Tories raise whopping $17.3-million, parties question 'Republican-style' tactics

The party raised $17.3-million in 2010, compared to $7-million collected by the Liberal party, $4.4-million raised by the NDP, $1.3-million by the Green Party and $642,500 by the Bloc Québécois.

By TIM NAUMETZ

The minority governing Conservatives' staggering lead on the other main parties in financial donations last year and a lingering question about its creation through a merger of the former federal Progressive Conservative and Canadian Alliance parties have sparked more comparisons between Conservative tactics and U.S. Republican Party political methods.

Copyright heats up in legislative committee

Bill C-32, Copyright Modernization Act

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

Opposition MPs want to hear from 200 more witnesses on the House special legislative committee studying the controversial Copyright Modernization Act, Bill C-32, but the Tories say excessive partisanship is interfering with the meetings.

“The think there’s an elephant in the room at the committee, which is that everybody is going into it, unfortunately, with a very partisan political stance, rather than working together on the bill which was the intent of setting up the legislative committee to review,” said Conservative Legal Affairs critic Rob Nicholson.

Donolo brings more focus to Liberals’ messaging, and a sharper response

A year into the job, Peter Donolo, chief of staff to Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, has been credited with bringing more discipline, professionalism, and structure to the OLO and caucus.

By KRISTEN SHANE

When Peter Donolo stepped into the Official Opposition Leader’s Office on Nov. 17, 2009 for his first day as Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff’s (Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ont.) chief of staff, there were high expectations of the 50-year-old.

“You could almost hear the collective sigh of relief gripping the Liberal Party when the leader hired a new chief of staff last week,” wrote Hill Times columnist and former Liberal deputy prime minister Sheila Copps. “The leader of the opposition, struggling to recast his own image, now has a pro on his side. For months, Ignatieff has suffered a downward spiral in personal popularity, courtesy of successful Tory attack ads. “With the arrival of Donolo, he is finally about to start fighting back.”

Conservatives say partisanship interfering in Bill C-32 hearings

Copyright Modernization Act review could be delayed until the fall as opposition parties call for 200 more witnesses.

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

Every Wednesday morning, the most powerful mandarins in government meet over coffee in Langevin

For More On Libya, See Story On Page 44

For More On Infectious Disease, See Story On Page 46

For More On Immigration, See Story On Page 47

For More On Banking, See Story On Page 50
NDP MP Tony Martin joined the Twitterverse last Thursday. His first tweets were about a national prayer breakfast he was attending in Washington, D.C. with U.S. President Barack Obama, Commander Mark Kelly whose wife is Arizona Democratic representative Gabby Giffords who was recently shot at a public event in Tucson, Arizona, Brownstone filmmaker Randall Wallace, and one of the Chilean miners stuck underground for months, Jose Enriquez.

He tweeted that the breakfast was “huge” and “inspiring” and that President Obama noted that his wife Michelle keeps him “humble.”

Mr. Martin and Liberal Senator David Smith were the only two federal Canadian legislators at the prayer breakfast. In a press release, Mr. Martin said he hoped “to be inspired and energized” and was “looking forward to having more time to strengthen relationships for the work ahead.”

**NDP MP Martin tweets from U.S. national prayer breakfast in D.C., Taste of the Arctic attracts hundreds, Campbell on Bill Maher’s show, and Genies coming to O-town**

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To learn more visit www.fpac.ca/bio-pathways

**CORRECTIONS: THE HILL TIMES**

Re: “Safe drinking water bill on First Nation Lands hits Senate committee.” (The Hill Times, Jan. 31, p. 49). British Columbia Conservative Senator Gerry St. Germain was attributed as the chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce. Conservative Ontario Senator Michael A. Meighen is that committee’s chair.

Due to two typing errors, some Senators’ travel expenses were incorrectly listed in the Jan. 17 edition of The Hill Times. Conservative Senator Irving Gerstein’s “other” travel was $1,476.36, not $14,796.36 which makes his total expenses $44,753.38, not $58,073.38 as listed. In addition, Conservative Senator Stephen Greene’s “other” travel was $152.37 not $125.37, making his total $42,217.25, not $42,190.25 as listed. The total for all Senators, therefore, is $5,336,757.26, not $5,350,050.26 as listed. The Hill Times apologizes for these errors.
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Tories say excessive partisanship interfering in Bill C-32 hearings

Copyright Modernization Act review could be delayed until the fall as opposition parties call for 200 more witnesses.

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Conservative MP Mike Lake sits on the C-32 legislative committee. (Photograph by Alix Sutch, The Hill Times)

THE HILL TIMES, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2011

LEGISLATION: COPYRIGHT

Act review could be
Copyright Modernization
Tories say excessive partisanship:

4

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"If they're responsible, they'll
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Experts urge feds to move offshore oil drilling environmental protection under Atlantic Accord

In his October 2010 report to the CNLBP, Commissioner Robert Wells noted that “there is a conflict within a single regulator which on the one hand regulates exploration and production and at the same time is being required to make the hard decisions which a safety regulator must make.”

Regulatory capture could equally effect regulators’ protection of the environment, according to federal Natural Resources and Environment minister Shawn Skinner, who has the same isolated power, Prof. Fraser.

Mr. Wells also noted a lack of transparency in the board’s releasing information about the decisions it takes, operators’ plans, and compliance audits.

Prof. Fraser said that while Norway publicly releases specific information on wastewater discharges on a regular basis, she can’t get the same from the CNLBP. The board told the House Committee on Fisheries the Hill Times last week that a working group of senior managers last month started a review of further information it can consider releasing proactively on its website or, when that’s not possible, by hardcopy.

Mr. Wells also spoke of ‘regulatory capture’ when regulators and those they regulate work so closely together that their relationship “may unconsciously influence the hard decisions that safety regulation requires.”

There’s no evidence of it happening in the Newfoundland offshore regulatory environment, but an independent safety authority would further safeguard against it, he said.

The National Energy Board, which regulates offshore petroleum production in the Arctic, expanded an existing study of whether to change a same-season relief well requirement. It is now in the information-gathering stages of a review of the safety and environmental requirements of the Arctic Ocean which will take into account reviews in other jurisdictions including a recently released U.S. presidential panel’s report on the BP spill.

The Newfoundland government commissioned Captain Mark Turner last May to do a review of the broad activities there as well. It has received a draft of it and is reviewing it, said Ms. Maclean.

Both the House committee chair, Conserva- tive MP Leon Benoit (Vegreville-Wainwright-Alta.), said the committee would report on a larger study of oil and gas drilling, including the offshore, but not specifically regarding to the BP spill.

“I think what members of the opposition found was that we really are in good shape compared to other countries,” Mr. Benoit said last week.

In all cases, in Canada, royalties are collected separately from the regulatory agencies that deal with safety and the environment.

Mr. Paradis has maintained that the CNLBP and other regulators are “strong” and “independent.” He said the NBP “enforces world-class standards.”

But NDP natural resources critic Nathan Cullen (Skeena-Bulkley Valley, B.C.) said the government is not truly interested in reform.

“Their goal is state that we don’t change anything significantly for our friends in the oil and gas sector,” said Mr. Cullen.

Despite the NBP review, he noted, Indi- can and Northern Affairs Canada continues to lease Arctic land for drilling. His party has complained the Arctic-only federal review from the NBP is not good enough, comprising all unconventional sources of oil and gas, should have been instituted.

Both the House committee chair and Natural Resourc- es Committee member Liberal MP Scott Andrews (Avonhl,Nfld.) agreed the aca- demics’ suggestion to restructure the New- foundland board is worth considering.
The Economic Action Plan has been a great success. Commendably, the upcoming budget is expected to focus on reducing the deficit primarily through spending restraint, rather than tax increases or reduction in transfer payments to the provinces. Given this focus, it will be difficult for federal and provincial governments to increase funding significantly during the next few years for health care, education, social services and arts and culture. However, the demand for the vital services provided by our not-for-profit sector will continue to grow, particularly for health care as our population ages.

These challenges facing both our governments and our charities also create an opportunity. The government can capitalize on the enormous success of the elimination of the capital gains tax on gifts of listed securities by expanding the tax exemption to include gifts of private company shares and taxable real estate. Concerns about valuation abuse can be addressed by the charity issuing a tax receipt only after it has received the cash proceeds from the sale. Gifts of both these appreciated capital assets are exempt from capital gains taxes in the United States, and Canadian charities should have the same opportunity to access donations from the private sector. Also, share donations to charities of private companies should have the same tax treatment as share donations of publicly listed companies.

Because Canada has a minority government, the support of the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois is important. We thank all three opposition Parties for confirming their support.

We join the not-for-profit sector in urging you to implement these measures in the upcoming budget. It is a great opportunity to demonstrate that a minority government can work to benefit all Canadians.
EDITORIAL

Feds should listen to NRTEE

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy recently released a report in Ottawa examining the economic risks and opportunities of climate change and whether or not Canada should “lead, lag, or harmonize policy approaches with the U.S.” and the consequences of doing so. “It concludes that Canada should harmonize its climate policy with the U.S. and calls it the Transitional Policy Option, “a sensible and realistic approach.”

Environment Minister Peter Kent should read the report and seriously consider the options. The report says the current policy of reducing GHGs reduction technologies.

NRTEE says its policy option offers Canada a way forward by walking a middle line between harmonizing on carbon targets and carbon prices.

“No single climate policy option is risk free; realistically, each entails some costs, but, if Canada desires to achieve its stated environmental goals of GHG emission reductions within a certain time period, we will need to consider additional steps now, independent of U.S. actions and policy uncertainty,” states the report.

The NRTEE says this approach would establish a “price collar” that limits carbon prices between Canada and the U.S. and would allow Canada to make significant greenhouse gas reductions over the next 10 years, address competitiveness concerns for industry, and pave the way toward greater harmonization later as American policy direction emerges.”

By adopting the NRTEE’s policy, the government regulations, calls for a contingent carbon pricing of no more than $30 per tonne CO2e higher than the price in the U.S.; a national cap-and-trade system with the auctioning of permits and revenue recycling to cap emissions and to address regional and sectoral concerns, as it puts it; a limited international permits to offset domestic carbon prices lower for Canadian firms; and a technology fund to stimulate investment in needed emission reduction technologies.

NRTEE says this approach would establish a “price collar” that limits carbon prices between Canada and the U.S. and would allow Canada to make significant greenhouse gas reductions over the next 10 years, address competitiveness concerns for industry, and pave the way toward greater harmonization later as American policy direction emerges.”

Prime Minister Harper’s accountability promises misleading, says Conacher

Prime Minister Harper’s claim that the Conservatives have “delivered” what they promised five years ago is as misleading as the promises were.

The Conservatives promised a Federal Accountability Act that would strengthen good government rules in 55 ways, but introduced an act in April 2006 with only 29 changes to strengthen the FAA proposed by the Conservatives also rejected 25 changes to strengthen the FAA proposed by the Conservatives.

The FAA also weakened government accountability by cutting eight key ethics watchdogs from 30 to 15, and made their promises to fix election dates, hold free votes on most issues, stop appointing election candidates, and stop appointing party supporters to the Senate and other positions.

As a result, as several scandals have revealed in the past few years, secret, unethical donations and lobbying, patronage and cronyism, unfair snap elections, wasteful spending, and excessive government secrecy are all still legal.

So another, stronger Federal Accountability Act is clearly needed to close the dozens of loopholes left open by the first FAA. The question remains, which party will finally deliver the good government promised to Canadians in the Constitution 144 years ago? Duff Conacher, coordinator Democracy Watch

LETTERS: TO THE EDITOR

Political parties should reach out more to grassroots Canadians

Re: “Time to make public funding of politics more democratic.” (The Hill Times, Jan. 9). Duff Conacher made some good points about the per-vote subsidy and other funding issues. However, I am forced to disagree with his proposal about cutting subsidies for parties based on whether they got more or less seats than their vote share warrants.

This is treating the symptom, not the disease. Rather than introducing formulas that offer transitional support to make up for the deficiencies of our electoral system, we should fix our electoral system. That would preclude endless arguments over how much the subsidies should be adjusted while offering the benefits of a modern proportional voting system.

I also suggest that the current subsidy should not be reduced. The less political parties have to spend, the less influence they have. Competition from third-party campaigns means the lack of diversity in our media ownership already allows for undue influence along ideological lines.

This is made even worse by the staffing cuts that have reduced the numbers of commentators and columnists leaving the readership as a mere shadow of its former self.

While leaving the per-vote subsidy intact doesn’t treat the problems of media ownership or editorial diversity, these are not fixable within the general framework of our electoral system. They may not even be fixable at the national level in the age of transnational mega-corporations.

Arctic mapping camp abandoned amid ice worry news report

On Jan. 31, 2011, CBC Radio news reported that the Canadian government is abandoning plans to set up a remote scientific camp on the Arctic Ocean ice this year, citing dangerously thin ice conditions.

Twenty-five Canadian scientists were due to conduct mapping work from an ice camp covering about 400 kilometers of the Arctic Ocean. It was determined that the possibility of ice break up during the ice camp’s construction was too risky and dangerous for the people involved.

Over the past five years, scientists have set up ice camps in remote areas of the Arctic Ocean as they gather extensive mapping data that can help Canada claim a greater area of the seabed under the United Nations Law of the Sea convention.

Canada and other Arctic countries are vying to claim more of the Arctic seabed, which is potentially rich in oil and gas resources.

Canada has until 2013 to submit its claim to the United Nations.

Any potential setback and loss of Canadian sovereignty due to Canada not completing mapping on time was avoidable had the government heeded advice I presented in a Hill Times article in August of 2007, when I was asked to comment on Arctic sovereignty.

Once again, the government needs to be reminded that to make the Arctic a priority, it must deliver on the resources and equipment necessary to get the job done, not just pay lip service to issues important to the North and Canada.

Liberal MP Larry Bagnell

Arctic issues and northern development critic

Yukon
Controversy over CMHR’s must be resolved


As with many of the concerns addressed by the above-noted pieces that have appeared in the last two editions of The Hill Times, Mr. Luciuk’s submission illustrates the problems that currently surround the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, and it is essential that your readership and the entire Canadian public be aware of these issues.

I use the word essential because the Canadian public must understand that the CMHR is very much a public educational institution, whose construction is funded largely by taxpayers, as well as by those operational costs are coming largely from the public ad infinitum.

As such, it is imperative that our legislative representatives ensure that the CMHR’s contents are indeed “thematic, comparative, and inclusive.” I think that the following are, inter alia, steps that ought to be taken to uphold the integrity of the CMHR and truly reflect the will of the Canadian people regarding the contents of the museum—as clearly evidenced in the museum’s own public canvassing results, contained in Luciuk’s submission.

First, our government should halt any continued federal funding towards the Museum until such time as the proposed contents are resolved in a fair and manner. Second, those proposed contents ought to be accordingly reviewed independently so that the proposed elevation of two communities’ suffering is not sustained. Such a hierarchy runs counter to the mandate of the Museum of “enhanc[ing] the public’s understanding of human rights.” It is clear that the contents of the CMHR have been controversial. The resulting divisiveness amongst various communities is regrettable, but certainly not unavoidable. I suggest that the solution in ensuring that such hard feelings not be exacerbated lies in a more equitable approach to the museum’s contents that has been proposed.

Mr. Luciuk’s recommendation of “thematic, comparative, and inclusive” contents is one that deserves considerable attention. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights must reflect impartiality if it is truly to be for all Canadians.

Andrew Harasymiw
Calgary, Alta.

PM Harper urges Canadians to explore, celebrate Canada’s black history

February is Black History Month and an opportunity to celebrate the values of perseverance and dignity that have defined the black community in Canada.

This year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is urging all Canadians to participate in various events about the important contributions of black Canadians to Canada’s history.

To be enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame, while Jarome Iginla was the first black captain in the National Hockey League.

Harper is also encouraging Canadians to reflect on the progress made in Nova Scotia.

The prime minister was born into slavery in White Rock, B.C.

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Canada needs a national brain strategy, now

It is important to be reminded from time to time what the government is trying to do, particularly in light of the needs of Canadians, as Health Minister Leona Aylukqak said recently that the government is committing $1 billion to a new national brain strategy.

Research funding announced last week is part of an ongoing effort to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease.

This continued commitment has not only supported the work of Canadian scientists who rank among the best in the world, but also new discoveries of real significance.

Through this research, our understanding of Alzheimer’s disease has improved in the last five years. Alzheimer’s is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain, which causes thinking and memory to become seriously impaired. Alzheimer’s disease is the most prevalent of a number of conditions known collectively as dementia. Over half a million Canadians have Alzheimer’s disease today and more than 100,000 new dementia cases are diagnosed each year. According to a recent study, the cost of this crisis, costs will spike to $37 billion by 2037.

While the numbers affected by dementia in Canada and the associated economic burden dealing with the disease are daunting, the impact on those with the illness and on their families is also very profound. The government’s continued commitment to Alzheimer’s research is a good first step. However, to deal with this crisis Canada needs a response to the challenge of the brain strategy.

Our voice on this issue is one of many neurological charities who see the need for a significant response from government. In public policy terms, it seems to us, and to Canadians, that Alzheimer’s disease, along with other neurological conditions, have been ignored by the policymakers in Ottawa. Canadians want a real response—a comprehensive response that dramatically improves the lives of people living with dementia.

Today, there is no national or federal brain strategy and federal programs, research funding, support and income assistance pale in comparison to the enormous and rapidly escalating health, economic and social impact of this devastating disease.

We have been told by policymakers that there is no appetite for another national health-related strategy yet National strategies have been successfully developed for a long list of other diseases, some of which have far less impact on the health of Canadians than neurodegenerative conditions.

We know that a rising tide is coming: the need for a national brain strategy has never been more apparent and more urgent than now.

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Canada needs a national brain strategy, now

It is important to be reminded from time to time what the government is trying to do, particularly in light of the needs of Canadians, as Health Minister Leona Aylukqak said recently that the government is committing $1 billion to a new national brain strategy.

Research funding announced last week is part of an ongoing effort to find a cure for Alzheimer’s disease.

This continued commitment has not only supported the work of Canadian scientists who rank among the best in the world, but also new discoveries of real significance.

Through this research, our understanding of Alzheimer’s disease has improved in the last five years. Alzheimer’s is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain, which causes thinking and memory to become seriously impaired. Alzheimer’s disease is the most prevalent of a number of conditions known collectively as dementia. Over half a million Canadians have Alzheimer’s disease today and more than 100,000 new dementia cases are diagnosed each year. According to a recent study, the cost of this crisis, costs will spike to $37 billion by 2037.

While the numbers affected by dementia in Canada and the associated economic burden dealing with the disease are daunting, the impact on those with the illness and on their families is also very profound. The government’s continued commitment to Alzheimer’s research is a good first step. However, to deal with this crisis Canada needs a response to the challenge of the brain strategy.

Our voice on this issue is one of many neurological charities who see the need for a significant response from government. In public policy terms, it seems to us, and to Canadians, that Alzheimer’s disease, along with other neurological conditions, have been ignored by the policymakers in Ottawa. Canadians want a real response—a comprehensive response that dramatically improves the lives of people living with dementia.

Today, there is no national or federal brain strategy and federal programs, research funding, support and income assistance pale in comparison to the enormous and rapidly escalating health, economic and social impact of this devastating disease.

We have been told by policymakers that there is no appetite for another national health-related strategy yet National strategies have been successfully developed for a long list of other diseases, some of which have far less impact on the health of Canadians than neurodegenerative conditions.

We know that a rising tide is coming: the need for a national brain strategy has never been more apparent and more urgent than now.

PM Harper urges Canadians to explore, celebrate Canada’s black history

February is Black History Month and an opportunity to celebrate the values of perseverance and dignity that have defined the black community in Canada.

This year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is urging all Canadians to participate in various events about the important contributions of black Canadians to Canada’s history.

To be enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame, while Jarome Iginla was the first black captain in the National Hockey League.

Harper is also encouraging Canadians to reflect on the progress made in Nova Scotia.

The prime minister was born into slavery in White Rock, B.C.

Canada needs a national brain strategy, now

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We know that a rising tide is coming: the need for a national brain strategy has never been more apparent and more urgent than now.
Canada and its allies must acknowledge that after a decade they are slowly, painfully, going nowhere. Foreign Affairs’ most recent quarterly report on Afghanistan may be its last and the Cabinet committee on Afghanistan has been disbanded.

Toronto—The Department of Foreign Affairs has now produced 10 quarterly progress reports on Afghanistan. They reveal little progress and significant regress on the most critical issue: security. The most recent report notes that insurgent attacks have increased by 70 per cent over the past year. Simultaneously, it reports, “Sixty per cent of Kandaharis see themselves as safe in their communities, and 46 per cent see security as improving. Only one in six Kandaharis see security as getting worse.” The implication is that Canadians have contributed to this relatively positive state of affairs. The findings of a more recent poll conducted for a BBC/ABC/Washington Post/German ADR consortium paint a more troubling picture. In 2000, only eight per cent of Afghans thought attacks against NATO/ISAF were justified; last year, 27 per cent thought so and support for the presence of foreign troops has justified; last year, 27 per cent thought so and support for the presence of foreign troops has shrunk to about half the population. Only 21 per cent of Afghans believe that the U.K. forces are playing a positive role (down from 36 per cent a year earlier) and 36 per cent (down from 43) think that of the Americans. There is little reason to believe that the Afghans think any more highly of the Canadians. In 2006, the Canadian media were hailing the success of Canadian Forces in the fields of Panjwai, but these “victories” had the enemy largely vanishing rather than being defeated. The Taliban, in classic guerrilla style, had outmaneuvered the Canadian well. In diversionary tactics, according to a military-related United States think tank, The Americans now see Canada’s campaign as one of the more serious setbacks suffered in the war. Ever since, the roads in Panjwai have been deadly, and Canadians have avoided them as much as possible. According to an interview with CIDA Minister Bev Oda, during her Christmas visit to the soldiers with Peter MacKay, Walt Natynczyk, and others in tow, including Canada’s favourite intellectual, Don Cherry, one of their helicopters was shot at and the Kandahar base was bombed. This does not constitute progress. There has been a lower number of Canadian fatalities in recent months, only one between August and December. The major reason however is because the armed forces spend most of their time, like the Danes and many others, inside their wire. Ottawa cannot avoid revealing the number of Canadian casualties. According to Scott Taylor, the former soldier and publisher of Esprit de Corps who has travelled widely in Afghanistan and who has more credibility than any Canadian reporter bunkered down behind the wire, approximately 1,500 Canadians have suffered injuries with over half of them severely injured. The ratio of wounded to killed soldiers for the U.S. forces last year was 12 to one. For Canada, the ratio last year and in the most deadly year, 2006, was about one in six. With advances in medical technologies relatively few die of their injuries, quite unlike the killing fields of earlier wars. The human and financial costs of caring for the injured will be severe and long-lasting.

The fanciful notion that Afghan fighters can be effectively trained inside the wire is akin to believing that a student driver may be trained without anyone else in the car with him. In addition to the linguistic and cultural challenges of communicating with the Afghans, they are unlikely to respect trainers prohibited from mentoring them in the field. Foreign Affairs reports on how many more Afghan soldiers are now being trained but it neglects to report how many desert or resign: two thirds by one count. Stéphane Dion has perceptively pointed out that if the ragtag untrained Afghans could undo the Soviets, what should lead us to believe that training will improve their prospects against the Taliban? The cost of sending forces to Afghanistan is very great. Perhaps it would be cheaper, but just as useless, to bring the Afghans here or to train them in another country. (Romania will probably assist for the money, as they illegally did for secret CIA renditions.)

There is very little prospect of foreign forces succeeding in Afghanistan. The dilemma facing Canada and other countries bogged down there is daunting. For Canada to turn its back on NATO (and the UN under whose auspices the NATO forces operate), however, would be to spur its multilateral traditions and to damage it in the eyes of allies. On the other hand, Canada and its allies must acknowledge that after a decade they are slowly, painfully, going nowhere. Foreign Affairs’ most recent quarterly report on Afghanistan may be its last and the Cabinet committee on Afghanistan has been disbanded.

The Karzai government and Afghan society more broadly are steeped in a culture of corruption. Foreign aid is no exception; two thirds of Afghans believe it is misdirected to corrupt government officials. Perhaps NATO should consider adopting the Afghan method to manage the problem and think inside the box: instead of spending a billion dollars annually over the next three years to train Afghans, it may be cheaper and a better investment to buy off the tribal chieftains to secure the border with Pakistan and keep the Taliban at bay.

Nelson Wiseman teaches political science at the University of Toronto.

The Hill Times
The effect is to penalize people who simply want to put their past behind them. It smacks of retribution and perverts the notion that most people are capable of redemption.

BY SHEILA COPPS

Just about every Canadian family has at least one convicted criminal in their midst. A now-deceased Conservative Member of Parliament had a brother on death row. A Liberal Member of Parliament was elected after confessing a past indiscretion as a bank robber. According to Public Safety Minister Vic Toews, some 37,000 people are pardoned every year for crimes previously committed.

Husbands, brothers, sons or daughters. Many of us have made mistakes in life that placed us in conflict with the law.

Toews himself pleaded guilty in 2005 to a regulatory offence after confessing a past indiscretion that could cost upwards of $20,000 in legal fees. He said “The facts in my case as agreed to by the court demonstrated that the breach of law was a simple mistake rather than a deliberate strategy to circumvent the law.”

Some countries save money and time by offering an automatic pardon after a sentence has served and a reasonable time period has elapsed with no repeat offenders. Kraft is director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, urged the minister to consider the Australian approach, which involves an automatic pardon.

But punitive pardon policies are not about money. They are just another element in the Tory law and order agenda.

Toews actually claimed that a criminal record serves as “protection” for society at large. He said he did not believe the debt to society had been paid by convicted criminals who had done their time and remained crime-free. In his estimation, a criminal record serves as a sort of scarlet letter to let society know we have criminals in our midst.

Most of us don’t need to be reminded. We have friends and families who have made an early mistake, go on to live normal, productive lives. We have let Toews’s decade-old brush with the law did not sensitize him to the fact that all Canadians who once found themselves in court should not be labelled forever. They are not all Karl Homolka wannabes.

Toews’s parole board proposal is punitive. The effect is to penalize people who simply want to put their past behind them. It smacks of retribution and perverts the notion that most people are capable of redemption.

Given his own history, the minister should know better. Sheila Copps is a former Jean Chrétien-era Cabinet minister and a former deputy prime minister.

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I wonder what animals would say if they watched daily Question Period

The difference between the human species and animals is that we have an intellect. This is a very flattering theory.

BY ANGELO PERSICHILLI

TORONTO—We say the difference between the human species and animals is that we have an intellect. This is a very flattering theory, but sometimes I’m wondering what the animals would say about us if they had a chance to watch Question Period for a few days. This thought crossed my mind when reading a story last week about how politicians spend the money they collect.

In the article, some Liberals were accusing the Conservatives of spending too much money on negative ads, even during non-election periods because their coffers are very wealthy. Basically, when politicians have too much money in their hands they do bad things. A few points:

First, it was a Liberal government that changed the rules on how to collect money, despite concerns from other parties and, eventually, all parties were able to work with the legislation that former Liberal Party president, Stephen LeDrew called “dumb as a bag of hammers.”

Two years ago, it was the Conservative government that was willing to eliminate some of the public financing of political parties and they were promptly crucified.

Now that the Tories are legally spending money they have legally collected, some want legislation to regulate the previous legislation.

Basically, after approving legislation on how to raise money, it now seems there is another need to regulate how and when to spend it.

Personally, I don’t agree with the way the federal Tories are using their money. I don’t like it, not only because I’m against all negative politics, on principle, but also because it’s useless. I don’t know how many times Conservative organizers can tell my neighbour that the Liberal Party leader is not up to the job. For all the people interested in that message, they’re got it. If they didn’t, after more than five years, it means that they’re not interested.

It is very simple but, unfortunately, that’s the name of the game for us, the intellectual humans. Despite our intellect, we do many strange things. For example, we are those who ask auto makers to build expensive cars capable of speeds up to 200 km/hour (that we eagerly buy), but then hire police to stop us from enjoying said speed because, as we know, it’s unsafe.

We support governments that authorize multinational tobacco to manufacture cigarettes and then the same governments spend millions of dollars to tell people that it’s bad to smoke and that we shouldn’t buy them.

But this is not just about our politicians.

For example, we are all for policies that will create jobs in Canada, but we are the first to cross the border for bargain prices. We are pro-environment, but Stéphane Dion lost the election because he wanted to do something about it with the carbon tax. We are all against corruption and dislike it when politicians misuse their money. But I’m wondering how many Canadians using cash to pay for merchandise or for services rendered whenever possible.

We all have our hearts in the right place, but I guess, as humans in possession of an intellect, we can rationalize anything. We have convinced ourselves that we are never wrong; it’s always someone else’s fault.

With animals, those creatures lacking an intellect, the law of survival of the strongest applies. But animals take only what they need and leave the rest. With intellectual humans, those who survive are not the strongest but the sneakiest. And they don’t even leave crumbs on the floor. The more intellect they have, the more they win at the expense of others.

Last week, I was very sad and I didn’t know if it was because Question Period started again or because my daughter’s 16-year-old unintellectual cat suddenly died. It might be both.

Angelo Persichilli is political editor of Corriere Canadese, Canada’s Italian-language daily newspaper based in Toronto.
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By Tom Korski

Imagine turning a 200 per cent profit from the sun—guaranteed! It sounds like a sales pitch captured on hidden camera at an airport hotel seminar. Yet it’s captured on hidden camera at an airport hotel seminar. Yet it’s publicly promoted by politicians, the press, even a church bulletin.

Conservatives hoping to win a majority of the 308 seats, The Liberals and New Democrats have

OPINION: CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS

Best hope for the opposition: joint nomination meetings

If the Liberals, New Democrats and Greens really want to beat the Tories, they should hold joint nomination meetings in those ridings where a single opponent has a good hope of defeating a Conservative incumbent. This could mean, at the most, joint nomination meetings in some 60 ridings.

By Clyde Sanger

Ottawa—Reality hour has struck for Canada’s opposition parties. The Conservative government is riding high, with a lead of seven points in the polls. Its cavalry are sniffing the air and pawing the ground for an election battle. The budget in March, if Prime Minister Stephen Harper insists on including corporate tax cuts, will sound the bugle. How can the Liberals and New Democrats respond?

Several polls show that most Canadians do not want an election; the third who do are predominantly Conservatives hoping to win a majority of the 308 seats. The Liberals and New Democrats have

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Federal Tories likely won’t go to polls before Ontario Tories

And united Tories are always a more potent force than divided Liberals. But you never get the sense that the McGuinty Liberals and the Ignatieff gang have the same sort of kinship.

BY TIM POWERS

Parliament’s back. A budget won’t be coming down until sometime in March. God knows what the election prognosticators will do to keep election speculation alive until then. Only weather stories and political turmoil in Egypt temporarily distract from the distorted single-minded obsession of some who push the election mantra for their own entertainment purposes.

I have been fascinated recently by what is happening in Ontario politics and what it might mean, if anything, to the federal scene. You see, Ontario will actually be having an election in October and for the first time in his tenure Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty could be unseated. Recent polls show Tory leader Tim Hudak do well in Ontario (I think that has the potential to have a positive bearing on federal Conservative fortunes in a federal vote in 2012. Likewise the reverse could also be true if we go to the polls federally first, but I still don’t believe that will happen. There seems to be a healthy constructive relationship between provincial and federal Tories in Ontario. From time to time, as is always the case in federal-provincial relationships, there will be differences but by and large sympatico between those organizations has the potential to produce positive electoral dividends for both.

Ontario is always a more potent force than divided Liberals. You never get the sense that the McGuinty Liberals and the Ignatieff gang have the same sort of kinship (other than the fraternal relationship between Dalton and David McGuinty). Perhaps they do but it isn’t obvious to the rest of the world if that is the case. The truth will be told in October.

Tories should be concerned about Alberta and British Columbia, where the birthplaces of the Harper conservative coalition are now engaged in a bloody civil war, with conservative attacking conservative, and new right-wing political parties being formed every hour.

BY WARREN KINSELLA

I am delighted to see my friends Brad and Tim so concerned about the future of the Liberal Party. Their empathy, and their conviction, is positively heartwarming.

In internet circles, they might be referred to—unchannelably—as “concern trolls.” But I am a nice person, and I take their expressions of support in good faith. Thanks, fellas.

Since they are both so worried about Liberal fortunes, let me assure them that the Liberal Party is not all that panicked about the departure of Rocco Rossi, a.k.a. Benedict Baldy. The reverse is true, actually.

Rocco, you see, is all about Rocco. When he was national director, he was heartily disliked by caucus and the leader’s office—because everything he did seemed to be all about advancing Rocco’s interests, and not the party’s. Remember, for instance, his bizarre kayak journey up the Rideau Canal?

I doubt you do. But the rest of us remember. We saw it as an epic dumb stunt, like many of the stunts Rocco did and does, which seemed to be more about raising Rossi’s profile than actually raising money.

As a McGuinty Liberal, I can also tell you that—with possible exception of me—nobody really knew who Rocco Rossi was. He not only didn’t have the finger to assist the provincial party, not once, and his claims that we “courted” him are flatly false.

Just days before he reinvented himself as a Conservative, in fact, Rocco was told very clearly that the McGuinty team was not interested in a bidding war for his loyalty. If he felt he’d be more at home with the rural ramp who is the Ontario PC’s leader because they share human rights, and their plans to rip $3-billion from health care, leading to hospital closures and nurse firings (in the name of cost-cutting), he was heartily disliked by the leader and shaken those fingers in his face and told to go find another home.

The latest Ipsos—showing McGuinty and Hudak within a 20 point lead over Hudak in the GTA—makes clear that Benedict Baldy is going to get “knocked out,” too.

The Liberal Party is fine, thank you very much. Brad, however, should check his own party’s health—they’re willingness to prop up the Harper Reformatories in the coming budget vote doesn’t exactly suggest rosy-checked health.

Tim, meanwhile, should cast an eye to Alberta and British Columbia—where the birthplaces of the Harper conservative coalition are now engaged in a bloody civil war, with conservative attacking conservative, and new right-wing political parties being formed every hour.

Again, thanks for the concern, fellas. And, Tim, Conservatives are welcome to take the bizarre and erratic Rocco Rossi. They deserve each other.

BY BRAD LAVIGNE

While conservative commentators are down-playing the significance of Rocco Rossi’s defection, many Liberals (my eloquent friend Warren included) are still reeling from the personal sucker punch the former national director has just delivered to the Once Mighty Liberal Party of Canada™.

It would be irresponsible to sweep this event under the rug or see it as little more than the ambition of a driven but unprincipled man. This defection speaks to the current state of the Ignatieff Liberals. It begs the question: If the tent gets so big, does being under it have any meaning?

This is exemplified by the identity crisis that the Liberals have under Ignatieff’s leadership. This guy supported the very war his party took credit for keeping Canada out of. He has written about targeted assassinations and coercive interrogations. He has changed his mind on key issues depending on what his most recent advisors tell him. Without question he is a blue Liberal. And the fact that his national director just

Tensions between Team McGuinty and Team Ignatieff, eh?

Liberals are still reeling from the personal sucker punch the former national director has just delivered to the Once Mighty Liberal Party of Canada™.

BY SANDY HORVATH

While the Conservative vote will mean more Toronto New Democrats elected (and no 416 Conservatives). And that’s good for all of Canada. news@hilltimes.com

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Media enamoured by nuances of political strategy, feds forge ahead with foreign, domestic agendas

Conservatives continue to control the economic narrative while Liberals settle on a corporate tax cut policy and the media are preoccupied with the square footage of the NDP war room.

Kim Campbell quipped that a campaign was no time to talk policy. It seems this is now true between elections too.

Just last week, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty declared that “We can have discussions about other things, but not about the fundamental direction of the economy.” While the “direction” of the economy may not need debating (who doesn’t want rising economic activity?) a robust discussion on how to achieve it is in the public interest.

Still, Conservatives continue to control the economic narrative while Liberals settle on a corporate tax cut policy and the media are preoccupied with the square footage of the NDP war room.

Another issue the government has dominated the debate on is the Afghanistan war. When Jack Layton, for instance, suggested talking with the Taliban to help achieve peace, he was dubbed “Taliban Jack.” (Ironically, NATO confirmed late last year that they are in Washington-sanctioned talks with the Taliban.)

Successfully stifling debate hasn’t hurt Harper and his team, however—not surprising given how few people pay attention to parliamentary proceedings. Pollara’s Michael Marzolini recently reported that only 15 per cent of people actually follow federal politics.

When it comes to foreign affairs in particular—which is rarely top of mind for Canadians—the federal government has a lot of leeway to politicize its policies without fearing push-back from the public. The Prime Minister’s Office said last week that they will focus on free trade legislation in the lead up to the budget. But how many people know about the negotiations conducted by DFATI that impact so many facets of society?

There are presently three free trade government bills: Colombia (which has received royal assent), Jordan, and Panama. Other pending negotiations include those with South Korea, the European Union, and Turkey.

Canada-Turkey relations are worth briefly exploring, especially given recent events in the Middle East.

In December, International Trade Minister Peter Van Loan led a mission to Istanbul and Ankara. His trip focused on expanding commercial relations, promoting trade and included opening a new consulate in Istanbul. Likewise, in January, a Senate delegation led by Speaker Noel Kinsella made a trip to Turkey.

While promoting bilateral trade may be worthwhile, it shouldn’t be done in a vacuum without reference to the human rights situation there. The U.S. State Department’s International Religious Freedom Report and the European Commission 2010 progress report on Turkey highlight that “non-Muslim religious communities … continue to face undue constraints.”

In Question Period recently, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said “that the fundamental basics of [his] government’s foreign policy was the encouragement of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.”

It appears though that these values were lost on Van Loan as human rights seem to have completely fallen by the wayside during his tour of Turkey. He didn’t even pay a courtesy call to the Ecumenical Patriarchate—an almost mandatory stop for all visiting dignitaries. This 1,700-year-old living institution shepherding the spiritual needs of 300 million Orthodox Christians is headed by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and regularly wronged by Turkish authorities.

But instead of investigating issues of substance like this and others (e.g., the North American perimeter security pact) the Ottawa press has an all-consuming obsession in covering election speculation. While the media are enamoured by the nuances of political strategy, the federal government forges ahead with its foreign and domestic agendas with insignificant scrutiny.

While the ballot question may be uncertain, it surely won’t be based on substantive matters.

The next campaign will confirm (yet again) that Kim Campbell’s claim is correct and highlight how many political reporters focus more on the political process than they do public policy.

Evan Sotiropoulos is a freelance political columnist.

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The Hill Times
OPINION: ELECTION BUZZ

Tory majority in the cards, 2011 to mark true beginning of Harper dynasty

If we do have a federal election this spring, the result will be a Conservative majority.

BY GERRY NICHOLLS

Oakville, Ont.—At the beginning of the year I boldly predicted in the National Post the federal Conservatives would trigger an election this spring.

Nothing has happened since then to cause me to change my mind. Indeed, if anything every day brings fresh evidence that a federal election is near.

This has emboldened me to climb a little further out onto my forecasting limb. After much pondering, I have come to the conclusion that if we do have a federal election this spring, the result will be a Conservative majority.

Now I realize this forecast goes against conventional political wisdom. Many pundits, using current public opinion polls as evidence, are arguing no party currently has enough voter support to win a majority.

Columnist Lorne Gunter has written, “Party standings would probably end the campaign at more or less their current levels. There is almost certainly no majority available to any party.”

And former Liberal strategist Warren Kinsella has declared, “Harper is still far from a majority.” Really?

Gunter and Kinsella are forgetting one simple fact: Canadians are not yet politically engaged.

The Liberals recently released a poll, for instance, which showed only 15 per cent of Canadians are even paying attention to federal politics. (By the way, that’s completely normal. The average person rarely cares about the goings on in Ottawa. They would rather watch American Idol than The National. And who can blame them?)

But once an election is actually called Canadians will get focused on politics. They will start paying attention.

And what will these focused Canadians see when they start paying attention? Well for one thing they will see a Prime Minister in Stephen Harper who is at the peak of his political powers.

A battle-hardened veteran of three national election campaigns and two leadership races, Stephen Harper is a wily political tactician who leads a united, well-disciplined and wealthy party.

The Liberals, on the other hand, are in a sorry state. Their leader, Michael Ignatieff is intelligent but a rookie when it comes to running a national campaign. He has only one national race under his belt, a Liberal leadership contest, which he lost.

Tory gains. Plus the victory of conservative Rob Ford in the Toronto mayoralty race shows even the up until now Tory-resistant GTA might be ready to turn blue.

Helping the Conservatives is that Ontarians are growing tired of Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty and thus will be in the mood to vote against any Liberal, provincially or federally.

For all these reasons a Conservative majority seems to be in the cards.

Mind you, the preceding analysis assumes the Tories will run a good, tactically sound campaign, and I concede that’s a mighty big assumption.

Never underestimate the ability of Conservatives to mess things up. However, all things being equal, we should expect 2011 to mark the true beginning of the Harper dynasty.

In short, in the next election Ignatieff will have a hard enough time ruling his own Liberal base, let alone winning over undecided voters.

In other words, on paper at least, the Harper versus Ignatieff contest could be the biggest mismatch since General Custer took on Sitting Bull.

And let’s not forget the Conservatives only need a net gain of 12 seats to win a majority.

That’s absolutely doable. All things considered, the Conservatives should gain seats in Danny Williams-less Newfoundland and will very likely win back the one seat they lost in Alberta in 2008.

But I’m guessing it’s in “voter-rich” Ontario where the Conservatives will really make their majority guaranteeing electoral breakthrough.

Political conditions in that province are just right for major Tory gains.

Last year’s emotion-laden debate over the gun registry, for instance, should help the Conservatives immensely when it comes to taking some opposition-held Ontario rural ridings.

And even Ontario’s urban ridings are ripe for the Tory taking.

Consider how the Conservatives handily won the recent byelection in Vaughan.

Plus the victory of conservative Rob Ford in the Toronto mayoralty race shows even the up until now Tory-resistant GTA might be ready to turn blue.

Considering how the Conservatives handily won the recent byelection in Vaughan.

And I concede that’s a mighty big assumption.

Never underestimate the ability of Conservatives to mess things up. However, all things being equal, we should expect 2011 to mark the true beginning of the Harper dynasty.

How will Prime Minister Harper govern after he wins a majority? That’s something even I can’t predict.

Gerry Nicholls is a writer and political consultant. www.gerrynicholls.com

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The Hill Times
Canadian Forces important to success in developing Afghan National Security Forces: U.S.

Canada’s significant pledge to the training mission is essential for our mission—assisting the Afghans to take lead security responsibility throughout the country by 2014.

BY DR. JACK KEM

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN—Almost 15 months ago LTG William B. Caldwell IV arrived in Afghanistan to stand up NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan (NTM-A)—a new organization with the mission of developing a professional, enduring, and self-sustaining Afghan National Security Force (ANSF). As LTG Caldwell’s civilian deputy, I have been privileged to assist in this critical mission to enable the Afghans to ultimately secure and stabilize their country.

Prior to the stand up of NTM-A on Nov. 21, 2009, the focus on ANSF development was on quantity—getting the numbers up. However, to develop a professional, enduring, and self-sustaining ANSF, the focus quickly changed to not only growth of the force, but to have a concerted effort to increase the quality of the force and build the foundation to professionalize the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

During the first year, NTM-A assisted our Afghan partners to both grow the force and reverse negative trends in quality (such as high levels of attrition and low training standards).

Today, the ANSF continues to enjoy impressive growth, increased capacity, and professionalization. Since November 2009, the strength of the Afghan National Army has grown from 97,011 to 152,034 and the Afghan National Police has grown from 94,956 to 116,856. This represents a total growth in the ANSF by approximately 77,000 troops in just 14 months.

In the midst of this tremendous growth, training capacity and quality of the force has increased dramatically. For example, basic rifle qualification for Afghan National Army recruits has increased from 35 per cent qualified to 95 per cent qualified. The number of ANA branch schools have increased from zero to 10, with two additional schools to be opened by November 2011. ANP training capacity has increased from 7,640 seats in November 2009, to 13,631 seats today. We are well on our way to a 20,980 seat training capacity by November 2011.

The most significant program in the professionalization of the ANSF, and the future of Afghanistan’s society, is NTM-A’s literacy program. With the low rate of only 47,100 in just 14 months—14 per cent literacy for army and police recruits, NTM-A embarked on a mission of mandatory literacy training. The number of ANSF students in mandatory literacy training has grown from zero to more than 47,100 in just 14 months—with an anticipated growth in the program to 100,000 soldiers and policemen in literacy classes on a weekly basis by July 2011.

The successes enjoyed during NTM-A’s first 14 months would not have been possible with the support of our NATO and coalition partners. In particular, Canada continues to play a crucial role in this success. Of the more than 2,900 Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, approximately 50, including two general officers, are assigned to NTM-A. Canadian Forces have been especially instrumental in leading the development of the Afghan National Police.

Canada’s recent pledge of up to 950 trainers for the NTM-A training mission at this critical time is especially welcome and appreciated. Dr. Jack D. Kem has been the deputy to the Commanding General, NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan since November 2009. He is a member of the U.S. Department of Defense Senior Executive Service, on leave of absence from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, where he serves concurrently as the director, Land Power Studies Institute, the Commandant’s Distinguished Chair of Military Innovation, and Supervisory Professor of Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations. He has a PhD in Public Ethics from North Carolina State University.

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OPINION: SOUND BITES

Political voices in the era of nine-second sound bites

Think of nine-second sound bites as a sort of political haiku.

By W.T. STANBURY

This column has two parts. The first is to summarize some important new research on the evolution of the way the news media report politicians’ words. The second is to have some fun (really!) by proposing words for the near ubiquitous nine second sound bites for both sides of the House of commons.

What the Research Says

In 1992, “a professor at the University of California published research showing that the length of the average TV sound bite had dropped dramatically, from 43 seconds in the 1968 presidential election to a mere nine seconds in the 1988 election.” (All of the material in this section is adapted from Craig Fehrman. “The incredible shrinking sound bite,” www.Boston.com, Jan. 2, 2011.)

“In recent presidential elections, the average TV sound bite has dropped to a tick under eight seconds. A shorter, dumber, and shillier political discourse, it seems, has become another hazard of modern life.”

More generally, solid research shows that “printed quotations [in newspapers] from politicians have been getting shorter for more than a century. This is due largely to the rise of a more sophisticated and independent style of journalism. Letting politicians ramble doesn’t necessarily produce a better or more informative political discourse,” writes Fehrman.

As newspapers became “less tied to political parties, they could take candidates’ words and combine them with context and analysis.”

“Much like newspapers at the end of the 19th century, newscasts in the 1960s and 1970s were going through a transformation. For the first time, network executives saw their news operations as potential profit makers… to get the biggest audiences, they needed more glitz, structure, and speed. Meanwhile, reporters… were becoming more skeptical and more cynical. […] Journalists and editors were more interested in exposing and analyzing political image-making than in passively transmitting those images,” Fehrman writes.

“In 1968, Walter Cronkite and CBS did a segment on Hubert Humphrey and Rich Nixon that used five quotations from the candidates with an average length of 60 seconds. … [In 1988] Peter Jennings and ABC did a segment on Bush and Dukakis that used 10 sound bites from the candida tees with an average length of 8.9 seconds. As sharp as that difference seemed in retrospect, it had happened so gradually that the industry itself hadn’t realized how much had changed,” Fehrman writes.

Research indicates that “as networks short ened their sound bites, they also changed the substance of their political coverage. They started using more in-house experts, pundits who looked less at what people said than at how they said it. TV news became more about strategy and the parsing of strategy — about buzzwords like “expectations” and “momentum” — than about the issues that presumably lie at the heart of politics. Journalists would turn campaigns into longer narratives, and there was no easier narrative than covering politics as though it were a space shuttle flight,” writes Fehrman.

“In the intensely competitive world of TV news,” The choice… may be between shrinking sound bites and no sound bites at all.” Every thing will be reporter or anchor voice-overs. In 1982 CBS made an attempt to bring back longer sound bites. However, producers found they were “throwing out useful sound bites simply because they weren’t long enough — and struggling to find suitable replacements.”

The implication is that the candidates were not speaking in coherent paragraphs. “The network ended up reading to more interpretation and paraphrase, and less airtime for candidates,” CBS went back to sound bites as usual—averaging nine seconds.

Political Speech in Nine-Second Bursts

The formula for a politician to gain recognition is to get on TV news. It is the holy grail of news coverage. Then the objective is to say something worthy of being given a sound bite of nine seconds or less. The point of all this is to get the politician’s words directly across to voters—not a voice-over summary.

“Remember that a 30-minute newscast contains only about 30 seconds of news. Advertising—couched largely in terms of slogans, and flashy visuals—fills up the balance. Hey, someone has to pay the bills to access all those eyeballs.”

The format is rigid and limited: the sound bite can use no more than eight words, and must fall within the 30-second limit. The new fighter jet is an invitation to say “we are No. 1 on the environment issue. The government has gone from youth to decrepitude. Julian Fantino has the right stuff—he will lead us to more seats in the GTA.”

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HEALTH-CARE ACT
Canada needs a National Pharmaceuticals Strategy and a Family Care Plan to support home caregivers, says Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh. p. 23

HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM
Our health-care system is at a tipping point and needs to be modernized, and not in the patchwork fashion that we have seen governments use over the past few decades, says NPD MP Megan Leslie. p. 22

EVIDENCE AND PRIVATIZATION
Private, for-profit delivery alongside non-profit delivery almost inevitably means a two-tier system that lengthens average wait times. And for-profit organizations tend to be of lower quality, whether they are in hospital, dialysis unit or a nursing home, says Hugh Armstrong. p. 30

SPORTS INJURIES
The federal government has a key role to play in coordinating a strategy to better protect amateur athletes from concussions and other traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, says NDP MP Glenn Thibeault. p. 24

CANADA HEALTH TRANSFER
The current federal-provincial accord governing the Canada Health Transfer expires in 2014 and early preparations for the next round of negotiations are underway. At this stage, signs are not encouraging. Canada must negotiate a more effective Canada Health Transfer, says Allan Maslove. p. 32

HEALTH CARE IN THE NORTH
How funds made available by Health Canada have made for life-changing improvements to one northern Canadian, and indirectly, for many others, by Stuart J. Whitley. p. 26

PHARMACEUTICALS
Canadians pay $2-billion extra on prescription drugs in order to get in return a net expenditure of $533-million by drug companies. By Marc-André Gagnon p. 31

EMERGENCY ROOM OVERCROWDING
Here’s a prescription for emergency room overcrowding. Increase the number of complex care and assisted living beds. Appropriate patients should be directed to these beds and away from those in the emergency room, says Liberal MP Keith Martin. p. 25
Health care has gone ‘beyond the minister,’ Cabinet must move forward on policy changes, say experts

Experts, critics, and stakeholders say with the 2004 federal-provincial health accord set to expire in 2014 they want to know what the feds’ plans are. They’re still waiting.

By BEAVONGDOUANGCHAI

H ealth care is not at the top of the federal government’s agenda and the Conservatives are not showing leadership on tackling the important issues Canadians face when it comes to the healthcare system by being silent on the renewal of the 2004 health accord, say opposition MPs and specialists.

“I don’t believe there’s any leadership on health from this government,” NDP MP and health critic Megan Leslie (Halifax, N.S.) told The Hill Times last week.

Ms. Leslie said that she believes the government is not moving on any health care-related issues because it believes health care is strictly a provincial jurisdiction. Jeffrey Turnbull, president of the Canadian Medical Association, agreed. When it comes to transforming the health-care system, which he believes is not adequately serving Canadians, he said the federal government “has not been active in this file, period.”

But it needs to start getting active, he said, especially since the 2004 health accord is up for renewal in 2014.

“I think we need to have our national government working with our provincial and territorial governments in preparation for the 2014 accord so that health transformation is on the top of the agenda. At a federal level, it’s currently not at the top of the agenda. Canadians want it to be there. Polling shows they put health care and the economy at the same level,” he said, noting that the negotiations between 10 provinces, three territories and the federal government is a complex process which needs to begin now.

“They have to be talking yesterday, not in a year’s time, not in two year’s time, but they have to be starting to talk right now.”

The accord, signed on Sept. 16, 2004 under then prime minister Paul Martin and the first ministers, set out an extra $41.2-billion over 10 years in dedicated funding for health care issues such as reducing wait times, training medical professionals and expanding home care and a national pharmaceutical strategy.

So far, the government has been silent on the future of the accord and what comes next when the money runs out.

“I don’t think they’re on the ice. They seem to be ignoring medicare in particular,” said University of Regina political science professor Greg Marchildon, who was the executive director of the Romanow Health Commission in 2001. He said while the Conservative government has been focused on the day-to-day health, “doing their thing in terms of First Nations and Inuit health, and the day-to-day regulatory issues, they’re not doing enough for the big picture.

They’re not enforcing the Canada Health Act, they’re not engaging in any discussion of the future of Medicare in any constructive way and this Prime Minister does not meet with premiers. There are no federal provincial and territorial meetings to allow for that,” he said.

“As painful as those are for prime ministers, and I’ve been to many of them myself when I worked in government, I can understand why a prime minister might not want to have too many of these, but there’s no other way to conduct federal/provincial business in this federation without having those meetings.”

But Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq (Nunavut) has not shown any of her own leadership on these issues as well, said Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh (Van-couver South, B.C.), his party’s health critic.

“No leadership on tackling any other issues than that are important but smaller in the scheme of things. Whether it’s the toys with lead, or other kinds of issues, she fails miserably on big issues like tobacco control, and her approach suits this government ultimately,” said Mr. Dosanjh, a former B.C. premier and federal health minister who negotiated the 2004 accord.

“She’s showing absolutely no leadership on tackling any issues other than those that are important but smaller in the scheme of things,” he said.

Ms. Van Alstyne said in the email:

“There is a leadership role which doesn’t cost money, but it takes on the understanding of what is the country needs: When I look at the map, it’s not the 13 jurisdictions,” she said. “So the federal government has an obligation, more than anybody, to take that leadership on and it’s very weak at the moment unfortunately.”

Meanwhile, Ms. Van Alstyne noted that the government “has its work cut out for it” to protect and promote the health and safety of Canadians, including: an “active response to” the outbreak of the H1N1 virus last year; food and product safety; support for “innovative approaches” to reduce wait times and improve access to health care services; support for electronic health records; and investing in “key aboriginal health programs. There are very few other jurisdictions that recognizes the health and safety of Canadians as a key priority,” she said.

“As such, we will continue to make future investments that will maintain and improve the well-being of Canadians across the country.”
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Time to build next generation of health care for Canadians

Our health-care system is at a tipping point and needs to be modernized, and not in the patchwork fashion that we have seen governments use over the past few decades.

Major changes are needed to contain the rising costs of delivering health care and the demographic challenges to come. We can’t lose sight of the fact that our health-care system creates an attractive environment for investors, exempting companies from paying for private health insurance. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce, particularly for small and medium business owners who rely on their own personal health and that of their employees. This is but one part of the return businesses receive from the corporate taxes they pay.

High standards of universality and portability were introduced in the Ten Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care in 2004; standards that we have not achieved in feet. Huge discrepancies remain across the country with respect to all aspects of health care, from primary care, through to palliative care and with most, if not all, aspects of public health and chronic disease prevention. The slashing of health-care jobs and beds over the last two decades has led to longer wait times, reduced access to primary care, and ultimately, higher costs due to delayed treatment.

This does not have to be. There are many solutions readily available to make our health-care system sustainable and help us adjust to the 21st century realities of having to offer more services out of the hospital and into community care settings, including the home.

Privatization is not the answer. Studies show provinces with the highest proportion of privatized services are the ones where the wait times are highest, since they poach human resources from our public system. Privatization leads to reduced quality of care, because profit demands lower wages, fewer staff and selective coverage based on procedure costs. Improving our health-care system begins by enforcing the Canada Health Act and reigniting in the privatization of health services.

Making our publicly-funded, publicly-delivered health-care system sustainable requires federal leadership to control the bulging costs of drugs and acute care and to remedy the absence of a national long-term care strategy. Prescription drugs are one of the most expensive components of our health-care system and have increased on average 10 per cent per year since 1995. We could save Canadians up to $10 billion per year on prescription drugs if we establish a pan-Canadian universal pharmacare model. A universal pharmacare program would also provide drug coverage to the one-in-four Canadians who don’t have any. It would allow the one-in-10 Canadians that stated they didn’t fill their prescriptions because of the price to get the medication they need. Therefore, the cost savings will come not only from lower drug prices but also from reducing the negative health consequences that result from inadequate drug coverage.

We must also address the lack of long-term care beds in this country. Long-term care beds are being needlessly filled at four times the cost of a long-term care bed. We need to offer Canadians a suite of options, from home care, to improved community care and residential care. Poor or non-existent care for those living at home with untreated health problems is resulting in huge costs to the system, including the costs of lost labour when family members are charged with full-time care of their loved ones. Establishing a comprehensive care strategy will save costs in the long-run.

We must increase our capacity to prevent and manage chronic illnesses. To do so, we need to look beyond the usual boundaries of our health-care system. Our health is affected by our environment, by access to good quality and affordable foods, the condition of our housing, the level of physical activity we engage in, what is called the social determinants of health. Children who grow up in precarious conditions are much more likely to suffer life-long health problems. Chronic disease prevention is perhaps the greatest solution to maintaining a sustainable health-care system, because healthy people need health services less. We must start preparing for the 2014 renegotiation of the Canada Health Transfer. While many of the tools for improving service delivery and chronic disease prevention are under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments, the Conservative government must show leadership and bring everyone together to ensure every Canadian, no matter where he or she lives, can have access to high quality and timely health care services.

Now is the time to start building the next generation of health care in our country, what Tommy Douglas called the ‘second phase of medicare’ and our federal government needs to lead the way.

NDP MP Megan Leslie, who is her party’s health critic, repre- sented Halifax, N.S. news@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times

Caring Is Only the Beginning...

One in four Canadians was a family caregiver in the last year. Family caregivers provide support to relatives who are disabled, gravely ill, or dying, at great cost to themselves both financially and in terms of their own health and well-being. That’s why the 26 members of the Health Charities Coalition of Canada are asking all federal parties to recognize the role of family caregivers and support their increasing needs. We’re also asking the federal government specifically to:

- Improve the Compassionate Care Benefit (under Employment Insurance) to provide greater financial support, flexibility and eligibility to caregivers.
- Create a companion program to the Compassionate Care Benefits that is not based on employment.

Caring for a loved one due to age, medical condition, long-term illness or disability is difficult enough. By making family caregivers a priority, Canada’s political parties can show all Canadians that they are not alone at a time when they need help the most.

Show Caregivers you Care
Canada needs a National Pharmaceuticals Strategy and a Family Care Plan to support home caregivers

Prime Minister Stephen Harper would rather treat the federal government as an ATM for the provinces than defend the Canada Health Act and work to improve health care for all Canadians.

BY LIBERAL MP UJJAL DOSANJH

Stephen Harper is continuing his attack on our health-care system. In a recent interview with Postmedia News, he once again made it clear that he believes that “the provinces are responsible for the management of our health-care system.” On Monday, Jan. 31, during Question Period, Mr. Harper stated that “We operate in a federal system in which health care is the primary responsibility of the provinces.” Like his colleague, Maxime Bernier, he would rather treat the federal government as an ATM for the provinces than defend the Canada Health Act and work to improve health care for all Canadians. Mr. Harper sees medicare as a nuisance, not a priority.

But is it any wonder? This is a Prime Minister whose only adult job outside politics was at the National Citizens Coalition, a right-wing lobbying group that was founded explicitly to oppose public health care.

In 1997, he said that “It’s past time the feds scrubbed the Canada Health Act.” In his famous “firewall letter” in 2001, he wrote that, “each province should be responsible and shows a complete failure of leadership.

In the past several decades, the share of national income devoted to total health care expenditure has actually remained relatively stable. Today, health care does make up a larger share of provincial budgets, but this is due in large part to choices that the provinces have made to cut tax revenues and reduce expenditures in other areas. Demographic change is affecting costs, but it is not the ticking time bomb it has been made out to be.

Drug costs are the fastest-growing area of health-care expenditure, rising from just under 10 per cent of the total in 1985, to more than 16 per cent of all health-care costs in 2009. And most of these costs end up being paid for by Canadian families or private insurers, not the public system. One-in-ten Canadians report not filling a prescription because they cannot afford to pay. If Canadian families are going broke to pay for medicine, we are surely losing the spirit of medicare.

Part of the 2004 health accord was the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy. This was a definitive step towards a national pharmacare program. When the Conservatives took power, all progress stopped. We hear from provincial capitals that governments have abandoned the pharmaceuticals strategy because the federal Conservative government has no interest. That is unacceptable.

At the same time, families are struggling to care for aging and sick loved ones at home. Providing supports to home caregivers would alleviate pressure on families and on our hospitals, freeing up hospital beds and creating savings on health-care provision. That is why we’ve proposed the Liberal Family Care Plan to support home caregivers.

We need to make improvements to our health care system. In the long term, we need to bring pharmaceuticals and the entire continuum of care— including home care and chronic care into the Canada Health Act. Doing so will require leadership which Mr. Harper seems entirely unwilling to provide. Mr. Harper would prefer to simply write cheques to the provinces while denying any responsibility and jurisdiction in health care whatsoever. The federal government must reclaim its responsibility and jurisdiction in health care. What Mr. Harper is offering is neglect. Canadians deserve better.

Ujjal Dosanjh is the Health Critic for the Liberal Party of Canada, Member of Parliament for Vancouver South and former premier of B.C.

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Photograph by Jake Wright, The Hill Times

Commençons par les aider...

Un Canadien sur quatre a été un aidant au cours de l’année dernière. Les aidants procurent des soins à leurs proches atteints d’une incapacité et qui sont gravement malades ou mourants, mais ces soins ont des répercussions à la fois financières et sur leur santé et leur bien-être. C’est pourquoi les 26 membres de la Coalition canadienne des organismes bénévoles en santé demandent à tous les partis fédéraux de reconnaître leur rôle d’aidant et de leur accorder un appui pour subvenir à leurs besoins grandissants. Nous demandons plus particulièrement au gouvernement fédéral :

- D’améliorer les prestations de compassion (offertes par l’assurance-emploi) pour augmenter l’aide financière, la flexibilité et réviser les critères d’admissibilité des aidants.
- De créer un programme de prestations de compassion qui n’est pas basé sur l’emploi.

Prendre soin d’un proche en raison de son âge, d’un problème médical, d’une maladie à long terme ou d’une incapacité est déjà très exigeant. En priorisant les aidants, les partis politiques canadiens peuvent montrer à tous les Canadiens qu’ils ne sont pas seuls à un moment de leur vie où ils ont le plus besoin d’aide.

Montrez aux aidants que vous voulez les aider

BY LIBERAL MP UJJAL DOSANJH

This is a Prime Minister whose only adult job outside politics was at the National Citizens Coalition, a right-wing lobbying group that was founded explicitly to oppose public health care, says Grit MP Ujjal Dosanjh.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper would rather treat the federal government as an ATM for the provinces than defend the Canada Health Act and work to improve health care for all Canadians.
If Sydney Crosby isn’t immune, neither are Canada’s youth

BY NDP MP GLENN THIBEAULT

Our nation has a storied history of amateur sporting achievements, with the record breaking gold medal performance by Canada’s athletes at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics serving as a unifying force in fostering the Canadian national identity. For years to come, Canadians across the country will remember where they were when Sidney Crosby scored the “Golden Goal” in the men’s hockey final. In addition to its cultural importance, sports and physical recreation are a vital part of healthy living and an active lifestyle. Currently, more than 23 million Canadians actively participate in sport and physical activity, representing approximately 59 per cent of our population. This number unfortunately also represents a 20 per cent decrease from the 1992 rates, coinciding with a rise in obesity rates over this interval.

However, recent research indicates that declining participation rates are not the only concern facing Canada’s sport community. In fact, the latest findings have revealed a silent epidemic of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Of even greater concern is the rising incidence of these injuries and the cumulative and long-lasting effects they can have on memory, judgment, social conduct, reflexes, speech, balance and coordination. “Post-concussion syndrome” involves a prolonged recovery phase, and sometimes even a life-long disability, during which symptoms can include headaches, dizziness, fatigue, irritability, light and sound sensitivity, and memory and concentration impairment. Even more worrisome is the evidence which suggests a strong causal relationship between an athlete sustaining multiple concussions and exhibiting Alzheimer-like symptoms. Second Impact Syndrome (SIS) occurs when an athlete sustains a second head injury prior to the first injury being resolved. Because the effects of SIS are even more devastating than a single concussion, coordinated action is needed to ensure that youth and amateur athletes are not negligently exposed to a second concussion while still recovering from the initial injury.

The effects which injuries of this type produce are not to be downplayed or marginalized. Rather, concussions can often have serious long term consequences for both the individual athlete involved, as well as society more broadly through the substantial costs associated with treating the injured athlete. Athletes who have received multiple concussions often suffer from Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) a term current research uses to denote multiple injuries. CTE is a condition most commonly found among boxers and can be characterized by a decline in mental and physical abilities which can include cognitive impairment, ataxia, behavioural changes, Parkinsonism and dementia. Moreover, not only does recent research show that long-term neuropsychological effects sports derived concussions can have; it also demonstrates that the prevalence of these injuries is significantly higher than previously thought. The 2010 study by the Hockey Concussion Education Project concluded that concussion incidence rates for participants in amateur hockey were approximately seven times greater than the previously estimated rate. Clearly, we have merely hit the tip of the iceberg in our attempts to properly classify and curtail incidence rates of sport-related concussions.

While the full scope and severity of the concussion epidemic has begun to be revealed, federal government funding for sports injury research has actually declined. In fact, the Canadian Institute of Health Research saw its funding cut by $8 per cent in 2009/10. The reduction in funding for this type of important research is extremely discouraging. The research community and the public at large are just beginning to understand the far-reaching consequences of concussions. With incidents on the rise, we should be funding more research on the subject. In order to sustain future participation rates in amateur athletics in Canada, we need to show our nation’s athletic community that reducing sport related concussions is a priority.

Finally, in addition to the effects sport related concussions can have on the individual athlete; these types of injuries also constitute a substantial economic cost which has yet to be accurately tabulated. Smartick’s 2009 Economic Burden of Injuries Report found that being struck by sports equipment cost the Canadian health care system approximately $188-million in direct and indirect costs. However, this only offers a snapshot of the economic impact as the report exclusively identifies hospital reported injuries and discounts account for all sports-related injuries. If one factors in uncompensated doctor’s visits, rehabilitation costs, and the spinoff costs faced by provincial education systems, this figure would likely amount to billions of dollars in economic costs directly resulting from the various types of sport related injuries. In order to accurately gauge the economic costs shouldered by our health and education system as a direct result of serious sport related injuries a more expansive system of data collection is needed.

Prior to being involved in politics I worked with persons suffering from debilitating neurological injuries, while also volunteering my time as a local hockey referee. Serving in these capacities, I have seen the long-term impact these types of injuries can have. I have also seen youth needlessly carted off the ice as a result of devastating injuries sustained during the course of a game. Having witnessed first-hand how these injuries occur, in addition to their long-term effects, I know it’s imperative that we take substantive action to reduce concussion incidence rates in amateur sports. The government can no longer be a deterrent mechanism for ensuring athletes have access to a safe space for our children, within the context of promoting physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

It’s time for the Conservative government to step up to the plate and recognize the severity of the concussion epidemic. To shrug off the issue by simply stating that youth athletes wear helmets, as Minister of State for Sport Gary Lunn, above, did during GP in November, is irresponsible and ignores the severity and scope of the issue.

What is desperately needed is a formal consultation process which brings together stakeholders from the academic, medical and athletic communities, as well as provincial and territorial ministers of Health, with the federal government playing a facilitating role. Such a process would grant all stakeholders a voice in determining the most appropriate course of action to stem the growing public health crisis which sport-inured concussions have become. Bringing together all stakeholders for such a consultative process would allow us to better understand serious sports injuries and their implications, set up a comprehensive sports injury surveillance and monitoring system, put in place a sufficient deterrent mechanism for ensuring athletes are not prematurely exposed to a second concussion, raise public awareness on the severity and scope of the crisis, allow for the creation of standardized injury prevention education program and most importantly, work towards implementing tangible solutions that address the wide range of injuries which 21st century sports medicine has revealed.

NDP MP Glenn Thibeault, who represents Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate Sudbury, Ont., is his party’s consummate. news@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times
HEALTH POLICY BRIEFING: EMERGENCY ROOMS

Fifty two per cent of Canadians agree that our health-care system is broken and needs to undergo fundamental change if it is going to meet our needs in the future. One essential change must be reducing the back-logs in Canadian emergency rooms.

As a physician who practised emergency medicine, most of the beds in my department were filled, the majority of the time, with patients suffering from chronic diseases who could no longer live at home. Many of their problems did not require treatment in an acute care hospital.

They could have received appropriate and less expensive care in a non-acute, complex care facility. Unfortunately, beds in these facilities were rarely available. These individuals, who could no longer care for themselves, wound up in the emergency room, sometimes for days on end.

They displaced other patients who needed an acute care hospital bed but wound up sitting in the waiting room for many hours before they could even see a physician because there were no vacant beds in the emergency room. This is cruel, and an inhumane way to care for people when they fall ill.

Many chronically ill patients decompensate unnecessarily at home due to a lack of ongoing home care. These tragedies could be avoided with better access to community services and home visits by nurses. This costs far less and protects the patient from picking up a deadly hospital-borne illness.

The following are a number of simple initiatives that can be implemented quickly to relieve emergency room congestion. They are:

1. Increase the number of complex care and assisted living beds. Appropriate patients should be directed to these beds and away from those in the emergency room.

2. Invest in community services such as: alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs, community care nurses, homecare, emergency shelters and affordable housing. Too many patients wind up in the emergency room who simply cannot meet their basic needs. Their problems are social, not medical.

3. Create a rapid reaction team within hospitals that is comprised of a social worker and a nurse that will help people access the outpatient services and programs they need. This team can also work in the community with a police liaison officer to access hard to reach marginalized people. This would identify medical and social problems before they become acute and direct people to the community services that can deal with them.

4. Implement a triage system in the emergency room that separates acute patients from non-acute patients. This will enable the latter to be diverted to a treatment clinic situated beside the emergency room. This clinic would be staffed by physicians and nurses who can quickly treat simpler problems. This should be open on a 24 hour basis.

These and other solutions will enable our beleaguered health care system to provide for timely access to health care when people fall ill. Leaders like Dr. Sherman must continue to speak out for the reforms our health care system desperately needs. For our patients, inaction and silence must not be an option.

Liberal MP Keith Martin, who represents Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, B.C., is a physician and has been a longtime advocate for health care reform including incorporating the private sector into the Canadian health-care system. For a list of his Do’s and Don’ts of health care reform and other editorials on this subject please visit keithmartin.org.

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The Hill Times

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has ideas on how the health system can be more efficient.

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Health care in the North: Imagining a different future

How funds made available by Health Canada have made for life-changing improvements to one northern Canadian, and indirectly, for many others.

By STUART J. WHITLEY

WHITEHORSE, YUKON—What qualities lead to happiness and high achievement? Current brain research suggests the unconscious mind—emotion and intuition—play a much larger role than hitherto thought. Mental health depends upon connection. “Happiness is determined by how much information and affection flows through us covertly every day...,” (D. Brooks, ‘Social Animal,’ The New Yorker, Jan. 17, 2011, p.26). Jeffrey Schwartz, author of The Mind and the Brain, contends that getting people to change is important because life itself involves continual rapid changes. The traditional view of managing change in people has focused upon providing critical feedback and judgment, or through the work of professional help, in analyzing individuals’ problems. But this emphasizes the rational methodologies employed by most clinicians. In the Yukon, we have supplemented this with relationship-building.

Ironically perhaps, the First Nations peoples of this country teach us that relationships are first in all things. We have been quick to overlook traditional wisdom because life itself involves continual rapid changes. The traditional view of managing change in people has focused upon providing critical feedback and judgment, or through the work of professional help, in analyzing individuals’ problems. But this emphasizes the rational methodologies employed by most clinicians. In the Yukon, we have supplemented this with relationship-building.

Today, George continues to reside in his First Nation community in rural Yukon. He has been compliant with his medication for over two years, and has had no hospitalizations. He is substance-free. He is one of the leaders and positive influences in the EPI region. He is employed full-time. He looks confident and happy. This is a young man, who has not simply achieved stability with regard to his mental illness, but who has gone beyond that to achieve role recovery. Moreover, George’s community now sees him as a strong and positive influence in the community. As they have seen his progress, they have gone the distance in making efforts for him to access continued education in his community. His employer allows him the time off to participate in the weekly early psychosis programming, to support his efforts to maintain his mental health.

A significant benefit has been the development of trust; valued working relationship between MHS and the FN involved with this young man, which has had a positive spillover to other clients. In all cases, the downstream consequences for their personal health (and consequent fewer demands on our health-care delivery system) are portentous. This is a real example—one of many—how funds made available by Health Canada have made for life-changing improvements to one northern Canadian, and indirectly, for many others.

In the last part of this three-part series, the impact of the loss of funding for such programs will be considered.

The author is deputy minister of Health & Social Services, Yukon Government. The view as expressed is that of the author, and do not necessarily represent those of the Yukon government or any other official. I am indebted to Marie Fast, Clinical Manager, Patrice Cameron and Tommy Thompson for their assistance and insights in the preparation of this piece.

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The Hill Times

Mental Health in the Workplace

Psychological Disorders

- The fastest growing category of disability claims in Canada and responsible for up to 40% of claims made to Canada’s major employers.
- Cost the Canadian economy $51 billion in 2003.
- Go untreated more often than not.

Mental Health Costs...

Psychology Works. Psychologists Help.

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1 http://archive.safety-council.org/info/OSH/mentalhealth.html
2 http://www.phac-acp.hc-sc.gc.ca/publicat/cds-rsc/28/1/index-eng.php#k42

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THE HILL TIMES, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2011

HEALTH POLICY BRIEFING: IN THE NORTH

THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA LE COLLÈGE DES MÉDICINS DE FAMILLE DU CANADA
Dear Member of Parliament,

cc: Natural Health Product Consumers

Getting the rules right for Natural Health Products (NHPs) is not just a health issue, it’s an economic issue.

The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) is working with Health Canada to ensure that the NHP rules and regulations protect the health of Canadians.

NHPs are neither Food nor Drugs. As Parliament introduces the new Food and Drugs Act, it should recognize NHPs with a separate category and not as a subset of drugs.

As a Member of Parliament you’ll be hearing more on how this issue impacts the health of your constituents and the economy.

Please visit www.CHFA.ca to find out more and join the conversation.

Sincerely,

Canadian Health Food Association
Federal-provincial health accord expires in 2014, experts say it's time feds talk about their plans

Experts say the health-care system will implode if the federal government will not continue support under the federal-provincial health accord, and are looking for focused, targeted support and leadership.

By BEAVONGDOUANGCHANI

Sustainability of the publicly-funded system, access to primary care, the rising cost of pharmaceuticals and human resource shortages are the top issues facing health care in Canada, say stakeholders and opposition MPs. All these issues are interconnected, however, and as Canada moves toward the end of the 10-year health accord signed in 2004, the federal government must take a leadership role in bringing the provinces and territories together to negotiate a post-2014 accord.

"Like many other industrialized countries, Canada faces a changing economic and social climate that will have repercussions for the health-care system. Demographic pressures, technological advances, rising costs: these are all challenges shared with other countries," said McGill University professor Antonia Maioni, director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and an expert in health-care issues.

"But Canada also faces more specific challenges: an increasingly diverse population, regional disparities in access to care, a health-care system that is both highly regulated for publicly-insured services, but at the same time contains gaps for pressing needs in home care, long-term care, and prescription drug coverage. Canada's health-care system is also buffeted around how all that care can get coordinated."

Mr. Abbott noted that access to primary health care was one of the biggest issues that Canada has problems with, and that includes seeing family physicians in a timely manner when they need them. Mr. Abbott said some provinces have day appointments being able to see them after hours and on weekends, long waiting periods for access to specialists and extended wait times in emergency rooms. He said that many Canadians, as a result, are going to emergency rooms for services they should be able to get from their family doctors which in turn crowds everything else out.

"There are pressure points," Mr. Abbott said. "We need to connect all those pieces. We have the services in place, but are they the right services for the right patient at the right time? And then we've got issues around how all that care can get coordinated."

Mr. Abbott said "it's a big problem" but it's also very complex. "It's a little more complex than how do you get someone through the emergency room? Why are they in the first place is the first question," he said.

Prof. Marchildon said it's more than just about funding, however. While many people and governments are focused on whether the system is fiscally sustainable, he said it's a "confusing conversation" that needs to be discussed in a national manner. He said part of the problem is the high costs of prescription drugs which is eating up a large portion of provincial budgets. He said that while he can appreciate that the federal government does not want to take any fiscal risk in this area, it does need to take a leadership role on the issue because provincial governments "are not capable of dealing with the cost problem on their own."

The 2004 accord set up a mechanism to provide a national pharmaceutical strategy, but it never materialized into a national pharmacare program.

Ms. Leslie said last week that in order to address the costs of health care, the federal government could look into a pharmacare program which could potentially save the government $10-billion by bulk buying prescriptions across the country at reduced prices, among other initiatives, such as home care and long-term care.

Ms. Leslie said, however, that the public system must absolutely be protected. "Our medicare system is working," Ms. Leslie said. "People say our health-care expenses are ballooning out of control,

By LEONA AGLUKKAQ

Continued on Page 29
they’re unsustainable and for me, unsustainable is absolutely code for privatization. They are not spiraling out of control. They are not unsustainable.”

Mr. Turnbull, whose organization has started doing cross-country consultations on the future of Canada’s health-care system, said that any discussion of a private versus public health-care system is paralyzing the overall and important discussion that’s needed.

“What we’re trying to say is let’s have this conversation about how we can have better health care, more comprehensive, improved delivery services, etc., that meets Canadians’ needs, and then when we’ve defined what that looks like, then yes, we’re going to have to talk about making it efficient as possible, making cost savings where ever we can, and if you do need more money, then let’s have the conversation about how we’re going to pay for it and there are many different ways to do it, through taxation base systems, social insurance systems, or yes, privatization.” Mr. Turnbull said. “All the options should be on the table. I think Canadians should have a thoughtful discussion about what’s best for them. But first, we’ve got to get on and say let’s restructure the health care system so that it serves Canadians and not get caught up on private versus public.”

For Prof. Marchildon, however, it’s “a perfect storm” currently for privatization debate to heat up at the moment. He said because of the federal debt and current deficit, along with a federal government that wants to “disentangle itself” from health care, combined with provincial elections that might produce right wing governments which also want to take on health care by themselves, it’s “a very dangerous time.”

“The provinces can’t have it both ways. They can’t have growing federal transfers for medicare through the Canada Health Transfer and then say that the federal government should have even less say on how that money is spent in terms of the principles and conditions of the Canada Health Act.” Prof. Marchildon said. “By the same token, the federal government can’t expect the provinces to shoulder the full fiscal burden, yet enforce the principles and conditions of the Canada Health Act. So something is going to give here if

Continued on Page 28

Editor’s Note

From influenza to hepatitis. From melanoma to cervical cancer. Each generation benefits from the discovery of new vaccines. GlaxoSmithKline is a pioneer in the development and production of innovative vaccines to help stop the spread of debilitating or life-threatening diseases. At GSK, we stay ahead by helping to keep Canadians healthy. Discover more at GSK.ca
Evidence and the privatization of health care

Private, for-profit delivery alongside non-profit delivery almost inevitably means a two-tier system that lengthens average wait times. And for-profit organizations tend to be of lower quality, whether they are in hospital, dialysis unit or a nursing home.

Conscious of public opinion, and of the efficiency and accessibility and even quality of public financing, those favouring privatization have shifted their focus from financing to delivery. They argue that the public doesn’t care whether health-care services are provided by non-profit or for-profit organizations, as long as they remain accessible and of high quality.

The privatizers may be correct on delivery in public opinion terms, for the evidence here is inconclusive. The evidence on accessibility and quality is, however, much clearer.

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After all, our health-care system is sustainable. Leaving aside the bloated U.S. system, our overall costs are similar to those of the other industrialized countries, in per capita terms and as a share of GDP. With private spending at about 30 per cent of total health-care spending, it is, however, more privatized than most European systems. It would be more efficient and accessible if it were expanded.

Prescription drugs and home care are critical areas for expansion, and have been at least since the federally-appointed National Forum on Health reported in 1997. Little progress has been made on either front, however, and less has been made on dental and eye care.

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The $2-billion extra price tag of brand-name drugs in Canada

Let’s repeat this very clearly: Canadians pay $2-billion extra on prescription drugs in order to get in return a net expenditure of $533-million by drug companies.

BY MARC-ANDRÉ GAGNON

Canadians often think that their prescription drugs are cheap. Otherwise, why would so many Americans cross the border to buy them?

Yet in the last five years, Canada has been the world’s third most expensive country for brand-name drugs. In 1987, Canada passed changes to the Patent Act extending patent protection for prescription drugs from 17 to 20 years after brand-name drug companies agreed to spend 10 per cent of their sales on research and development. The rationale was simple: a generous patent policy for brand-name companies would ensure a more competitive, innovative pharmaceutical sector in Canada.

In order to prevent abuse, the Patented Medicines Price Review Board was created as a watchdog to cap prices of brand-name drugs and ensure transparency of Canadian pharmaceutical activities.

At first, this strategy worked very well. While the price of patented drugs increased, the pharmaceutical industry opened many important research labs in Canada.

The problem arose from the method of price capping and its bias towards pharmaceutical companies. Patented drug prices are capped based on the median of a basket of seven comparable countries with the highest R&D expenditures as compared to sales—the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, France, United Kingdom and Italy. But, there is a catch: most of these countries also have the world’s most expensive prices for patented drugs. The rationale was simple: these countries have a high R&D to sales ratio. If Canada has the same prices as they do, it could get the same spin-offs they do.

Since drug companies in Canada have little incentive to sell their drugs at a significantly lower price than the cap set by the PMPRB, Canada is effectively always aiming to be among the world’s top five most expensive countries. Since 2005, Canada has been the third most expensive country because exchange rates increased or foreign drug prices decreased while the cap was not adjusted.

The ratio of investment in research and development to the sale price of drugs has increased in these countries since 2000, but not in Canada. Since 2001, pharmaceutical companies have not been holding up their end of the bargain and the ratio is constantly decreasing. It was only 7.5 per cent in 2009.

In 2006, the PMPRB explored the possibility of modifying the basket of countries to include other comparable countries: Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Netherlands and Spain. Except for Spain and New Zealand, they all have a higher R&D to sales ratio than Canada.

By using a model to cap prices based on the median between 13 countries, Canada would be aiming to be the world’s seventh most expensive country. This would mean an average price reduction of 15 per cent on patented drugs. Since the total cost of patented drugs is $13.3-billion, this would be a savings of $2-billion.

Currently, Canada artificially inflates the cost of prescription drugs by $2-billion to facilitate pharmaceutical R&D, while total private R&D expenditures in Canada are only $1.22-billion.

After taking into account generous tax subsidies in R&D, drug companies in Canada spend, in fact, only a net amount of $533-million in R&D. Let’s repeat this very clearly: Canadians pay $2-billion extra on prescription drugs in order to get in return a net expenditure of $533-million by drug companies.

Photo by Jake Wright, The Hill Times

The Hill Times, Monday, February 7, 2011

HEALTH POLICY BRIEFING: PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Alzheimer’s disease... it’s more than you think

Dementia by the numbers
- Number of Canadians with dementia in 2008: 500,000
- Number of new cases every year: 103,700
- Number of Canadians with dementia in 2038: 1.5 million
- Amount of economic burden: $15 billion
- Number of national brain strategies in Canada: 0


www.alzheimer.ca

Dr. Marc-André Gagnon is assistant professor with the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University. He is an expert on the political economy of the pharmaceutical industry, pharmaceutical promotion, and the commercialization of medical research. In his current research, he compares national models of pharmaceutical innovation, and analyzes the efficiency of different types of public drug coverage policies. In September 2010, his research was released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives which found that a universal prescription drug plan would cut more than $10-billion from Canada’s health-care bill.

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The Hill Times
Walking the talk: negotiating a more effective Canada Health Transfer

The current federal-provincial accord governing the Canada Health Transfer expires in 2014 and early preparations for the next round of negotiations are underway. At this stage, signs are not encouraging.

By ALLAN MASLOVE

The current federal-provincial accord governing the Canada Health Transfer expires in 2014 and early preparations for the next round of negotiations are underway. At this stage, signs are not encouraging. The Harper government appears to want to get Ottawa out of the health sector as much as possible, so its primary objective is likely to be restraining the growth of the transfer beyond 2014, with little concern for the programmatic content of the next accord. The provinces, as always, will want to maximize the transfer while seeking to avoid any commitments.

Obviously, the money is important, but it should not be the only issue or even the most important issue in the upcoming negotiations. The current arrangements are seriously flawed, so simply extending them for a further five or 10 years will not do. Current fiscal arrangements, because they do not require provinces to make any meaningful performance commitments, are incapable of being an effective instrument to help resolve well-known problems and bottlenecks in Medicare. Inadequate long-term and home care capacity has been repeatedly identified as a critical factor in unacceptably long wait-times and hospital overcrowding. Yet nothing in the current accord effectively addresses this issue. This is only one example of many. Yes, simply providing money helps, but effective targeting would help much more.

Ambiguity and lack of transparency are the hallmarks of the current financial arrangements, probably because this suits all governments for different reasons. Ottawa likes to claim a share of the political credit for supporting Medicare, but when criticisms arise, it is quick to note that responsibility lies with the provinces. The provinces like to assert their jurisdiction over health care but never hesitate to point to “inadequate funding” from Ottawa to explain away failures. It is no surprise when ordinary patients and taxpayers are confused about where to focus their attentions when they have concerns or criticisms.

Can we get beyond this? Of course, but it would require Ottawa to change course and recognize that it has an important role to play in health care. The vision of federalism where each order of government operates in its own spheres in splendid isolation is not realistic (and arguably never was) in a world where resources, capital and most of all, people, are more mobile than they have ever been. Ottawa must be prepared to assert—while recognizing provincial jurisdiction—that it is justified in expecting identifiable progress for the health dollars it already provides and the additional billions it will be expected to provide in the future. (After all, federal politicians are not hesitant to insist on value for money in their own annual spending programs, so why not here as well?) And it would require the provinces to recognize—while maintaining their authority over health care—that there are national interests in Medicare that lie behind the billions Ottawa contributes.

Assuming that Ottawa is open to representing the national interest in health, there is an alternative plan. A modified model of federal-provincial fiscal arrangements seemed to be emerging several years ago around the federal transfer of gas tax revenues to municipalities (via the provinces) for infrastructure investment and around the previous government’s child-care program. (The latter was cancelled by the Harper government before it became a reality because the Conservatives had another vision for child care, not because of the financing model). The alternative model would involve negotiating separate contractual agreements between Ottawa and each province. These agreements, like any contract, would involve an exchange. One party (Ottawa) would agree to pay money and, in exchange, the other party (a province) would commit to certain performances (such as observing the principles of the Canada Health Act, enhancements of specified services, investments in long-term care facilities). Some of the contract terms would be standard in all the agreements (adherence to the CHA), but others could vary depending on the specific pressures and bottlenecks in individual provinces.

This approach would not be a leap into uncharted territory: the provinces have already demonstrated in the gas tax program that they are willing to make fairly specific commitments in the context of “contracts” between two sovereign governments. In that sense, 10 health contracts rather than one health accord would not break new ground. As in any contract, the commitments and responsibilities of each party would be explicit, thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

Let us not be unrealistic about how much would change. It would be unrealistic to expect “complete” contracts to emerge from this process as it is unlikely that governments could reach agreement on clear indicators of contract compliance and consequences for non-compliance. That said, one-on-one agreements would still be an improvement. A simple renewal of the existing accord would not.

Allan Maslove is the acting director of the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University. Dr. Maslove is the author of a study for the National Forum on Health entitled, ‘National Goals and the Federal Role in Health Care’. He has written numerous articles in the areas of public policy and public finance. His main areas of work have been in taxation, budgetary policy and federal-provincial fiscal relations with a particular focus on the financing of Canadian health care. Recently, he worked in the area of federal-provincial fiscal arrangements, focusing on the financing of the national health care system.

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Dosanjh says unsustainability of health care ‘a myth, a big lie’

Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh and NDP MP Megan Leslie say the costs for health care, as a percentage of the GDP, have remained the same.

Continued from Page 29

there is this agenda and everybody’s trying to reduce their fiscal risk, particularly the federal government. ... If you are looking forward to greater sort of private sector involvement, private patient pay, user fees, then this could be a time of great opportunity.”

Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh (Vancouver South, B.C.), his party’s health critic and former federal health minister who negotiated the 2004 accord, said the debate should not only be on the fiscal end, because “the fact of it is the unsustainability of our health care is a big myth, it’s a big lie.”

Both he and Ms. Leslie noted that costs as a percentage of provincial budgets are increasing because governments have reduced taxes and therefore are taking in less income to support the system. As a percentage of national gross domestic product, however, the costs have remained the same for the past 30 years.

“Yes we have problems, it’s not a perfect system, no system is, but private solutions aren’t the solutions. Just because you privatize parts of our health care, it’s not going to produce more doctors, it’s not going to produce more nurses, it’s not going to produce more radiologists, it’s a big myth,” Mr. Dosanjh said.

“So, the government should be engaging in a dialogue with the provinces with respect to post-2014 and with respect to in fact saying, what have you done with the money we’ve given you since 2004? Where has it gone? Why do you have unacceptable wait-times in certain areas? We’ve given you money. We’ve given you money to expand homecare. Have you expanded homecare? On the pharmacare strategy, what we’re hearing from the provincial capitals is that the provinces are interested in a national pharmacare program, but this government has not shown interest,” said Mr. Dosanjh.

The interconnectedness of all the issues surrounding health-care renewal can also be seen in human resource shortages. Currently approximately five million Canadians don’t have access to family physicians or nurse practitioners, and “the longer the wait-time, and if we have to wait longer and longer, the medical problem becomes more and more serious,” said Judith Shamian, president of the Canadian Nurses Association.

There is currently a shortage of 11,000 nurses, and by CNA estimates, it could increase to 60,000 by 2014 if the situation is not remedied.

This is why, Ms. Shamian said, the federal government must start talking about these health human resources issues. “It’s not just producing the nurses. Even if governments say we’re increasing the seats by a number of seats, we don’t have the faculty at this point. We need to build capacity around physical structures, having buildings and simulation labs and so on,” Ms. Shamian said, noting other issues in the area of nurse practitioners who are able to prescribe medication except for narcotics and pain killers found in the Controlled Substances Act.

“Many nurse practitioners will be taking care of end of life, or chronic pain and they can not deliver or do the care that those patients need because of the reputation barriers. That’s a simple thing [the federal government can do] and it’s been standing in the queue for a very long time and now this is turning to be my pet peeve because it’s ridiculous. We’re depriving 100,000s of Canadians from getting [proper care],” she said.

Prof. Maioni agreed that easy solutions are hard to come by when it comes to doctor and nursing shortages. She said there were two types of shortages: “One refers to absolute numbers: are there enough doctors in Canada? The comparative data suggests Canada has a slightly lower doctor to population ratio than in many other countries, but not off the charts,” she said.

“The other type of shortage has to do with specialties and regional distribution. Are there enough primary care doctors as opposed to specialists? Are there certain specialties that are under pressure? And, where exactly are the shortages? In rural areas? Remote areas? It’s not a simple question,” Prof. Maioni said.

The health sector is currently focused on the 2014 negotiations, and stakeholders said that’s what the government should also be focusing on.

“It’s a 10-year agreement that needs to be discussed and renewed and a lot of the messaging is that the federal government doesn’t want to talk about it because of the fiscal restraint. Well, the system will implode if the federal government will not continue this support, but it needs to be focused, targeted support, and that’s where the leadership comes in,” Ms. Shamian said. “The federal government needs to provide the leadership to bring the country together to make sure that we know how we’re going to get to 2020 or to 2010 and have a healthy nation.”

One key component to the 2014 negotiations, however, is the need to step up on accountability measures, Mr. Turnbull said. The federal government should set up a framework with national standards and accountability on the outcomes and clearly enforce that accountability based on the provincial transfers. It’s an essential part of the Canadian Health Act, he said.

“Through the transfer process, we have to hold provincial governments accountable for health outcomes based on the transfers,” he said, adding that Canada also needs to create a more innovative health environment.

For Mr. Abbott, he said an emphasis on new money and new ways to expand and improve home and continuing care services will be a large focus that the federal government is behind on.

“They’re silent on these issues,” he said. “I think most people in the health sector are looking for that voice, the federal voice is missing and it needs to be there.”

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THE Q&A: BILL ROWE

Former Ottawa hired gun serves up insider look at ‘most vicious federal-provincial battle in Newfoundland and Labrador’s history’

By KATE MALLOY

On a November afternoon in 2004 in a room of the Prime Minister’s Office in Centre Block, John Hamm, then-premier of Nova Scotia, was in a meeting with Danny Williams, premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and prime minister Paul Martin. The three men were hashing out the details of the Atlantic Accord and offshore petroleum revenues. Only the leaders and note-takers were in the room.

Bill Rowe, the first Ottawa representative for Newfoundland and Labrador responsible directly to premier Williams, was in the adjoining room along with a dozen federal and provincial “minions” from the PMO and the premiers’ offices. In his new book

Danny Williams: The War With Ottawa, The Inside Story By A Hired Gun, takes a ‘warts-and-all’ look at former Newfoundland premier Danny Williams’ fight with prime minister Paul Martin for $2-billion, what was called the Atlantic Accord Crisis in 2004.

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In the book, Mr. Rowe offers a ‘warts-and-all’ look at what he calls the ‘most vicious’ federal-provincial battle in Newfoundland and Labrador’s history known as the Atlantic Accord Crisis over offshore petroleum revenues. In the book, Mr. Rowe describes some of “the ruthless antics within the workings of government” and delivers a can- did look at Mr. Williams’ “take-no-prisoners” style of leadership. Mr. Martin had made a commitment during the election 2004 campaign that he accepted the provincial proposal on the Atlantic Accord and the offshore oil, Mr. Williams said. At the time, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador was getting about 15 per cent of the revenue from the offshore oil and the feds were getting 85 per cent. Mr. Williams said Mr. Martin later backtracked on his promise. That’s when the political battle started.

Mr. Rowe credits then Tory MPs Loyola Hearn and Norm Doyle with keeping the accord in the spotlight in the House of Commons, but he later came to distrust Mr. Hearn. He says Liberal MP Gary Bryam worked behind the scenes to bring the two sides together and that then Natural Resources minister John Efford’s career was permanently damaged by the battle.

Eventually, Mr. Williams finally got what he wanted for the province, 100 per cent protection of offshore revenues until 2012, and $2.6-billion in offshore resource revenues, including $2-billion up front.

Through it all, Mr. Rowe, a writer and author of other books, kept a journal to record important events. His book, published by Flanker Press, has so far sold an estimated 25,000 copies.

Mr. Williams retired from politics in December after seven years in power, and after turning Newfoundland and Labrador into a ‘have’ province and signing the deal to the proposed $6.2-billion Lower Churchill hydroelectric project in Labrador. He left politics as one of Canada’s most charismatic and popular premiers.

You describe this battle as “the most vicious federal-provincial battle in Newfoundland and Labrador’s history.” What made it the most vicious? And why was this Williams’s biggest challenge of his career?

“It became very personal. When Danny Williams first got elected and Paul Martin became prime minister they became instant friends. Then when Martin made this commitment to Danny that he was going to accept his proposal and then reneged on it, the emotions became greater than the rationality involved and a very visceral campaign [began] and they started to slag each other.

At the health conference here, Danny stood up and said, ‘I don’t know what’s wrong with this fella, we’re not even getting our thugs, let alone a crust from this,’ and calling him names, basically, and Paul Martin was responding in kind.

‘And he had a fellow, Scott Reid, a bully boy type, and Scott Reid would go off on a tangent of his own and say, Mr. Williams is going to rue the day, blah, blah, blah, and the prime minister ordered him to stand up in the House of Commons and apologize for the statements made by his own communications director, Scott Reid, and withdraw them. So it was that kind of debate and I’m just giving you a few examples, just touching on the visceral, emotional environment that took place.

‘Then, of course, when the equalization deal came along in November of 2004, Danny Williams boycotted that. He stood up and said he would not attend the First Ministers’ summit and that cut the feet out from under Martin as well and it was during that time that he said publicly that Martin was a liar and he even produced a message from the telephone indicating something that Martin’s office had said and then later denied and that he could prove the opposite of. So it was that kind of slamming match, calling each other liars and insulting each other, basically.

“The first chapter of the book, I indicate they got into a fist fight during a private meeting where there were no officials present and it would have become a fist fight. They were starting to have a fist fight and I wouldn’t use his name, but a big guy stood between them like an NHL referee and actually separated the prime minister of Canada and the premier of Newfoundland. Two aging statesmen had to be separated or they would have come to blows at the meeting over this, so that’s what I mean when I say it was vicious.”

You write about “the final do or die meeting” between Paul Martin and Danny Williams which you describe as “the very last kick at the very last can at the end of the road” on Jan. 28, 2005. Can you briefly describe this meeting and what happened in the end?

“We went into it, I always thought that Danny would get his deal sooner or later because I couldn’t see Paul Martin continuing. He couldn’t survive this nightmare he put himself in and he would have said yes much earlier if it hadn’t been for the advice coming from Finance and from the minister of finance, Ralph Goodale, [who] didn’t like what was happening at all.

“So we went into this final do or die meeting with the premier’s office figuring about a 25 per cent chance of success and if we did he was willing to make this deal for basically all over, at least for this round.

“We went in there and I think that otherwise prime minister Paul Martin came to a decision that they would make this work, because Himelefarb was the one who was back and forth between the two sides all day long because he was, he even pulled a fast one.

“We had an agreement as a result of much toing and froing and Danny Williams also understanding that Martin was wanting a deal and Himelefarb was working on a deal.

“Danny compromised as well—sort of met them not half way—but lowered his sights just a little regarding equalization and the years, and I won’t get into the painfully tedious technical details, but he did compromise somewhat and they came to a deal and it was reduced to writing.

“They were about to sign it in the office I was in—the minister of finance for Newfoundland and I was there to sign it—and they noticed that something was different from what they had agreed to and they noticed that it was serious, it could mean hundreds of millions of dollars in the second eight years of the contract, and Danny had already called home and got the consent of the Cabinet to the deal and it was a done deal.”

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Two aging statesmen had to be separated or they would have come to blows

Bill Rowe writes about a meeting between Paul Martin and Danny Williams in 2004 on Parliament Hill on the Atlantic Accord. “It was vicious.”

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“And here suddenly in the written document something was different to what they agreed to, so everyone went mad and crazy and Himelfarb came back and he said, no and he insisted that that hadn’t been agreed to.”

“He said when he mentioned to the prime minister that Danny was insisting on it, the prime minister banged his fist on the table and walked out of the building in disgust, this is the kind of thing that was going on, kind of a hysterical over-shouting performance by all sides, especially the Prime Minister’s Office and anyway we had a quick palaver and all kinds of scenarios were used.”

“It was decided that the risk, if oil stayed up, the risk of our losing that money was very slight if oil kept rising, which in fact it has done, and it looked like it was going to work so Danny swallowed his pride and agreed to the deal even though at the very last minute the prime minister and Himelfarb tried to finesse past him and that’s the kind of thing that in the past had enraged Williams and had made him誓 to any kind of a deal, a compromised deal but in this particular case, it was either do or die, and it was obvious that the prime minister, I think the words that Himelfarb used was the prime minister cannot as Canadian prime minister break the rules of equalization to that extent, it will not fly in the other provinces.”

“Because you have to remember in Ontario, McGuinty was whining his head off. Every day McGuinty was out saying ‘McGuinty’s going to destroy Canada and equalization is going to destroy the House of Commons and being called a liar and a renegade and a man who breached his commitment, as long as he’s in politics because Danny Williams will never relent, will never give up, he will go for the jugular day after day. And I think it was probably that realization that led Paul Martin to go against the advice of his officials and come up with a $2-billion deal for the province on offshore oil.”

Was that good leadership on Paul Martin’s part?

“Paul Martin was not a good leader. The Economist called him Mr. Dithers. There is no way Paul Martin would follow the advice of his strategists when it came time to winning an election and say this and do that and say the other thing and then live up to the advice of his accountants and bean counters about not living up to his commitment that’s not leadership.”

“Harper is a different kind of a leader. Harper also made a commitment to Danny Williams in writing during the election campaign that he would remove natural resources from the equalization formula which would mean that Newfoundland could finally pay down its huge debt, twice as large as the national average. When Harper got elected and Danny went to collect, Harper said, ‘No, I’m not going to do that.’ I agree but I can’t do it. End of story.”

“So Harper’s a ruthless person, who will to my mind, hypocrisy is not the right word because he’s the kind of person who will say anything as Martin would during an election, but he differs from Martin in that Martin will then find himself in a moral quandary and morasse and tried to live up to his commitment.”

“Harper just said, ‘No, I can’t do it.’ I’ve checked with officials and I misspoke myself and I can’t do something that’s not going to be for the benefit of Canada. Goodbye, Mr. Williams; and, of course, this led to the ABC Campaign in the last election.”

Are there any similarities between Danny Williams and Joey Smallwood?

“No, I wouldn’t say so. Joey Smallwood was a kind of a promoter type and highly articulate and an orator in the old sense of the word and more of a baronial politician.”

“Danny Williams is a fella who made a quarter of a billion dollars in business in two or three decades on his own and, coming from, I won’t say he came from nothing, he was a lawyer and a Rhodes scholar and so on, so he had intellect and training and learning and an ability to actually make money that Joey Smallwood never had.”

“So all of this, plus a total fearlessness when it comes to dealing with anybody, because when you make a quarter of a billion dollars in the world of business you consider yourself equal to anybody in the world in that area and certainly he felt that Paul Martin was a peer and his equal in every respect and he knew that Paul Martin prided himself on being a ‘my word is my bond’-type of guy, that’s how he made his own money in business. And Danny felt he had let him down so badly because he went back on his word.”

“So Joey Smallwood would have compromised, even though he was considered to be a bit of a dictator, he wasn’t in fact, he was more of a compromiser.”

Why do people like Danny Williams so much?

“Because he didn’t take no for an answer. In the book, I call him ‘crazy’ and when I talk to Himelfarb who was the clerk of the Privy Council, I made the point to Himelfarb that, ‘you can’t win against this guy, the man is crazy,’ and Himelfarb said, ‘This is your boss you’re talking about here, this man you’re calling crazy?’ And I said, ‘Yeah, crazy in the best sense of the word, crazy in the sense that Churchill was crazy, or some of these other people who will never say die are crazy. So your man Paul Martin will have this nightmare forever of standing up in the House of Commons and being called a liar and a renegade and a man who breached his commitment, as long as he’s in politics because Danny Williams will never relent, will never give up, he will go for the jugular day after day. And I think it was probably that realization that led Paul Martin to go against the advice of his officials and come up with a $2-billion deal for the province on offshore oil.”

Are there similarities between Harper and Danny Williams?

“Yes, in a way there are, except this: Williams is very much a people person.”

What was it like to work for a man like that?

“Working for Danny was good because I had access to him and whenever I went anywhere people knew I was Danny’s guy. I wasn’t a cog in the bureaucratic wheel of Newfoundland and Labrador. I was his hired gun, I was his eyes and ears, and mouth, if necessary. So it worked pretty well and it was good and we succeeded. I had a five-year contract and once it was over, it took eight months to come to a good positive conclusion, but once it was over, I was happy enough to get out and go back to real life.”

Do you think Danny Williams will actually go back to federal politics?

“No, I think Danny Williams is out of politics completely. He’s had a rough seven years in provincial politics and he’s had some health issues as well, including a back problem and then, of course, a possibly fatal heart problem that he was coping with, that was cured fortunately by surgery, a long operation. And I would say Danny Williams probably has intimations of mortality and that he wants to spend the next couple of decades following his own pursuits rather than those of others.”

What do you think his legacy will be?

“His main legacy has been turning Newfoundland and Labrador into a ‘have’ province. People will say, ‘Yes, it’s easy to turn a province into a have province if you’ve got offshore oil coming out of your ears’ but the fact is that Danny turned around the psychology of the province, including in Ottawa, and in the stands where Paul Martin and the Liberal government and obtaining $2-billion on the Atlantic Accord where it’s going to go right against the debt and he sort of made people in Newfoundland and Labrador [realize] that they were no longer Canada’s poor cousins, that we were a contributing member of the Confederation, and we no longer have to see stories in national newspapers or on the national news where any time Newfoundland and Labrador was referred to it would always be with the tag, Canada’s poorest province. Well, that’s gone. Those days are gone and the psychology of that has gone with it.”

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Let’s talk: Join conversation to end stigma of mental illness

It’s time to de-stigmatize mental illness and promote Canadian mental health, says former Olympian Clara Hughes.

By CLARA HUGHES

Mental illness impacts all Canadians. One of the most startling statistics that we often hear is that one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives. And that doesn’t include the impact on family and friends who watch and worry, often feeling helpless, as a loved one struggles.

Worse, two out of three people with a mental illness won’t seek help, too often silenced by the stigma and fear around the disease. A decade ago, I was one of these statistics.

Most people find it hard to believe that on the heels of winning my first two Olympic medals at the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996, I descended into a deep depression. For two years, I fought depression through the darkest days of my life, unable to compete, unable even to smile.

But I was lucky. I was one of the minority who talked about my problems with people who cared—my “circle of trust.” As an athlete, I was surrounded by both the loving support and professional guidance of my family, friends, coaches and fellow athletes. I had access to the tools I needed to make the right decisions, to choose to come back to life, to find the light from the darkness. I talked, and people responded. And I was lucky enough to emerge a stronger person, able to compete in four more Olympiads and win more medals in competitions all over the world over my 20-year athletic career.

For me, and for so many, the first step was talking about it, recognizing how ridiculous it is that so many people fear mental illness, and even blame those who suffer for being afflicted. A poll conducted by the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) in 2008 found that only 50 per cent of Canadians would tell a friend that a family member has a mental illness—yet 72 per cent would disclose a cancer diagnosis.

If we don’t lift this shroud of silence around mental health, how will anyone be able to help? The human toll of mental illness is substantial. Around the world, more than 150 million people are affected by mental illness. In Canada the impact is extensive. Mental illness accounts for 30 per cent of disability claims and 70 per cent of total disability costs. On any given day, half a million Canadians miss work due to a mental illness, at a total cost to the Canadian economy of $51 billion a year in lost productivity.

There are voices in the silence, recognizing how ridiculous it is that one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives. And even 72 per cent of total disability costs. On any given day, half a million Canadians miss work due to a mental illness, at a total cost to the Canadian economy of $51 billion a year in lost productivity.

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Ending stigma of mental illness: Clara Hughes is a six-time Olympic medal winner, an officer of the Order of Canada, and a member of the Order of Manitoba. On the heels of winning her first two Olympic medals at the Atlanta Summer Games in 1996, she descended into deep depression and for two years fought depression.

Whether it’s chatting about mental health on the phone, on the internet, or across the kitchen or boardroom table, starting the conversation is a critical part of enabling everybody to have the same opportunity to heal that I had. Clara Hughes, six-time Olympic medal winner, is the only athlete ever to win multiple medals in both Winter and Summer Olympic Games. An Officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Manitoba, Ms. Hughes is the national spokesperson for the Bell Mental Health Initiative, the first program of its kind ever undertaken by a Canadian corporation. Its commitment includes a five-year, $50 million investment to raise awareness and support for mental health. In addition to its anti-stigma campaign, Bell will be providing funding for research, improving access to treatment and developing innovative workplace programs.

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There are voices in the silence, recognizing how ridiculous it is that one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives. And even 72 per cent of total disability costs. On any given day, half a million Canadians miss work due to a mental illness, at a total cost to the Canadian economy of $51 billion a year in lost productivity.

As part of the campaign that is unfolding across the country, people will be encouraged to spread the word about mental health.

On Bell Let’s Talk Day, Feb. 9, Bell will contribute five cents for every text message sent and every long distance call made by Bell customers to mental health-related initiatives across the country.

The campaign is just one facet of a much larger Bell Mental Health Initiative launched last fall. The largest program of its kind ever undertaken by a Canadian corporation, its commitment includes a five-year, $50 million investment to raise awareness and support for mental health. In addition to its anti-stigma campaign, Bell will be providing funding for research, improving access to treatment and developing innovative workplace programs.

The human toll of mental illness is substantial. Around the world, more than 150 million people are affected by mental illness. In Canada the impact is extensive. Mental illness accounts for 30 per cent of disability claims and 70 per cent of total disability costs. On any given day, half a million Canadians miss work due to a mental illness, at a total cost to the Canadian economy of $51 billion a year in lost productivity.

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Whether it’s chatting about mental health on the phone, on the internet, or across the kitchen or boardroom table, starting the conversation is a critical part of enabling everybody to have the same opportunity to heal that I had.

Clara Hughes, six-time Olympic medal winner, is the only athlete ever to win multiple medals in both Winter and Summer Olympic Games. An Officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Manitoba, Ms. Hughes is the national spokesperson for the Bell Let’s Talk campaign to de-stigmatize mental illness and promote Canadian mental health.
This year’s theme will explore various topics and subjects that will contribute to Canada’s nuclear industry moving forward in both domestic and international markets.

Wednesday, February 23, 2011
18:00 - 21:30 Welcome Reception

Thursday, February 24, 2011
07:30 – 08:30 Breakfast and Introductory Remarks
Wayne Robbins, Chairman Canadian Nuclear Association, Chief Nuclear Officer Ontario Power Generation.

08:30 – 09:15 The Transformative Opportunity for the Nuclear Industry in Canada.
John Ibitson, Political Journalist and The Globe and Mail Ottawa Bureau Chief.

The Honourable Senator W. David Angus, Chairman Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources.

10:15 – 11:00 Nuclear Roadmap to 2050.
Luis E. Echavarri, Director-General OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA).

11:20 – 12:00 Celebrating Sixty-Five Years of Regulating the Nuclear Industry.
Michael Binder, President and Chief Executive Officer Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

12:15 – 14:15 Luncheon
Need, Speed, Greed: The Innovation Economy.
Vijay Vaitheeswaran, Award Winning Correspondent for The Economist.

14:30 – 16:00 Panel Discussion:
Tim Gitzel, President, Cameco Corporation
Jacques Besnainou, Chief Executive Officer, AREVA Inc.
Tom Mitchell, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Power Generation
Blair Kennedy, Vice-President Nuclear, New Brunswick Power.

16:30 – 17:15 Canada’s Nuclear Future: Fast Forward or Fall Back?
Thomas D’Aquino, Senior Counsel, Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP and Distinguished Lifetime Member, Canadian Council of Chief Executives.

17:15 – 19:30 Exhibitor and Career Fair Reception

Friday, February 25, 2011
07:45 - 08:45 Breakfast

08:45 - 09:45 The Spark: Igniting the Creative Fire That Lives Within Us All.
Lyn Heward, Former President and Chief Operating Officer Cirque du Soleil.

08:45 - 09:45 Investing in Nuclear Research and Development Infrastructure.
Dr. Phillip Finck, Associate Laboratory Director for Nuclear Science and Technology Idaho National Laboratory.

11:20 - 12:00 The Economic Benefits of Refurbishing and Operating
Ontario’s Nuclear Reactors. Jayson Myers, President and Chief Executive Officer Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

12:00 - 12:30 Closing Remarks
Denise Carpenter, President and Chief Executive Officer Canadian Nuclear Association.

12:30 - 14:00 Closing Buffet Luncheon
Stairs joins CIDA Minister Oda’s office as new chief of staff

And former PMO issues management adviser Matt Wolf joins the Sun TV News Channel in Toronto as an editorial producer, fourth PMO staffer to move to Sun TV.

By KRISTEN SHANE

Darren Cunningham and William Stairs were both rumoured for weeks to be involved somehow with the chiefs of staff musical chairs that was taking place after last month’s Cabinet shuffle. Hill Climbers can confirm that Mr. Cunningham recently left as Industry Minister Tony Clement’s chief, and Mr. Stairs is settling in to International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda’s office as her new chief.

After having worked seven years in Conservative Party politics, in three ministers’ offices and having participated in three federal election campaigns, Mr. Cunningham sent an email to colleagues Jan. 31, obtained by Hill Climbers, announcing his departure.

“[I]t is time to call it a day,” he said, and focus on “my most important job” of being a husband, and father to three young children. His wife, Kari Menzies-Cunningham, is the daughter of one of the Conservatives’ newest Cabinet ministers, Minister of State for Finance Ted Menzies, whom Prime Minister Stephen Harper promoted from Parliamentarian secretary at the Cabinet shuffle Jan. 4.

“It is time for me to get more sleep, some life balance, and go find new challenges,” wrote Mr. Cunningham.

When reached at home last week, he referred comment to Mr. Clement’s communications shop, adding that he’s now back to being a private citizen. It had been rumoured shortly after the shuffle that Mr. Stairs would replace Mr. Cunningham as Mr. Clement’s chief, but Mr. Cunningham refused to comment at the time, and Mr. Clement told The Hill Times he had made no decisions.

Mr. Cunningham served under Mr. Clement at Industry since 2008 as both director of communications and later chief. Staff there stayed on message last week, even when it was clear Mr. Cunningham had left the building.

When press secretary Heather Hume was asked Feb. 3 who her chief of staff was, she replied: “We don’t comment on staffing changes. I’m sorry, I can’t comment.” Not even on her chief of staff, a position which, if changed, would typically appear publicly within a matter of weeks on the government’s online employee directory.

Originally from Calgary, Alta., after graduating the University of Regina, Sask., with a bachelor’s degree in political science in 1995, Mr. Cunningham worked in the office of then-leader of the Progressive Conservatives, Peter MacKay, as director of operations and finance before it merged with the Canadian Alliance in 2003.

In the 2004 general election, he worked communications in the new Conservative Party’s war room. Coming to the Hill in his mid-30s, he became a communications officer and later manager of Parliamentary media relations in the Conservatives’ OLO.

In the 2006 election, Mr. Cunningham was a second wagon-master and communications officer, before being picked up as then-Industry minister Maxime Bernier’s director of Parliamentary affairs when the Conservatives formed government. He shuffled to be chief for then-Revenue minister Gordon O’Connor in 2007, and back to Industry under Mr. Clement the next year.

In the OLO, Mr. Cunningham once worked under Mr. Stairs, who was acting director of communications at the time. Last Wednesday, Mr. Stairs stepped in as Ms. Oda’s chief, replacing Stephanie Machel, who shuffled into Environment to do the job for Peter Kent.

Mr. Stairs had been a senior adviser to the Prime Minister until last month, where one Conservative said his role seemed undefined and the PMO powers-that-be were likely looking for a more key role for him.

On the Hill since the early 1990s as a Tory staffer, the Nova Scotia-bred 50-something was previously chief of staff to Cabinet minister Vic Toews, as well as Mr. Harper’s first communications director in the PMO.

He headed the PMO issues management division for part of last year, until moving to be a senior adviser to Mr. Harper.

Other Cabinet shuffle-induced staffing changes are starting to emerge.

Mr. Menzies, the Finance minister’s Parliamentary-secretary-turned-junior-minister, is slated to bring his executive assistant Kim Roper to his ministerial office, likely as director of Parliamentary affairs (his new staffing titles were not official as of last week).

Mr. Menzies already had an office in the Finance minister’s lair, and will now just be expanding it to fit more staffers. Directors of Parliamentary affairs typically handle legislative duties, including informing Parliamentarians of all parties about legislative issues stemming from their portfolios.

Mr. Menzies is sticking alongside his senior special assistant (formerly Parliamentary secretary’s assistant) Bram Sepers, who is set to take over press duties, although Finance Minister Jim Flaherty’s communications director Chisholm Pothier will keep his lead role on the file. Shawn Fried in Mr. Menzies’ chief of staff.

Over in Seniors Minister of State Julian Fantino’s new digs, chief Dan Mader has been busy unpacking boxes and interviewing potential new staffers. This week, communications director Heather Domerecky officially starts. She was press secretary to Kim Roper.

Continued on Page 45
Bill C-32 Weakens Canada’s Global Competitiveness

New Exceptions to Copyright Would Undermine Canada’s Digital Economy

WARNING: C-32 may be toxic to Canada’s digital economy. Do not pass as drafted.

Nine Warnings on C-32...
visit www.c32jointstatement.ca

Le projet de loi C-32 affaiblit la compétitivité du Canada à l’échelle mondiale

Les nouvelles exceptions prévues en matière de droit d’auteur affaibliraient l’économie numérique canadienne
Ottawa meets the Arctic, and politicians not above the law

Continued from Page 2

The Arctic comes to Ottawa

A sold-out crowd of 400 gathered at the National Gallery of Canada on Feb. 1 to celebrate Canada’s North at “A Taste of the Arctic” event held by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

The event was a success in 2010, the “Year of the Inuit,” to showcase Inuit food, culture and fashion in the nation’s capital. Organizers decided to do it again this year, complete with seal meat, which Liberal MP Justin Trudeau sampled.

As everyone will remember, it became popular once former governor general Michaëlle Jean airs a seal heart during her visit to Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in 2009. As a strong supporter of Canada’s North, Ms. Jean was the special guest at last week’s event.

“Whether in outdoor festivals like Toonik Tyme, during expeditions out on the land, or even community feasts in, say, Rankin Inlet—which for some reason attracted a whole lot of attention—it should come as no surprise that the people of the North always share the best they have,” Ms. Jean said at the event.

The food stations and hors d’oeuvres included: Char tartar served in a savory loganberry sauce, roasted ragout of a ground juniper sauce, sautéed shrimp curry connette, smoked goose breast with a pepper sauce infused with caraway seeds, wild bear meat with a berry chutney, and a char tartar served in a savory blueberry frangolico, and a selection of Northern teas.

ITK leader Mary Simon was also of course there, even though she had recently slipped on ice and broke her ankle. She attended on crutches.

Other notable guests included Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Fisheries Minister Gail Shea, Liberal Senator Charlie Watt, Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth, Liberal MP Todd Russell, NDP MP Dennis Red- ington and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. Laureen Harper also showed up for the festivities.

A Taste of the Arctic also doubled as a fundraiser for the Avataq Cultural Institute based in Nunavik, Que. Spoken word artist Taqralik Patridge, singer Elisapie Isaac and acrobats ArtCirq entertained the guests.

People who deny climate change have head in sand: Former PM Campbell

Climate change deniers should be laughed at, says American comedy talk show host Bill Maher.


Mr. Kingston took issue with people criticizing non-climate change believers, and likened the people who use the “If you don’t believe it, you’re crazy” line to “fear mongering.”

“You’re laughed at because you dare question it,” Mr. Kingston said, to which Mr. Maher replied: “You should be laughed at.”

Mr. Kingston also said that the science of climate change is political and that we need to get the science out of Washington and into the labs, to which Mr. Maher replied: “The only science that’s political is science funded by oil companies.”

Ms. Campbell jumped into the debate saying that while we may not know for sure the long-term implications of climate change, there is in fact a climate science that has been studied for years which says that climate change is real.

“We know, for example, dinosaurs weren’t running around with thermometers writing down the temperature, but we know how much carbon was in the air hundreds of thousands of years ago because people have dug at the ice cores,” she said.

“That was the start of climate science.”

She said Mr. Kingston’s position was “absolute rubbish” and that climate change “is a huge threat to our security and to doing it to have your head in the sand.” Well then.

Politicians not above the law: new book

Politicians should not be exempt from the criminal process, says a new book by Joseph Main- got, a former House of Com- mons Parliamen- tary law clerk, and David Dehler, a retired lawyer.

According to the book, Politicians Above the Law: A Case for the Abolition of Parliamentary Inviolability, more than 70 per cent of national assemblies and Parliaments guarantee their members will “not be prosecuted, or detained, or arrested without prior consent of the Parliament or the assembly in which they sit. This is known as Parliamentary inviolability. Only the United States Congress and all Commonwealth Parliaments do not give this immunity to their members.

Mr. Maingot and Mr. Dehler argue in their book that “protection for the member beyond Parliament should be no more and no less than that provided to the rest of the citizenry” and that “inviolability and its attendant protection for the member erode the separation of powers.”

In a blurb for the book, former prime minister Paul Martin said it’s a book “that should be read. ‘Parliamentary immunity is a necessary guarantee of the independence of the legislature. When it extends to protecting members beyond their Parliamentary activities from the criminal justice system however, it brings the legislature into disrepute and there can be few greater attacks on its independence than that caused by the contempt this engenders,’” he wrote.

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The Hill Times
Public Works say hill media welcome to stay in National Press Building, for now

After a 17-month delay, Public Works says Hill media are welcome to stay for the time being in the historic Wellington Street National Press Building that has housed them for the past 50 years, says the president of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

By JESSICA BRUNO

After a 17-month delay, Public Works says Hill media are welcome to stay for the time being in the historic Wellington Street National Press Building that has housed them for the past 50 years, says the president of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

“The House of Commons and the Senate currently occupy five of the nine floors in the building, including the site of the former Press Club, which has been filled with cubicles. One floor sits empty, according to the access to information request, and only three have media tenants occupying them. “They’re getting us by stealth, basically,” said Ms. Buzzetti.

Much of the building has the feeling of better days gone by. Elevators are grungy, hallways are cluttered and paint is chipped. Public Works scheduled $368,000 of repairs for the building in 2010-2011. This includes $270,000 to restore the building’s 1917 façade and $53,000 “for various small minor repairs,” said Ms. Bétoté Akwa...

In preparation for the Senate to move into its temporary space in fall of 2009, the department spent $805,247 for a local construction company to renovate the top two floors of the building. The work took six months and included asbestos removal, according to a brief that appeared in the Ottawa Construction News September 2009. The 94-year-old building is recognized as a heritage building by the federal government. Originally called the Norlite Building, it was built between 1917-1918 by a team of local architects. It is decorated in an Italian Renaissance style, and before it was expropriated by the government in 1954, it featured an open-concept layout and balconies.

Meanwhile, Public Works’ management style is currently being examined by the House Government Operations Committee. Auditor General Sheila Fraser testified before the committee on Feb. 3 as a part of their ongoing look at Public Works’ management of construction contracts for the massive $5-billion renovation of the Parliamentary Buildings.

There, she reiterated the recommendation she made in a report last year that the ministry should come up with a plan to hand control of the historical buildings to a dedicated parliamentary body.

“Clearly, we believe that the responsibility has to be given back to Parliament,” she told the committee.

She also said that she would “not at all be surprised if the cost estimates increase.” As more work gets underway in the $5-billion long-term plan to revitalize the parliamentary precinct, likening it to renovating one’s house and finding some “surprises” along the way.

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The Hill Times
Getting back to Parliament and getting back in shape

Parliament Hill folks are a social bunch and that goes well with physical activity. It serves the purpose of unwinding by putting Parliament aside for an hour as well as exercise.

By THERESA KAVANAGH

Parliament Hill—Politics is a special kind of work that has not traditionally been associated with regular physical activity. As someone who has worked on the Hill for 22 years, I can sympathize when folks say they have a hard time carving out fitness time especially those with young families. My response is that fitness needs to be more than dedicated time for getting in shape. If your physical activity does not serve another purpose you are unlikely to want to do it. The true test of a good activity is that it ticks off another box for you. For example, the motivation for riding your bike to work is not only fitness but a cheap mode of transportation. You also save time not having to go to a gym on the way home. Fitness can also give you the solitude you are looking for after a day of talking and listening. Bringing balance to your day is a wonderful by-product of exercise.

Parliament Hill folks are a social bunch and that goes well with physical activity. It can mean booking weekend dates with friends or joining groups no matter what the time frame. I admire the MPs who book a little basketball with their colleagues at the end of a long day. It serves the purpose of unwinding by putting Parliament aside for an hour as well as exercise.

Fitness is a great way to get away from work altogether. I recently went to a 50th birthday party for a friend who I had worked with years ago. To my surprise most of the guests were not only book new friends she met when she took up rock climbing. As someone else with high issues, I will not likely join that group but I was impressed with the loyalty such a pastime can create among participants. I find that physical activity may be the reason for joining a club or class but the side benefit is meeting new people.

When I took up running 11 years ago, I wanted an exercise that was easy to schedule. The side benefit was chatting with people who were interesting and had nothing to do with work. It was great until one wanted to talk about the next election! Discussions on upcoming races (the running kind) were far more relevant. Booking activities with your spouse or a good friend can give you the time together that you might not otherwise have. Going for a skate on that wonderful canal ice is an opportunity to chat and enjoy a hot chocolate. I am fortunate enough to have a husband who is a good sport. Our first date was a bike ride that left him a little unprepared since I was in triathlon training mode—he thought it was just a date! He was left huffing and puffing behind me. I admit that it was a bit mean on my part but he passed the test with flying colours which is why we are married today. I unknowingly created a monster because he is a faster biker than me now.

As I go into buildings on the Hill I see smokers at every entrance. I think how hard it is for them to give up something that has such a social aspect of meeting up with others. This is the obvious attraction with young smokers who can be cool and unconventional and have an instant peer group. It is why I have always believed it is critically important to have teens take part in a physical activity they can call their own. They need a peer group. Sports are not just for physical fitness but for socialization as well. This spring will be my sixth offering a “learn to run” program for folks on the Hill. I get a lot of satisfaction hearing from past participants who continue to enjoy running. Some have even gone on to do marathons. This, however, is not the goal. I am happy when participants figure out that they can make fitness time work for them and discover other benefits. It is particularly nice when they are young parents and they pass on this enthusiasm to their family.

If fitness is thought of as a chore that must be endured to lose weight it is doomed for failure. I wish everyone the opportunity of finding an activity that helps them see another aspect of themselves and can be integrated into their lifestyle. We all have the power to be our own inspiration.

Theresa Kavanagh is the NDP Whip’s assistant and committee coordinator. She’s also a runner and a triathlete who has completed 14 marathons, qualifying for the Boston marathon four times and running it twice. She will be running a 10-week learn-to-run program from March 21 to May 24. It will run on Mondays when the House is in session and Tuesday when the House is on break. It’s a $50 fee. The money will be donated to a school physical education program.

The Hill Times

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FEATURE: SPIN

The Spin Doctors
By Kristen Shane

“Most Canadians (64 per cent) surveyed in a recent Ipsos Reid poll said there’s no need for an election. All parties say they don’t want one either. They want to keep working hard for Canadians. Let’s ignore the election speculation hype and assume that that’s actually the case.

Then why the campaign-style attacks ads?”

Fred DeLorey
Conservative strategist

“Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff revealed his goal for 2011 in a series of end-of-year interviews given in December: an election. Michael Ignatieff said he was ready for an election and that Canadians were ready for an election. Ignatieff then went on a national campaign tour targeting seats the Liberals don’t currently hold. He then revealed his ballot question. Michael Ignatieff, through his own words and actions, is, without question, laying the groundwork for a spring campaign. And he’s doing this in the midst of a fragile economic recovery.

“So I think it’s pretty clear why we’re running ads. It’s the prudent thing to do.”

Greg MacEachern
Liberal strategist

“As this edition goes to press, the Conservatives are still twisting and turning about which ads they pulled and which ads they didn’t. And their odd defence off the ‘Yes, Yes, Yes’ ads (apparently like a mayfly, they were only meant to live for a day?) goes against logic, and belies the fact that these ads were prepared with the intention of being put on television.

“It is problematic for the Conservatives do not want an unnecessary election at a time when the economy remains fragile; but we must be ready in case the Ignatieff-led coalition is successful in calling an election.

“It’s important that if we do have an opportunistic election this spring that Canadians know who Michael Ignatieff is and why he came back. And let’s not forget—this isn’t new. On every occasion when Ignatieff has threatened an election, we have done exactly the same thing, most recently in the fall of 2009.”

Karine Sauvé
Bloc Québécois strategist

“The question for the Conservatives! They’re the ones who’ve launched an aggressive and totally useless ad campaign. As far as we’re concerned, we’ve been true to ourselves—we’ve been responsible and rigorous. The Conservative government knows what we want to see in the next budget. We’ve put a dollar figure on our demands. The ball is now in the Conservative camp’s court. They say they want to govern. The budget will be the ultimate test. We’ll see just how serious they really are.”

Karl Bélanger
NDP strategist

Why else would they launch these election-style ads? “Jack Layton’s New Democrats are ready for an election, but that is not where our focus is. In fact, our preference is to get to work on things that matter to Canadian families, such as protecting and enhancing pensions. The NDP will also keep up the pressure on the Conservative government and work towards improving our health care system, so every Canadian can get the level of service they deserve.

“New Democrats will keep trying to make Canadian families’ lives more affordable with practical solutions such as an affordable housing strategy, dropping the federal tax off home heating or reinstituting the ecoEnergy retrofit program.

“That’s the kind of leadership Canadians want to see.”

Answer One Question and Win A Book!

On Feb. 16, The Writers’ Trust will host the Shaughnessy Cohen Award nominees at Politics and the Pen, a gala honouring five political books written in Canada this year. The winning author will receive a cash award of $25,000. The Hill Times and The Writers Trust, meanwhile, are holding a contest to win the books. Answer the question following the description of one of the finalists’ books and you could win a copy of that book. The first person to send the right answer to news@hilltimes.com wins the book. The Hill Times will run a question every week leading up to the Feb. 16 event.

And thank you to those who took part in last week’s contest. Keep reading!

Question:
In what year was the Berlin Wall dismantled?

Answer:
1989

The Hill Times

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Practical | Global | Focused
Donolo brings more focus to Grits’ messaging, sharper response

A year into the job, Peter Donolo, chief of staff to Grit Leader Michael Ignatieff, has been credited with bringing more discipline, professionalism, and structure to the team.

Continued from Page 1

The party hasn’t much improved its support in public opinion polls since Mr. Donolo’s arrival, but he is being credited with bringing more discipline, professionalism and structure to the 70-member OLO team, sharpening the leader’s message, and boosting morale in caucus.

Raised in Montreal, the bilingual Mr. Donolo came on the Hill in 1981 when he was in his early 30s, at a time when his new boss, opposition leader Jean Chrétien, had been dismissed as “yesterday’s man.” He was working as communications director to Toronto’s then-major Art Eggleton, who was a Liberal Senator, when Mr. Chrétien hired the wavy-haired film and jazz lover as his communications director. Mr. Donolo worked alongside Mr. Chrétien’s chief of staff, Jean Pelletier, and others in the OLO to help Mr. Chrétien lead the party to three back-to-back victories.

Mr. Donolo worked with Mr. Chrétien until 1999, gaining praise from many, including former American ambassador to Canada, Jim Blanchard, who said Mr. Donolo was a better communications director than anyone doing the same job in the White House, according to Mr. Donolo’s former colleague and recruiter Eddie Goldberg in his book The Way It Works: inside Ottawa.

Although not everyone is happy in the 77-member Liberal caucus, one year and three months into the chief of staff job, his friends and colleagues in the caucus say Mr. Donolo has used his connections with the party to pull together a strong, united team, and his strategic tact and good-natured personality to win the respect of caucus and party followers.

The party may not be up for the Liberals, but Grits are quick to point out Mr. Donolo’s own mantra: “It’s not a sprint; it’s a marathon.” Meanwhile, his rivals note that one man can’t turn around a party with a recent history of internal strife or a leader who has been unable to gain traction with voters. The Liberals need more help than that.

Mr. Donolo was quick to make his mark. On his first day on the job, after Mr. Ignatieff unceremoniously replaced Ignatief-fellow僚ist Ian Davey, Mr. Donolo shook up senior OLO staff by adding a few old hands including former Quebec Cabinet minister Jean Marc Fournier as principal secretary, longtime Ontario-based Liberal organizer Pat Sorbara, and former prime minister Paul Martin’s communications director Mario Lague in the same role.

Globe and Mail columnist Lawrence Martin wrote at the time that party members were annoyed with the amateurish way Mr. Davey and his partner, former communic-action director Jill Fairbrother, were dismissed — through a leak to reporters even before Mr. Davey and Ms. Fairbrother were told.

But caucus members “went on ad nau-seam about the wisdom in the change,” one member reportedly told Mr. Martin. “It was Donolo to the rescue.”

Liberal insiders at the time said adding experienced leaders brought a new atmosphere of “adult supervision” to the Queen Street branch of the OLO. Mr. Donolo has been credited for bringing more discipline, professionalism and structure to the esti-mated 70-member staff.

“He has the ability to attract quality people,” said Liberal MP Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton-Canso, N.S.), the party’s for-mer whip and current fisheries critic. “Peter can pick up the phone, and every Liberal across the country will take the call,” Liberal Deputy Leader Ralph Goodale told The Hill Times last week.

When Mr. Laguë died suddenly in August, raisers note that one man has been credited for bringing more discipline, professionalism and structure to the team.

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When Mr. Laguë died suddenly in August, Gowlings covers all angles in meeting the legal, regulatory and public sector experience in a range of industries, Gowlings Government Affairs Group can help you effect change.

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Think government: think Gowlings.

Gowlings Government Affairs Group can help you effect change.

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**PMO staffer Wolf heads to Sun TV News**

Matt Wolf recently joined Sun TV News as an editorial producer in Toronto.

**Continued from Page 38**

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Minister Keith Ashfield.

Sun News hires a fourth former PMO staffer

Former PMO issues management adviser Matt Wolf recently joined the Sun TV News Channel in Toronto as an editorial producer. Reached on his cell phone last week, Mr. Wolf said he’s not working on the news side of the right-leaning 24-hour news channel expected to launch early this year, but on opinion shows, although no specific one yet.

“Political jobs are temporary by nature. This is a change of direction, something else interesting,” he said.

Mr. Wolf left government last fall after a temporary stint at Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz’s communications division. He is better known for working in the PMO issues management unit since July 2008, alongside former directors Jenni Byrne and Jasmine Igneski.

At Sun News, he works in the same location as Dennis Matthews, a former PMO advertising manager. Mr. Matthews left government last year after more than two years in his PMO ad job, which was original conceived to help with strategic planning division led by former staffer Patrick Muttart. Mr. Matthews had worked his way into the job from starting as an executive assistant to Mr. Muttart in the winter of 2008, soon after the Conservatives were elected.

He could not be reached for comment last week through his office voicemail. A LinkedIn profile matching his name and work history indicates he is director of marketing and brand development of marketing researcher, Mr. Plotz for Sun Media. As a past issues management researcher, Mr. Plotz had developed a reputation as a guy who could dig up any dirt on the opposition in a jiffy.

He was hired by fellow former PMO staffer Kory Teneycke, perhaps the most well known figure in Sun TV News’ early days. Mr. Harper’s former communications director was in charge of shepherding the embryonic channel through its birth, but stirred controversy over his fresh ties to politics and a petition against the station that he allegedly had a hand in drafting. Perceived to be a liability to parent company Quebecor Media Inc., he quit as it was trying to attain a federal broadcasting licence for the channel. After it received a licence, he rejoined the venture last month.

Mr. Teneycke referred Hill Climbers last week to Quebecor’s vice-president of corporate and institutional affairs, Serge Sasseville, who refused to comment on the hiring of former PMO staff.

Speaking to Hill Climbers last summer about Mr. Plotz’s new job, Mr. Teneycke emphasized that Mr. Plotz was not in a reporting or news decision-making role. Likewise, Mr. Wolf stressed his role in opinion programming, not newsgathering.

“Responding to criticism that the channel could still be perceived as “too close to government” given the former PMO staffers’ involvement, he said, “We’ll report stuff objectively and accurately. People here will be professionals at their job.”

New MPs and Senators still hiring Hill staff

Three new MPs who won by-elections Nov. 29 have hired more temporary workers while two new Senators appointed Dec. 20 are expected to have theirs in place in the next few weeks.

In addition to new Vaughan, Ont. Conservative MP Mr. Funtino, Conservative Robert Sopuck is new to represent Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette, Man. His legislative assistant Duncan Hamilton is set to do a grab-bag of committee and administrative work alongside Mr. Sopuck’s Parliamentary assistant Brett Carlson.

Together, they bring a mix of experience and knowledge of the riding.

Mr. Hamilton told Hill Climbers last month that he has worked over the last six years for another Manitoba Conservative MP, James Bezan, Saskatchewan-based Agriculture Minister Mr. Ritz, and rural Ontario MP Larry Miller. He also said he spent a short time in the Whip’s office. He left his last post as Mr. Miller’s LA in July.

Mr. Carlson is a student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ont. studying political science and psychology, but comes from Mr. Sopuck’s riding, said Mr. Hamilton. He interned last summer in Ottawa for Human Resources Minister Diane Finley and has been working part-time since then for Brant, Ont. MP Phil McColeman. Mr. Sopuck also has three staffers in his constituency.

Down the road in Winnipeg North, Man., Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux has a full slate of staff working in his busy constituency office, but no one yet named to permanently manage the Ottawa office in Confederation Building.

Mr. Hamilton said太阳 news has a full slate of staff working in his busy constituency office, but no one yet named to permanently manage the Ottawa office in Confederation Building.

This just in: Ted Menzies, Mike Wallace and Kim Roper, top; William Stairs, left, and Kory Teneycke.

Much of his work is constituency-based, explained his executive assistant Roldan Sevillaino to Hill Climbers in early January. Mr. Lamoureux has one full-time and close to 10 part-time staffers in his riding office.

Ninety per cent of the work they do is immigration related, said Mr. Lamoureux two weeks ago, as he and his wife were busy preparing his new office.

He is looking to eventually hire a student part time to manage his Hill office.

Mr. Sevillaino has been travelling back and forth to get things set up, and Mr. Lamoureux hired a temporary assistant. He was hired by fellow former PMO staff, per-

Due to a redistribution that is dissolving Mr. Lamoureux’s former riding as an MLA, Inkster.

Mr. Sevillaino said once an LA is set up in Ottawa, he would be based out of Winnipeg.

“Getting elected near the Christmas season isn’t the best time to get elected, just because no offices are open to get anything set up,” he noted last month.

New Senators Larry Smith and Don Meredith are in the same boat. Temporary workers were answering the phones in both of their offices in late January. Patti Lou Fowlo in Mr. Meredith’s office said she was brought in Jan. 17 by Senate human resources to get his office set up. Neither Senator had hired permanent full-time staffers who were in their offices at the end of January.

kshan@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times
Conservatives raise whopping $17.3-million last year, parties question ‘Republican-style’ tactics

The party raised $17.3-million in 2010, compared to $7-million collected by the Liberal Party, $4.4-million raised by the NDP, $1.3-million by the Green Party and $642,500 by the Bloc Québécois.

A senior Conservative Senator has confirmed to The Hill Times that the former Progressive Conservative Party, until its merger with the Canadian Alliance eight years ago to form the Conservative Party of Canada, had retained one of the most prestigious fundraising and direct marketing firms in the U.S. during its majority government years under then-prime minister Brian Mulroney.

And, a former member of the Conservative Party who did not want to be identified, told The Hill Times the direct mail solicitations for donations he continues to receive from the Conservative Fund Canada, the financial arm of the party, contain the same kind of messaging, style and appearance as the solicitations he once received from the Progressive Conservative Party.

Conservative Senator Don Oliver, a former board member of the Progressive Conservative Party’s fundraising arm, the PC Canada Fund, confirmed the PC Party retained the Falls Church, Virginia, firm of Odell, Simms & Lynch when he was on the board. The company, established in 1974, has long had Republican Party links, and one of its founders, Robert Odell, is now a Republican state senator in New Hampshire.

“When I was involved, Bob Odell certainly gave us a lot of advice, but I don’t know when the contract severed. I know nothing about that,” Sen. Oliver told The Hill Times.

He said the U.S. firm advised the Conservatives on messages and content for the letters to mail to party supporters or potential party supporters to solicit contributions.

Confirmation of the fundraising methods of the Progressive Conservative Party and rumours within the Conservative Party that the formula was passed on through the former Liberal government of Jean Chrétien when it banned union and corporate donations and limited federal political donations to $5,000 from each donor, effective Jan. 1, 2004. Mr. Harper lowered the individual donations to $1,000 in 2006.

Opposition MPs question Mr. Harper’s position, in light of evidence his party may be paying a Republican-connected direct marketer for advice on the messaging and design that has proved so lucrative for the Conservatives. But, because of the secrecy surrounding its fundraising methods, the Conservative Party refuses to confirm whether it has used the methods so successfully since the merger and Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s (Calgary-Southwest, Alta.) election as the first leader of the new party in 2003. It will not deny or confirm whether it continues to use the same Virginia-based company as the Progressive Conservatives.

“We don’t comment on how we fundraise, though I’m sure the other parties would love to know,” Conservative Party spokesman Fred DeLorey said in an email response to questions. A Hill Times telephone request for an interview with Odell, Simms & Lynch, left with an attendant who answered the company’s phone, was not returned.

Party financial reports Elections Canada posted on its website last week showed how far ahead of its main rivals the Conservative Party remains in financial support from donors. The party raised $17.3 million in 2010, compared to $7-million collected by the Liberal party, $4.4-million raised by the NDP, $1.3-million by the Green Party and $642,500 by the Bloc Québécois.

Sen. Oliver said he suspects the Liberal Party depends on similar outside help for its fundraising efforts. “I’m sure they’ve gone to many experts, there are dozens of people who have this type of expertise. And I’m sure the Democratic Party has all the knowledge, and the Republican Party has them. In the States, raising money for a Senate seat is a huge business. The day you’re elected, the next day you start, and it’s in the millions. It can be many experts down there who can give you good advice,” Sen. Oliver said.

But a Liberal Party spokeswoman said an in-house fundraising team “works with a Canadian broker, and they work with Canadian creative agencies, letter shops, printers, and that’s how we execute our direct mail campaign.”

NDP national director Brad Lavigne said his party also depends on a Canadian consulting firm to help design and produce its direct-mail fundraising. Liberal and NDP MPs said the Conservative fundraising tactics, linking specific policy issues to targeted groups among voters, are, like the controversial attack ads the Conservatives released last month, borrowed from the Republican Party.

“Stephen Harper once called the Republican Party his ‘shining light,’ this was his quote,” said Liberal MP Mark Holland (Ajax-Pickering, Ont.). “I think you’re seeing the same kind of strategies used by Republicans imported here, he’s emulated it. What they do is they go after ultra-right-wing conservative groups, send a very targeted message to raise enormous amounts of money that make them very beholden to that money.”

NDP MP Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, Ont.) also questioned the Conservative fundraising style and tactics, as well as the U.S.-style of attack ads. “Here’s a party that claims to want to be standing up for Canada, and meanwhile it’s using an American platform [style] to raise money,” he said.

tnausset@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times
Every Wednesday morning, most powerful mandarins in government meet over coffee in Langevin Building

Ned Franks, one of the country’s leading experts on Parliament, says deputy ministers should have five-year tenures.

The exact format of the meeting depends on the Clerk, though it follows a general format of a short briefing by the Clerk on the important issues of the week, including legislation, topics discussed in Cabinet and important events, said DMs who have attended. No decisions are made at these morning meetings.

Under some clerks, deputy ministers are called upon to contribute more actively to the meetings than others, contributing presentations about their areas of expertise, or commentary on a topic, explained Mr. Dorais. Under others, such as Jocelyne Bourgon, who was Clerk from 1994 to 1999 under prime minister Jean Chrétien, the meetings were more weighted towards PCO making the presentations, he said.

As for Mr. Wouters’s meeting style, attendees are staying lipped, as it is traditional to be discreet about the contents of DM breakfasts, even though they are not considered a Cabinet confidence.

Mr. Dorais knew Mr. Wouters when they were both DMs attending the breakfast meetings. Before he became the Clerk, Mr. Wouters was a deputy minister for both the Treasury Board and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Mr. Dorais was circumstances when asked about Mr. Wouters’s management style. “Wayne is a very human person,” he said.

The former DM and breakfast organizer described Mr. Wouters as “collegial” and “very personable,” adding he is obviously one of the best policy minds.

Whether the meetings lean more towards policy or public service issues is another mark of a clerk’s influence on the meetings, said Mr. Dorais.

According to Mr. Dorais, Kevin Lynch, the clerk of the PCO prior to Mr. Wouters, liked to delve “deep into financial issues.” Alex Himel, who was clerk from 2002 to 2006 played a big role as the prime minister’s policy adviser, and a lesser one as head of the public service.

The probability of this is great enough that it was historically, as the current tenure of a deputy minister is only about three-and-a-half years, Mr. Franks explained, noting that it takes a DM at least two years to learn the department.

“It means that more than half the time, the deputy minister of a department hasn’t got full control of the portfolio,” he said. “There is a professional ethic that sometimes gets violated by the department, and a deputy minister who is not a professional in that way, but a professional deputy minister, would see it differently, and I think that problem comes up more often than we would think. So that’s one of the risks of being a deputy minister, it’s being a community rather than a departmental minister,” he stated.

The shorter DM tenure has been paralleled with a shorter stay for most occupants of the Clerk’s Office as well. This too troubles Mr. Franks.

“I would like to see the tenures of both Clerks of the Privy Council and deputy ministers substantially lengthened, at least five years. I would feel much more comfortable that they were caring more about their departments and the civil service and less about concerns of interests of those in power,” he said.

But when the breakfast meetings are at their best, they can help the public service run smoothly, Mr. Clark noted.

“What also comes out of meeting like that is, if their good meetings, and being run properly, is that you’re able to mitigate error. In other words, if you’re living in silos and not communicating, then your chances of mistakes are pretty high, and if you’re communicating through effective meeting structures that allows you to focus,” he said.

Having a corps of well-informed deputy ministers also helps when ministers, or even entire governments change, the meeting organizer added. In these cases, it’s the DM’s job to get their new ministers up to speed on their or his new portfolio, and to help PCO present policy options to a new government.
PBO, Treasury Board President Day lock horns over numbers, dollars

Canada’s Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page and Treasury Board president Stockwell Day have been locked in a verbal round of tug-of-war over whether or not the government’s numbers add up.

By JESSICA BRUNO

S

ince he released his report on the departmental budget freeze on Jan. 20, Canada’s Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page and Treasury Board president Stockwell Day have been locked in a verbal round of tug-of-war over whether or not the government’s numbers add up.

“All we’ve heard from Minister Day is that he has a clear plan, even though no one has seen it, and it sounds like attrition is part of that plan,” Mr. Page told The Hill Times in a recent interview.

The PBO’s report took a look at the government’s five-year, $68.8-billion freeze, which was instituted as a part of the government’s 2010 budget, and concluded that there is “limited evidence” attrition will play a strong hand in saving the government money, as Mr. Day has alluded to in the past.

The government has said the budget freeze will result in savings of $300-million in 2010-2011, $900-million in 2011-2012 and $1.8-billion in 2012-2013, according to last year’s budget. These measures, along with asking departments to absorb a 1.4 per cent wage increase for workers and a freeze to departmental travel and hospitality allowances, would help contribute to the savings.

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, in 2009-2010, 11,134 workers left the public service, and an anticipated 13,000 more will leave in 2010-2011.

More than a quarter of public servants will be eligible to retire by 2012, according to government estimates.

The PBO’s estimates put attrition at closer to 1,133 over the next three years in 10 departments, after it factors in several thousand new workers at Correctional Services being hired. The PBO arrived at these numbers by looking at 10 of the largest government departments and agencies, which together employ 160,000 federal civil servants.

The 10 departments the PBO requested information from included: National Defence, Public Works, Indian Affairs, Industry Canada, Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canada Border Services Agency.

All but two departments, Correctional Services Canada and the RCMP, responded to his request. Of the eight that responded, only one, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, said it had a plan to address the budget freeze.

Mr. Day has said Mr. Page “could not be more wrong.”

“It is more than 11,000... If he is off by 1,000 per cent on that number, which is very easily proven, what is off on all the other numbers is he is talking about?” Mr. Day said in Question Period Feb. 1.

Mr. Page has said that the PBO needs to see the details of how departments will deal with attrition and the budget freeze before it can make a final assessment of the budget freeze.

“The question is, what’s the overall plan in terms of strategy, what are the other overall measures, and then we want to know what’s the plan relative to all of the departments. Are some of the departments going to be protected?” Mr. Page said in a recent interview with The Hill Times.

Both the PBO and the House Government Operations Committee have requested that the government disclose the details of how departmental budgets would meet the budget cuts to them as a part of their ongoing studies.

The government has not given them the information, citing Cabinet confidence.

In a letter dated Aug. 6, 2010, Mr. Day declined Mr. Page’s request because “items that have received Cabinet and/or Budget approval have not yet been considered by the Treasury Board.”

“Until we see the plan, we’re not prepared to say if the operational freeze is achievable,” Mr. Page told the House Government Operations Committee on Feb. 1.

There are 51 mentions of budget savings in the Treasury Board Secretariat’s most recent supplementary estimates 2010-2011, but nowhere in the report does the department responsible for overseeing the public service explain where the cuts were made this year.

Some of the budget savings include $13,761,089 from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, $4.9-million from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and $2.1-million from Canadian Heritage. In all, the cuts total $180-million.

Mr. Page said he expects the balance of the $300-million in cuts will appear in Supplementary Estimates C, the final round of budgetary adjustments for the year to be released this spring.

“One part of the process is departmental freezes, one of the parts, it’s not the whole plan, obviously not. Growth in the economy is part of it,” said Conservative MP and committee member Ed Holder (London West, Ont.).

Just how much the federal government can depend on economic growth to eliminate the deficit is another point of contention between the PBO and the government.

In a second report, also released on Jan. 20, the PBO compares their deficit projections to those of the International Monetary Fund and the Department of Finance.

While Finance Department projections show Canada’s deficit ending in 2015-2016, when the government is predicted to post a surplus of $2.6-billion, both the IMF and the PBO have said that Canada will continue to post deficits.

Both the PBO and Mr. Finance Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Oshawa, Ont.) have cited IMF reports to support their own numbers.

The most recent update to the Economic Action Plan, released by the Finance Department on Jan. 31, the government quotes an IMF report stating that Canada will maintain “the strongest fiscal position in the G-7” in the medium-term.

“As the IMF says, this government is on track. We will balance the budget in medium term,” Mr. Flaherty said the next day in the House.

In some respects, Mr. Page said Mr. Flaherty is right.

“We did turn off, in this financial crisis, [compared to other countries]. Mr. Flaherty is absolutely right about that, and this government and previous governments deserve credit for that,” said Mr. Page.

“But from a parliamentary perspective, we want to make sure that we don’t slip into another fiscal crisis like we did in the 1990s,” said Mr. Page, adding, however, that Canada is in a much stronger fiscal situation now than it was back then.

Mr. Page attributes the schism in predictions to a disagreement over whether Canada has a structural deficit—a chronic shortfall of budget revenue compared to spending. The IMF and PBO have factored a structural deficit into their predictions, while the Finance Department has not, according to the PBO report.

“A large part of the deficit is cyclical, which means as the economy recovers this will go away,” Mr. Page told the House.

It does not look like Mr. Page will have the last word on the government’s purse at the House Government Operations Committee.

Mr. Day’s spokesperson confirmed he will appear before them at their next meeting, Feb. 8, to answer questions about the freeze.

At the time of writing, it was not confirmed whether he would appear.

If he does, no doubt Mr. Page will have something to say about that.
Cappuccino, MacDonald, Lynch, and Carson to talk about climate change, clean energy on Feb. 9

The Parliamentary Calendar

MondAy, FEB. 7

CFSM Federal Lobby Day—The Canada- US Chamber of Commerce invites you to gather to meet with MPs to discuss the importance of trade to economic growth and a strong future for Canadian agriculture, energy, and the services sector. Meet MPs on Parliament Hill from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. RSVP to info@cancham.org.

National Gallery Media Event—The media are invited to the National Gallery of Canada’s unveiling of its 2011-2012 Exhibitions Program, to be followed by a buffet lunch. Highlights will include a tour of the exhibition: 250 Years of Canadian Photography. Feb. 7, 11 a.m. National Gallery of Canada, 280 Sussex Dr. RSVP to info@ngcm.ca.

Canada’s Olympic Effort—The Canada- US Chamber of Commerce will present a discussion with former Olympic athletes and organizers about the legacy of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games. The panel will include a former IOC member and chair of the Vancouver organizing committee. The panel will discuss the impact that the games had on the city and the region, and how to prepare for the winter social calendar. The Politics and the Pen will host its annual general council meeting Feb. 12, 12:30 p.m. Fairmont Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP to info@cancham.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

A Candid Conversation About Being a Woman in American Political Life—Guest speaker Judith Heumann, U.S. President Barack Obama’s Special Advisor on International Disability Rights, will discuss “A Candid Conversation About Being a Woman in American Political Life and Working Within the Obama Administration.” Event is now sold out, but there is a waiting list. Register to info@equalvoicewa.org.

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Friday, Feb. 11

Postal Transformation—Guest speaker Carl Hart, Canada Post, will discuss “Postal Transformation: Renewing Canada Post’s Physical and Electronic Network to Create a Modern Post.” Presented by OCRI. Feb. 11, 7:15 a.m. United Conservative Club of Canada, 55 5th Ave., Kelowna, BC. RSVP to info@liberal.ca.

SUNDAY, FEB. 13

Blue Quenby holds Annual General Council Meeting—The Blue Quenby will host its annual general council meeting Feb. 12-13, Hotel des Sieurges, 1200 rue John- son St., Ste-Hyacinthe, Que. Call 416-997-245-249 or info@bluequenby.ca. Registration required. More details available soon at www.bluequenby.ca.

Ontario Young Liberals AGM—The Ontario Young Liberals will host their AGM. Christine Devere at 416-981-3060 or createcyouth@gmail.com. Registration required. More details available soon at www.ontarionyl.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 16

An Outlook on the Next Phase of Canada’s Economic Plan—Join Prentis Bean, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for a talk “Vigilance and Leadership: An Outlook on the Next Phase of Canada’s Economic Plan.” Presented by the Economic Club of Canada. Feb. 15, 7:30-8:30 a.m. Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Canadian Club of Toronto. RSVP to info@canadianclub.org.

Lunch with MPs—The Liberal caucus is MP Guy Lauzon.

TUESDAY, FEB. 15

Ghosts of Violence—Guest speaker Anthony Rota at 613-995-6255.

From Climate Change to Clean Energy—Guest Speaker Mike Capewell and Policy Options Editor Ian Macdonald, along with inviting guests from the University of Calgary, Kevin Lynch, BCM Financial Group, and Collen McCullough will discuss “From Climate Change to Clean Energy” at a workshop. Feb. 15, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Desjourn Centre, Calgary Petroleum Club, 315 8th Ave. SW, Calgary. Please register in advance. Suzanne Lambert at 403-260-0746 or slambert@irpp.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 16

Conference on criminalized women. Feb. 9, 5:30-7 p.m. Fairmont Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. RSVP to info@cancham.org.

Ghosts of Violence—Guest speaker Anthony Rota at 613-995-6255.

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SUNDAY, FEB. 19
A Day with Ken Dryden—Join Liberal MP Ken Dryden at the Musical Instrument Museum, 3901 Lakeshore Rd. W. in Milton, Ontario. Enjoy his presentation on his passion for hockey, skating, and a tour of the Montreal Canadiens locker room. Admission is by donation (cash only). 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

MONDAY, FEB. 20
MRI scan of the hippocampus is Making Canada a Northern Tiger.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3
FIRST ANNUAL MACDONALD-LAURIER SOIREE—Mark this date! Join in the First Annual Macdonald-Laurier Soiree and celebrate two of Canada’s greatest Prime Ministers and Flag Day all in one great event. Feb. 15, 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Fairmont Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. 613-482-8377 or info@macdonaldlaurier.ca

BYE BYE TO THE BADGER—Toronto Star Hill reporter Richard “The Badger” Brennan, former president of the parliamentary press gallery is moving back to The Star’s Toronto office after four years in the capital. Some send him off. Feb. 16, 6:30 p.m. Hy’s, 50 O’Connor St., Ottawa, Ont.

NDP Caucus—The federal NDP caucus meets Wednesday mornings in 1 Wellington at 9 a.m. Please call winter press secretary Karl Bullinger at 613-720-4641. Caucus meets Wednesdays when the House is sitting.

Blue Caucus—The Blue Bloc/quais meets Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Room 208, 61 Parliament Bldg., when the House is sitting. For more information, please call the leader’s press secretary Karine Savard at 613-947-2495.

Canadian Club Luncheon—Today’s speaker is Richard Hanson. March 2, 12-2 45-50 members, $62 non-members. Ballroom, Fairmont Chateau Laurier, 1 Rideau St., Ottawa. www.canadianclubottawa.ca

THURSDAY, MARCH 3
Bacun & Lighbay Breakfast—PAGOSE presents a talk on “The Amazing, Changing, Aging Brains” with Alison B. Solomon, McMaster University, March 7, 7 a.m. No charge to MPs, Senators and Parliamentary Press gallery members, others $20. Government Conference Centre. 2 Rideau St. Register to info@bigsayas.ca

Parliamentary Associations—The Liberal MP’s Spring Social will be held Wednesday, May 9, St. Andrew’s Club, 48 George St. Contact: Liberal Press Gallery: 613-995-6255. Ottawa Press Gallery: 613-995-6279.

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Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout—Dr. Patrick Moore will discuss his book Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout: The Making of a Sensible Environmentalist as well as environmental issues ranging from climate change and energy independence. Presented by the Fraser Institute. Feb. 24: Centennial Restaurant, 104th Ave. SE, Calgary, Alta. events@fraserinst.org

THURSDAY, FEB. 24
Translating Knowledge into Action—Join Liberal MP Keith Martin (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca) for a discussion on “Translating Knowledge into Action: Improving the Health of the Bottom Two Billion.” Presented by CIPS at the University of Ottawa. March 1, 10:30 a.m. Free. Room 3120, Desmarais Building, 55 Laurier Ave. E. www.cips.uottawa.ca

NATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY—The Conference of Defence Associations International (CDA) presents “The Amazing, Changing, Aging Brains” with Alison B. Solomon, McMaster University, March 7, 7 a.m. No charge to MPs, Senators and Parliamentary Press gallery members, others $20. Government Conference Centre. 2 Rideau St. Register to info@bigsayas.ca

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Pass the haggis and praise the Bard! The House Speaker’s annual Robbie Burns party on Jan. 31 welcomed Parliamentarians back to the Hill with splash of tartan. While your ever-ready representative at the canapé table wasn’t there last Monday night, she does have eyes and ears everywhere. This time, they were in the bagpipe section, with none other than former Liberal MP and Hill Times contributor Joe Jordan.

“It went really well… it’s grown,” said Mr. Jordan of the dinner, which is in its tenth installment.

He remembers that House Speaker Peter Milliken (Kingston-and-the-Islands, Ont.) first came up with the idea to hold a tribute to the poet and cultural icon who is known simply as ‘the Bard’ in Scotland shortly after he was elected Speaker.

Mr. Jordan said he has been involved in the party since the beginning, along with regulars former NDP MP Bill Blaikie, Defence Minister Peter McKay (Central Nova, N.S.), Conservative MP Gerald Keddy (South Shore-St. Margaret’s, N.S.) and Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, Man.).

Since then it’s gone from a small gathering in the Speaker’s Saloon to a party of 90 or so MPs and personal guests who take over the Railway Committee Room, one of the larger committee rooms in Centre Block.

At the back of guests’ minds this year was the thought that this Robbie Burns party may be Mr. Milliken’s last, said Mr. Jordan. He has announced he will not run for re-election in the next election.

To honour Mr. Milliken’s commitment to Scottish culture, Mr. Jordan presented a set of bagpipes to the Rob Roy Pipe Band and Highland Dancers of Kingston, Ont., at the dinner. The group is a regular performer at the Burns night. Mr. Jordan said that the set of pipes would help young kids without a set of their own to get a start at learning the instrument.

Aside from the pipe presentation, every traditional Robbie Burns party follows a strict format, and the House Speaker’s was no exception. To open the ceremonies, Mr. Jordan ushered in the haggis with a tune on his ‘pipes. Behind him was Conservative MP and Robbie Burns enthusiast Ed Holder (London West, Ont.), who delivered the Address to a Haggis (yes, such a poem exists).

It reads like a chef’s love letter to the classic Scottish dish that is made of sheep’s intestine stuffed with other assorted mutton bits and oatmeal, calling it among other colourful things, the “Great Chief o’ the puddin’ race!”

“IT’s about a two-minute long chant and shouting about the haggis, and then they do a toast to the chef,” explained Anthony Carricato, a communications officer in the Speaker’s Office.

When Mr. Carricato was the House Speaker’s events officer he was responsible for organizing the Burns dinner. This year he attended in a kilt a friend had bought at Value Village.

Many of the other attendees also tarted themselves up for the evening, be it assorted mouton bits and oatmeal, calling the canapé table wasn’t there last Monday. At the back of guests’ minds this year was the thought that this Robbie Burns party on Jan. 31 welcomed Parliamentarians back to the Hill with splash of tartan. While your ever-ready representative at the canapé table wasn’t there last Monday night, she does have eyes and ears everywhere. This time, they were in the bagpipe section, with none other than former Liberal MP and Hill Times contributor Joe Jordan.

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