largest caucus in Canadian history. This was a cabinet position that included many right-wing conservatives from outside Quebec, the overweening English-speaking anglophones, and then a huge group of MPs, including the leader, many of whom were strong nationalists and, in many cases, as conservative as Quebec Liberal. There were lots of strong personalities on both sides. It was a very mixed group, especially with Mulroney trying to amend the Constitution. Mr. St. Germain was a strong small-c conservative credential, was also a bilingual Métis naturally sensitive to Canada’s linguistic duality. Mulroney, who was obsessed with keeping the party united, told me that that was a huge factor in his decision to name him caucus chair, or as Mulroney put it in my interview with him, ‘his caucus CEO.’ It was a great choice in large part because Gerry is a workaholic and is very personable, yet could be intimidating with his police-man’s build and direct manner. He could cajole MPs with his charm or go with him from ‘The Boss’ when that was necessary.”

What role did his Métis background play in his career? “It is well-known of course that Gerry is a Métis and from self-government to housing programs to First Nations schools. Here’s these books in bulk to distribute to his wealthy friends to buy some of them. Gerry didn’t widely advertise his aboriginal background. It wasn’t until a few years after I left Parliament in 1993 that he began researching his roots and discovered that he was a descendant of Canada’s first Métis leader, Cuthbert Grant. This is where the title came from, because from ‘I Am Métis’ he was too ashamed to say, ‘I am a Métis.’”

How important was it to him to convince the new Conservative Party of Canada after its collapse? “There were three key moments. He was the party president when the party fell apart in 1983, so it’s fair to say he was instrumental in the early years working with Jean Charest and Elsie Wayne, the only two MPs to survive that devastating election, and a tiny group of party officials, including the late Jim Prentice, to keep the party alive. The second major contribution was in 2000 when he jumped from the PCs to the Conservative Alliance after Stockwell Day became leader. That caused a rupture in his friendship with Mulroney, and it was a huge blow against Joe Clark, the Tory leader who at the time was insisting there would never be unity and that the PCs would eventually return to their former glory. The third contribution came in 2003 when he worked behind the scenes with Harper and a small group of PC and Alliance grandees to negotiate the merger.”

Why was he a “quiet hero,” as you put it, in the Senate for Canada’s aboriginal community? “If you wanted to get something done on a First Nations issue in Ottawa your first stop was St. Germain’s Senate office. Gerry was a long-time member and later chairman of the Senate Aboriginal Peoples Committee. That committee produced reports on many of the key issues of recent years, from self-government to housing to First Nations schools to give support to a skeletal caucus in many major expenditures in areas such as safe water and economic development.”

What was his role in the Senate scandal? “It’s well-known of course that Gerry is one of the more prominent people named in the 2015 report by Auditor General Michael Ferguson into alleged inappropriate spending by Senators. As you know, they were all told a few months ago that the RCMP wouldn’t be investigating them. I think those who are interested in that angle need to read the chapter where I go into this period in some detail, as it is tough to summarize in a few sentences. Gerry has always maintained that, except for one relatively small item, he did nothing improper, and has been prepared to fight the allegations in civil court if the Senate files suit.”

Why is this book important and who should read it? “I think it’s a book for anyone remotely interested in the ups and downs of Canada’s conservative movement, because Gerry was like a fly on the wall during some of its great and not-so-great moments over the past few decades. In the epilogue, he offers some advice, as a person who worked closely with the only two Tory leaders who won majority governments since John Diefenbaker, on what party members should look for in a new leader in next May’s leadership vote. And I think it’s just a compelling story of a life well-lived. He wasn’t perfect, and he would be the first to tell you that his family paid a huge price for his fratic workaholic nature. But no one could challenge the notion that he didn’t get the most out of his abilities during his remarkable rise from very humble beginnings. Finally, I should note that Gerry agreed to open his archives and his life to me because he hoped his personal story would be a source of inspiration for aboriginal youths. In fact, he’s trying to convince some of his wealthy friends to buy some of these books in bulk to distribute to First Nations schools. Here’s hoping he succeeds.”
Government response to House Official Languages Committee lost in translation

Cost cutting versus quality is an ongoing theme bedeviling the government’s ambition and obligation to provide access of equal quality in the official language of choice. It will get worse, not better, especially if a new system for procuring the services of interpreters is allowed to go forward. After many delays, the new system scheduled to be in place Jan. 23, 2017, is still in need of a major overhaul.

OTTAWA—Something unexplained happened after MPs on the House Official Languages Committee published a report calling for sweeping reform to the federal Translation Bureau. As if its report was written in a language not understood, the committee’s call for major change was met by a casual, all-is-well response from the government that the status quo is just fine.

Unhappy MPs on the committee will be able to go forward with their call for major change. After hearing the experts recite a litany of problems at the Translation Bureau and declare that equal access to federal institutions, regardless of official language, would most certainly be compromised by this proposed system, they will be assigned because they have the right skills, experience and subject matter knowledge for the job.

The Trudeau government has stated that it places high value on official languages and wants to be judged by how well it communicates with Canadians in English and in French. The government’s ambition and obligation to provide access of equal quality in the official language of choice.

The Trudeau government has stated that it places high value on official languages and wants to be judged by how well it communicates with Canadians in English and in French. Nicole Gagnon speaks for the Canadian chapter of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC Canada).

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**FEATURE BUZZ**

**HEARD ON THE HILL**

**By Derek Abma**

**Leslie reveals interesting family connections**

Continued from page 2

So a guy who’s a retired lieutenant general, veteran of Afghanistan, and is currently a Member of Parliament can be seen as having an accomplished life, right? Well it seems to run in the family for Andrew Leslie, the Liberal MP for Orleans, Ont., who was profiled in the holiday edition of Ottawa Style magazine. The article revealed a number of notable relatives of Mr. Leslie.

For example, his uncle, Galt MacDermot, is a two-time Grammy Award winner, and a Tony Award Winner, whose many contributions to popular culture include writing the hit song Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In for the musical Hair.

His aunt was Anne Savage, a renowned artist whose life partner was another well-known Canadian painter, A.Y. Jackson.

The article, written by Julie Beun, described how other ancestors of Mr. Leslie are celebrated in his home’s decor, including in a 260-year-old portrait of Capt. James Norman Stewart Leslie, who fought with Gen. James Wolfe in the Plains of Abraham battle and later fought in the American Revolution.

It’s also noted that Mr. Leslie’s paternal grandfather was Gen. Andrew McNaughton, a noted scientist who fought in both world wars and was later a National Defence minister and worked at the United Nations.

His maternal grandfather was Brooke Claxton, a veteran of the First World War who later became Health and Defence minister, and for whom the Brooke Claxton Building in Tunney’s Pasture in Ottawa is named after.

**Globe departures confirmed by J-Source**

Journalism news website J-Source last week confirmed nine of the 20 editorial staff of The Globe and Mail who left with buyouts last month.


J-Source quoted Sue Andrew, a union rep at the Globe, as saying 20 editorial and 10 advertising staff took buyouts in November, and five people from advertisings were laid off.

**Maingot releases new book, Parliamentary Immunity in Canada**


Mr. Maingot, 85, is a former member of the Law Reform Commission of Canada and wrote the English and French versions of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, published in 1982 and 1997, respectively, as well as Politicians Above the Law with David Deabler in 2011.

**It’s the most wonderful time of the year...**

The 32nd edition of Christmas Lights Across Canada is upon us. Admiring the hundreds of thousands of lights shining in Canada’s Capital Region—and in every provincial and territorial capital is a wonderful way to get into the spirit of the season!

Every evening, sparkling lights along Confederation Boulevard and a multimedia projection show on Parliament Hill let you experience the holiday magic. This year, Confederation Park will be illuminated in red and white as a special nod to the 150th anniversary of Confederation. The projection show can be enjoyed until December 25, and the lights until January 7.

You are all invited to the official Illumination Ceremony on Parliament Hill on Wednesday, December 7 at 7 pm. It will feature live musical performances and an amazing pyrotechnic display!

Canadian Heritage is proud to present this program in cooperation with exclusive sponsor Manulife. “Manulife is proud to sponsor this great Canadian tradition,” said Peter Wilkinson, Senior Vice President. “Christmas Lights Across Canada has delighted countless Canadians for many years and helped start each New Year on a bright note.”

**Parliamentary Immunity in Canada**

looks at: parliamentary privilege; freedom of speech; the publication of parliamentary papers; parliamentary proceedings, the Official Secrets Act and criminal law; the use of parliamentary matters as evidence in court; Parliament Hill and precincts of the House of Parliament; privilege of freedom from arrest and related privileges; corporate rights, privileges and the powers of the Senate and House; the courts and their jurisdiction over the Senate and House; and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and parliamentary privilege.

“Our legislative system derives much authority from the powers of the legislature to demand production of documents and responses to questions and these matters are fundamental to parliamentary privilege. Here is an informative volume that will inform its readers of the rules, laws, and practices that make our parliamentary system function so well for the benefit of all our citizens,” Peter Miliken, House Speaker from 2001 to 2011, writes in the book’s foreword.

For more information, visit canad.ca/christmas-lights

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Former top NDP staffer Bélanger named president of Douglas-Coldwell Foundation

Karl Bélanger has taken on a new volunteer position in life after the Hill.

P A R L I A M E N T H I L L — NDP stalwart Karl Bélanger was recently named the new president of the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation after bidding farewell to work on the Hill after almost 20 years earlier this fall.

Mr. Bélanger said he was approached to take on the volunteer position after former president David White resigned for “personal reasons.” He added he had already been elected to sit on the foundation’s board of directors during the summer while still national director of the NDP.

“I thought about it for a while and then we kept going,” he said.

Mr. Bélanger was an active Dipper in his time work in politics in September, having spent almost two decades working on the Hill, having been a senior press secretary for the NDP in Quebec City during the 1997 federal election, and soon after joined then leader Alexa McDonough’s caucus communications team on the Hill. Originally from Quebec City, Mr. Bélanger was an active Dipper even before then, having run unsuccessfully as a federal candidate in Jonquière, Que. in 1993 at just 18 years old, and again in a 1996 by-election in Lac-St-Jean, Que. In 2000, Mr. Bélanger became press secretary to Ms. McDonough and served in the same role for Jack Layton after he was elected party leader in 2005. Three years later, he was a senior press secretary and principal secretary for Quebec to the late leader, becoming part of Mr. Layton’s inner circle. After Mr. Layton died in 2011, Mr. Bélanger remained in place, becoming principal secretary to Thomas Mulcair when he was elected the new NDP leader in 2012.

Last January, he moved over to party headquarters as NDP national director of the NDP until June, at which point briefly re- turning to the NDP leader’s office before announcing his departure on Sept. 14.

With more spare time on his hands now, Mr. Bélanger said he’s going to spend “some of it working to help the DCF and building the DCF.”

Mr. Bélanger will be undertaking his “first outing” as president on Dec. 5, when he’s set to speak to a political class at Carleton University about social democracy in Canada and the history of the NDP.

The foundation used to rent a small office space in the Jack Layton Building of Bank Street and Laurier Ave. West, which is owned by the NDP and named in honour of the late leader in 2012—and is home to the party’s headquarters office, along with other tenants. But it now has a small workspace, with only one part-time staffer on the payroll, at 251 Bank St.

Etienne Gquaton, a former constituency assistant to then NDP MP Eve Peclet, is vice-president of the foundation, as is former LÉA executive director Diane O’Reggio. Anne Scotton serves as executive secretary for the DCF, and Doug Massey is treasurer.

Among the dozen-member board of directors for the DCF are former NDP president Rebecca Blaikie, former NDP Hill staffer Calinda Brown, current NDP MP Irene Mathyssen, and former New Brunswick NDP MLA Elizabeth May. Mr. Bélanger said the DCF currently has roughly 2,000 regular supporters, but he’s looking to “expand and grow” the foundation’s donor and member-base as president.

“I think there’s more that can be done,” said Mr. Bélanger of his long-term goals. “Right now, we have established six scholarships. I wouldn’t mind awarding a few more scholarships in different universities where we’re not present.”

Mr. Bélanger said he’s also planning to reach out to “illuminated Canadians who might not know about the DCF and its mandate,” and wants the foundation to have a better presence at progressive events to help publicize its projects and “generate interest.”

“One of the projects we currently have is the Story of Mouseland renewal project. This great tale from Clarence Gillis and made famous by Tommy Douglas is of historical importance and relevance. We want to make it accessible to the young generation by bringing it to life with a new animation,” he said.

The Story of Mouseland is a political one, and a critique of Canada’s political system, about a place where mice “lived and played” which keeps electing either white or black cats to government. Then “one little mouse who had an idea” comes along and suggests that rather than choosing between white or black cats that they elect a government of mice—in turn, the mouse is called a “Bolivar” and is immediately sent to jail. But while “you can lock up a mouse or a mouse ‘goes on story, you can’t lock up an idea.”

For now, Mr. Bélanger said he’s focused on getting his bearings as DCF president.

“I just want to get a better sense of what my role is, and getting to know our partners, establishing connections with them and perhaps even looking at some international connections as well, there are similar foundations across the world,” said Mr. Bélanger.

The federal NDP is currently in the midst of a lengthy leadership race, with some long-awaited movement recently being made, with NDP MP Peter Julian announcing his decision to run for leadership. NDP MP Charlie Angus has also recently stepped down from his role as federal caucus chair to consider throwing his name in the hat.

The leadership race officially kicked off in July, with the dilute registration open until July 2017 and voting set to take place by preferential ballot in October.

Asked for his thoughts on the race so far, Mr. Bélanger said “it’s interesting to see that there’s some movement on that front.”

“I think NDP members are looking forward to the race, and they’re eager to see a candidate step forward and present their ideas,” he said.
Parliamentary Calendar

Assembly of First Nations convenes its annual December assembly Dec. 6-8

**Monday, Dec. 5**

**House Sitting**—The House is sitting weekdays until Dec. 16, but it could adjourn earlier. It’s scheduled for a six-week break. The House will resume sitting on Monday, Jan. 30, 2017.

**Tuesday, Dec. 6**

**Second Conservative Leadership Debate**—The second debate will be held on Dec. 6 in Monton, N.B., and will be a bilingual debate. Moderator: Monica Baeriy, local lawyer and former Progressive Conservative provincial party leadership campaign. Themes to be covered: employment, infrastructure, and labour, and family, children and health. Debates will be streamed live online for all party members and all Canadians to see. All debates are open to Conservative Party members to attend. The Conservative Party leadership election will be on May 27, 2017.


**Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly**—The Assembly of First Nations, headed by Perry Bellegarde, convenes its annual December Assembly, one of two major national gatherings the AFN holds each year, in Gatineau, Que. Hilton Lac Leamy, 3, boulevard du Casino, Gatineau, Dec. 6-Dec. 8. The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wight

**Wednesday, Dec. 7**

**Liberal Caucus Meeting**—The Liberals will meet in Room 237-C Centre Block on Parliament Hill. For more information, please call Liberal Party media relations at media@liberal.ca or 613-627-2384.

**Conservative Caucus Meeting**—The Conservatives will meet for their national caucus meeting. For more information, contact Cory Hann, director of communications, Conservative Party of Canada at coryhann@conservative.ca.

**NPD Caucus Meeting**—The NPD caucus will meet from 9-15 a.m., in Room 112-N Centre Block, on Wednesday. Please call the NDP Media Centre at 613-232-2351 or NDPmpmpsp@gmail.com.

**Bloc Québécois Caucus Meeting**—The Bloc Québécois caucus will meet from 9:30 a.m. in the Françophonie room (263-B) of Centre Block, on Wednesday. For more information, call press attaché Julie Grotelue, 514-792-2529.

**Bank of Canada Release**—The bank is expected to make its latest interest rate announcement. 10 a.m.

**Rona Ambrose’s Christmas Reception**—Interim Conservative Party Leader Rona Ambrose will be holding a Christmas reception for the Parliamentary Press Gallery on Wed., Dec. 7, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Stornoway, 541 Acacia Ave. Please RSVP by Dec. 2 at cpcleader@mpsp.gc.ca. Ms. Ambrose is asking members of the press gallery to bring one or two of the following to the reception: mitts, scarf, toque (for a woman), specialty teas, nut-free chocolate and candy (not alcohol-filled), body or hand lotions, soap, toothbrush, brush or comb, nail polish, mascara, eye shadow, lipstick, purse-sized Kleenex, small cosmetic bag, bus tickets or gift cards (for Tim Hortons or Shoppers Drug Mart for under $15).

**Thursday, Dec. 8**

**Canada’s Airports: Key Gateways in Today’s Global Economy**—The Economic Club of Canada presents this discussion featuring: Adam Legge, Calgary Chamber of Commerce; Howard Eng, Greater Toronto Airports Authority; Michel Leblanc, Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal; Sam Samadadeh, Kelowna International Airport; and Perrin Beatty, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 7:30-9:15 p.m., Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa.

**Have the Lessons of the Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster Been Learned?**—A conference exploring the impact of the disaster and the future of energy transportation in Canada. Dec. 8, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., University of Ottawa, Desmarais Building (55 Laurier Ave. E.), Room 12102, $25 per person (students may register for free). Organized by the University of Ottawa, the uOttawa Faculty of Law (Common Law Section and Civil Law Section), the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, York University, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Law Foundation of Ontario, and the Union of Canadian Transportation Employees.

**Friday, Dec. 9**

**First Ministers Meeting**—Dec. 9 in Ottawa, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will meet with provincial and territorial leaders on Dec. 9 in Ottawa. U.S. vice-president Joe Biden is set to speak. For more information, call the PMO Press Office at 613-957-5555.

**9th Annual European Union Christmas Concert**—The European Union Delegation to Canada and the diplomatic missions of EU member states are hosting an evening of European Christmas carols, featuring performances by the Ottawa Children’s Choir, Canticle Lyrica, Nipissin High School choir, and Incognito Choir. The concert will also feature mezzo-soprano Terri-Ann Wint and organist Timo- phiee room (263-S) in Centre Bock, on Wednesday. For more information, call EU Delegation to Canada: 613-238-6464, @EUinCanada, facebook.com/EUinCanada.

**Bloc Québécois Caucus Meeting**—The Bloc Québécois caucus will meet from 9:30 a.m. in the Frangophonie room (263-B) of Centre Block, on Wednesday. For more information, contact the Bloc Québécois Caucus Media Relations at 613-232-2351.

**NDP Caucus Meeting**—The NDP caucus will meet from 9-15 a.m., in Room 112-N Centre Block, on Wednesday. Please call the NPD Media Centre at 613-232-2351 or ndpmmpsp@gmail.com.

**Conservative Caucus Meeting**—The Conservative Party will meet for their national caucus meeting. For more information, contact Cory Hann, director of communications, Conservative Party of Canada at coryhann@conservative.ca.

**Bloc Québécois Caucus Meeting**—The Bloc Québécois caucus will meet from 9:30 a.m. in the Françophonie room (263-B) of Centre Block, on Wednesday. For more information, call press attaché Julie Grotelue, 514-792-2529.

**Bank of Canada Release**—The bank is expected to make its latest interest rate announcement. 10 a.m.
Continued from page 42

Participants must RSVP by Dec. 6 at crgpa@crgpa.org.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 14

Liberal Caucus Meeting—The Liberals will meet in Room 237-C Centre Block on Parliament Hill. For more information, please call Liberal Party media relations at media@liberal.ca or 613-234-2884.

Conservative Caucus Meeting—The Conservatives will meet for their national caucus meeting. For more information, contact Cory Hann, director of communications, Conservative Party of Canada at cory@canadaconservative.ca.

NDP Caucus Meeting—The NDP caucus will meet from 9:15 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Room 112-N Centre Block, on Wednesday. Please call the NDP Media Centre at 613-222-3531 or ndpinfo@parl.gc.ca.

Bloc Québécois Caucus Meeting—The Bloc Québécois will meet from 9:30 a.m. in the Frenchophone room (263-B) in Centre Block, on Wednesday. For more information, call press attaché Julie Groleau, 514-792-2579.

Tradémacia Book Launch—The School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies and the Department of History at Carleton University and UBC Press will host a book launch for Paul Litt's book, Tradémacia, at D'Arcy McGee's, 44 Sparks St., Toronto, Ont. Pin a rose to your lapel and saunter in around 5:30 p.m. for drinks, good food, and lively conversation. www.ubcpress.ca.

FRIDAY, DEC. 16

The House is Scheduled to Rise—Though it could rise earlier for the holidays, this is the last scheduled sitting day until Jan. 30.

Diplomatic Hospitality Group Christmas Holiday Luncheon—The Canadian Federation of University Women's Diplomatic Hospitality Group in Ottawa invites diplomats, their spouses/partners, and their families to this event. For more information, contact Terri Videau, 613-783-9100.

TUESDAY, JAN. 17, 2017

Third Conservative Leadership Debate—The third party-sanctioned debate will be held on Jan. 17 in Quebec City, and will be a French debate. Debates will be streamed live online for all party members and all Canadians to see. All debates are open to Conservative Party members to attend. The Conservative Party leadership election will be on May 27, 2017.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 18, 2017

Bank of Canada Release—The bank is expected to make its latest interest rate announcement as well as publish its quarterly Monetary Policy Report. 10 a.m.

Diplomatic Hospitality Group Lunch—Learn to Curl—The Canadian Federation of University Women's Diplomatic Hospitality Group in Ottawa invites diplomats, their spouses/partners, and their families to this event. Wed., Jan. 18, 10 a.m. to noon. Navy Curling Club, 41 Navy Pte.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 25, 2017

I Am a Metis
The Story of Gerry St. Germain

Peter O’Neil has written the lively biography of Senator Gerry St. Germain, who went from humble beginnings in a tiny Metis community to become one of Canada’s most influential political insiders.

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