

*i*POLITICS

HOLIDAY 2019 MAGAZINE



JOURNALISM THAT DOESN'T FOLLOW THE HERD.

CANADA GROWS

MORE THAN JUST

Christmas TREES

DO YOU KNOW YOUR OFFICIAL TREE?



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iPolitics is Canada's top digital source for independent, up-to-the-minute coverage of Canadian politics and the business of government.

WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BUILD A FAIRER AND BETTER COUNTRY WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE

Chile's Ambassador to Canada, Alejandro Marisio Cugat, says of fallout from protests

Chile's Ambassador to Canada says historic protests that have rocked the South American country this fall have unearthed long-simmering issues, but the changes these demonstrations are already generating could actually benefit Chile in the future.

"We're going through a very difficult ... complicated moment. But from now on, everything can be better," Alejandro Marisio Cugat said in an interview at the iPolitics office in Ottawa.

"This is something that has to change in our culture. We're gonna have to build a fairer, better country with social justice."

Massive protests erupted in the South American country in October after a fare hike for public transit in the capital of Santiago. Widespread demonstrations mushroomed to demands for better social services and complaints against economic inequality. Violent clashes with police, as well as arson and looting, led to the deaths of at least 24 people and injuries to another 2,300.

In response to the historic demonstrations, President Sebastián Piñera, a centre-right politician, has announced that Chileans would head to the polls in April to decide whether to rewrite the country's constitution, and if so, what body would be responsible for doing that work — a so-called constituent assembly, or a mix of new representatives and elected officials.

If, as widely expected, Chileans vote to replace their constitution, the responsible body will have until October 2020 to submit a new one to voters for approval.

In a recent interview with iPolitics, Marisio Cugat said the protests enveloping the country could serve as an important learning experience for other countries, arguing the underlying factors that contributed to the demonstrations are hardly unique to Chile.

"We're sharing our experience and everybody's looking at Chile so we have to do our homework. This phenomenon that we're seeing and we saw these days it's not [just a] Chilean one," he said, citing similar protests that have

occurred in Ecuador and recently in Lebanon and even in Iran

"The situation that we're going through is something that nobody was prepared for. No one could even imagine or realize that this will happen. I want to be honest, we were talking and everybody was looking at Chile like a unique country, a special country, like a country that will become a developed country in 10 years," he said.

Chile is often held up as having one of the most stable and sound economies in South America, applauded for its openness to international trade and skilful management of government finances. It's generally seen as a safe landing spot for foreign investment and a stable democracy that respects the rule of law. It's the wealthiest country in South America on a per capita basis.

But Chile is also home to the highest levels of inequality among all OECD countries and is at the bottom of the list when it comes to general government spending.

Marisio Cugat credited the protests to years of slow-burning anger over a series of problems that have plagued Chile for decades, even predating the country's return to democracy in 1990.

Specifically, he cited widespread anger at the chasm between the rich and everyone else, Chile's sparse pension payments to retirees, growing student debt, health care underfunding, and the rising cost of living, as well as complaints about corporate collusion and corruption.

Chile's current constitution was written in 1980 during the tenure of dictator Augusto Pinochet, whose administration championed the right-wing free market ideals of the so-called Chicago School of U.S. economists, most notably Milton Friedman.

As such, the constitution is seen as championing free market fundamentals and restricting growth in the size of government.

Although Pinochet left the presidency in 1990, the legacy of his policies still lingers in Chile, explained Marisio Cugat.

For example, Pinochet's administration privatized the country's social security programs, meaning Chile doesn't have a mandatory government-run pension program similar to the Canada Pension Plan.

Instead, all individuals, except those in the military and national police, were made solely responsible for their individual retirement accounts. The state and business contributed nothing, though under the country's former president Michelle Bachelet, in 2008 Chile began to provide minimum pensions for the poorest retirees.

Since employers don't contribute to their workers' pensions, the cost of labour in Chile is relatively low; however, many retirees have struggled to keep up with bills after leaving the workforce.

The other contributing factors cited by Marisio Cugat, such as high student debt levels, underinvestment in the country's public healthcare system (the country has a two-tier healthcare system where private insurance companies offer coverage in competition with a universal public one) and the high prices for medicines, all sound terribly familiar to many western democracies also grappling with a restless and anxious middle-class.

"What happened in October ... wasn't just about the 30 pesos (the increase to the metro fare). The government was [making] efforts to solve some (of these problems), but not fast enough," he said.

"And what people see is that the politicians, the members of Congress, government institutions, and different institutions they don't care, or didn't care, about what was happening... or they weren't fast enough to solve [their] problems."

"Chile looks very good in the macroeconomic figures. We have a sound economy. We were growing ... unemployment was very low [at] seven per cent. You could see that the country was working but ... a big part of the population didn't get the benefits, and they decided that this has to change," Marisio added.



By Marco Vigliotti

In a bid to quell the protests, President Piñera has scrapped the fare increase, withdrawn a tax reform plan, shuffled his cabinet, promised to increase social spending, and hiked taxes on the wealthy, as well as hiking the minimum wage and pension benefits.

But Marisio Cugat said it's been difficult for the Chilean government to negotiate with the protestors because there are no identifiable leaders and demands are coming from disparate corners.

"What has also been difficult for the government [is] to negotiate to get to agreements and to find the solutions ... because there are so many calls from different sectors, with so many demands," he explained.

Referencing accusations of human rights abuses by authorities interacting with protestors, the ambassador credited President Piñera for promising

to restrict police activities, including the use of rubber bullets. Some protesters have blamed Chilean authorities for aiming at demonstrators' eyes when firing rubber bullets.

In a televised speech in mid-November, President Piñera acknowledged "abuses and crimes were committed, and the rights of all were not respected," while promising there would be "no impunity" for those who committed excesses and abuses, or for protestors who had engaged in acts of violence.

Generally, the ambassador says he believes the changes generated by these wide-scale protests could put Chile on a new political path.

Marisio Cugat said while the country, under its various governments, has essentially maintained the neo-liberal tenets installed by Pinochet, even decades after his ouster, the protests

show that this may be ending. This is evidenced by the current government's openness to deficit spending while devoting more resources to social services.

"You see the mentality of the government, the neo-liberalism, it's changing. The barrier has been moved a little bit. So things will change," he explained.

"We're very optimistic. We're very optimistic because we think that we are going to be able to build a better and fairer country, [and] a happier country."



Chile's Ambassador to Canada, Alejandro Marisio Cugat, speaking with Marco Vigliotti at iPolitics. Photo: Charlie Pinkerton/iPolitics





Dear Readers,

Much has changed since our last edition of the iPolitics magazine. MPs and Senators have moved from Centre Block to their temporary homes in the West Block and Government Conference Centre respectively. The federal election brought in a minority government for the 43rd session of Parliament, political advertising had to play by new rules, and a newly formed debate commission reshaped the official English and French language debates. Through it all, iPolitics delivered enterprise journalism and original content to a growing number of subscribers.

For the first time during a general election, iPolitics partnered with Mainstreet Research to bring you exclusive early access to polling surveys and results, which proved to be among the most accurate in the country.

iPolitics launched during the previous minority government as Canada's first digital-native parliamentary news service. We continue to be a vital part of the political landscape with a product suite that includes daily political news coverage, specialized parliamentary monitoring services, political analysis podcasts, policy focused live events and an annual print magazine. If something happens on the Hill, iPolitics NEWS and INTEL teams will be watching and reporting it.

We have you to thank for supporting us through this journey and hope you enjoy reading the magazine.

Onwards and upwards,

Heather Bakken

Deputy Publisher & Sr. VP, iPolitics



Dear Readers,

It's been a historic and exciting year on the federal political scene, and by extension, for us at iPolitics. From parliamentarians departing the venerable hallways of Centre Block, to the dramatic SNC-Lavalin controversy and this past fall's closely fought federal election, change has been the only constant in 2019.

And faced with our first minority Parliament in eight years, I expect more of the same in 2020. While the Liberals retained power in the Oct. 21 vote, the party now holds watch over a minority government that must work across stark partisan and geographic lines to pass legislation and advance their policies.

For us at iPolitics, a minority Parliament offers exciting new opportunities, with passing legislation and navigating committees requiring far more shrewd political negotiating, and the threat of a snap election always looming. But just as with this past decade, iPolitics will continue to provide thorough and in-depth parliamentary reporting that touches upon the policies and politics driving conversations on the Hill.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope you enjoy our 2019 Christmas magazine.

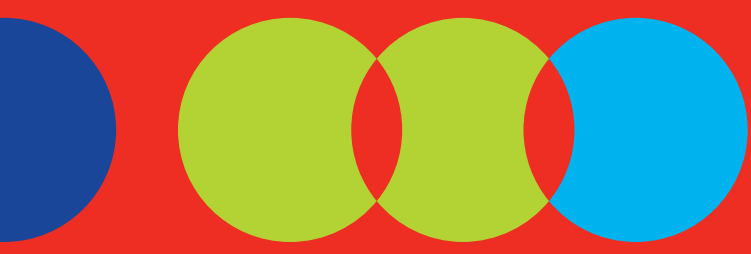
Marco Vigliotti

Senior Editor, iPolitics



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STRATEGISTS' INSIGHTS ON CABINET COMMITTEES



Newly minted as the deputy prime minister and minister of intergovernmental affairs, Chrystia Freeland's appointment as deputy chair of the all-important Agenda, Results and Communications Cabinet Committee reinforces her elevated role among her ministerial peers and signals that she's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's most trusted advisor, say strategists.

And the streamlining and realignment of cabinet committees by Trudeau in advance of the 43rd Parliament hints at a sharpened focus on delivering policy, rather than optics, according to some pundits who spoke to iPolitics, with one former Conservative staffer saying the committee responsible for day-to-day coordination of the government's agenda will take on additional importance in a non-majority setting.

Mary Anne Carter, a consultant with Earncliffe Strategy Group, says Freeland's appointment of vice-chair for the most important cabinet committee, "reaffirms the perspective that she is the most senior minister."

"It remains to be seen how Minister Freeland will develop in her new position, and the extent to which she will involve herself in the day-to-day running of major files, but her new ministerial appointment signals that she will play a lead role in managing important issues from western

alienation, to provincial resistance on federal climate change initiatives, to continuing to oversee the U.S. relations file," she told iPolitics via email.

Cabinet committees are essentially where the hard decisions of a government's front bench are made. Policies or decisions are circulated through the appropriate committee channels, but all must pass through the Agenda, Results and Communications (ARC) Committee, which is chaired by the prime minister, for final approval.

This makes the vice-chair role one of the most important in cabinet, especially as they are responsible for filling in for the prime minister when they are out of the country.

Chad Rogers, Conservative strategist and partner with public affairs firm Crestview Strategy, explained that because of the size of cabinet it would be "unruly" to hold substantive debates among all members, so the work is divvied up into various internal and secretive committees.

Membership is decided very strategically, he said, with a focus on the specific abilities and skillsets of ministers, and ensuring regional, ideological and linguistic diversity, which, for the sake of the Liberals, would mean including both native French and English speakers, and both progressive and more-centrist members.

For Rogers, valuable cabinet committees members are those who can handle hefty additional reading, or drive productive conversations around the table. But since the material presented at these committees is highly sensitive and secretive, ministers only have a limited amount of time to read through often complex material, making it vital that committee members are quick studies and good at asking critical questions, he explained. For example, a cabinet document has to be carried in a locked briefcase, Rogers noted.

He argued that Freeland's elevation to vice-chair of ARC signals that Trudeau is "ceding the serious part of his work" to his deputy prime minister amid anger from his caucus over how the last campaign was managed. "He no longer has the mandate he had before and he's got to have a buffer," he explained in an interview. "Chrystia Freeland is now functionally the prime minister."

Of course, the Liberals lost their majority standing in the House in this past fall's vote, dropping from 184 seats in 2015 to 157.

Elliott Hughes, a Liberal strategist and senior advisor with Summa Strategies, disagreed with Rogers' sentiment, saying Trudeau's leadership style has always been about spreading out work and responsibility to trusted hands in caucus.

"The prime minister's wise enough ... [to understand] that he's got a very strong team around him to ensure that they are utilized and playing an important role in decision making, and not including them in decision making going forward would be to the detriment of good policy and good outcome," he said.

"I see that more as a demonstration of his leadership, rather than perhaps an old-style type leadership rule, where it's the iron fist. I see this as a much more aware type of leadership and let's bring everybody, let's lift everybody up together, and let's let everybody have a say because the people that are chipping in know what they're talking about," he continued.

By Marco Vigliotti

Hughes also pointed to the reduced number of cabinet committees, which have been slashed to seven from 10, as a signal that the Trudeau government will be “much more focused” with its legislative priorities and less preoccupied with “optics.”

“I think it's reflected in a streamlined focused approach, a more work person-like . . . approach to getting down to business,” he explained, citing the straightforward titles of the committees that have been stripped of campaign rhetoric, such as Operations, Treasury Board, Economy and Environment, Reconciliation, Health and Social Affairs, and Global Affairs and Public Security.

Marc Desmarais, vice-president of government relations with National and a federal Liberal candidate in the 2015 election, also argued that streamlining the number of cabinet committees and renaming them is a response to the message sent by the electorate in the October vote.

Under the former Liberal government of Jean Chrétien, he noted that there were only four cabinet committees.

“This is a different government now. It's a minority government situation, and they received the message from the public on what they need to work on and I think the cabinet committees are focused on that,” he said.

However, Desmarais said he wanted to see full membership lists or spelled-out mandates to gain a firmer sense of the focus of these committees.

Neil Brodie, a vice president with Bluesky Strategy Group and chief of staff to several cabinet ministers in the former Conservative government, said that when Stephen Harper was prime minister, the second most important

committee was the Cabinet Committee on Operations, and it will be “even more important for Trudeau” in this Parliament.

That's because the committee, if it has the same mandate as it did under Harper, handles the “day-to-day” coordination of the government's agenda, he said, including “issues management, legislation, anything pertaining to House planning and communication.”

Veteran politicians Dominic LeBlanc and Pablo Rodriguez are in “great positions” as chair and vice-chair of the Cabinet Committee of Operations, according to Brodie, as they'll be responsible for planning the “legislative calendar,” which he noted is “fraught with uncertainty” in a minority government setting.

“Having those two stick-handle House planning, issues management and communications of this govern-

ment shows Mr. Trudeau's level of confidence in those two ministers,” he explained.

He also noted that Freeland's role as vice-chair of ARC, but also her role as chair of the Cabinet Committee on Economy and the Environment, reinforces that she's a “heavy hitter in this government right now.”

Hughes, as well as Desmarais, also singled out Freeland's chair responsibilities for the Cabinet Committee on Economy and the Environment, saying it's a position that could have been occupied by Finance Minister Bill Morneau.

“I think it just further demonstrates Minister Freeland's importance in this government,” Hughes added.



Holiday Gifts



From the Leaders

Here's what Canada's major party leaders would gift their colleagues for the yuletide season



Editors note: Mr. Trudeau did not get back to us by press time, so the ipolitics team crafted this list on his behalf

Prime Minister and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer:

A complete DVD boxset of House of Cards (to help prepare for the next Conservative convention)

Green Party Interim Leader Jo-Ann Roberts:

A 3D map of the Parliament buildings.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh:

A book about coping with loss to help him adjust to his smaller caucus

Bloc Québécois leader Yves Francois Blanchet:

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms



Green Party Interim Leader Jo-Ann Roberts

Prime Minister and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau:

Green wax for his surfboard

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer:

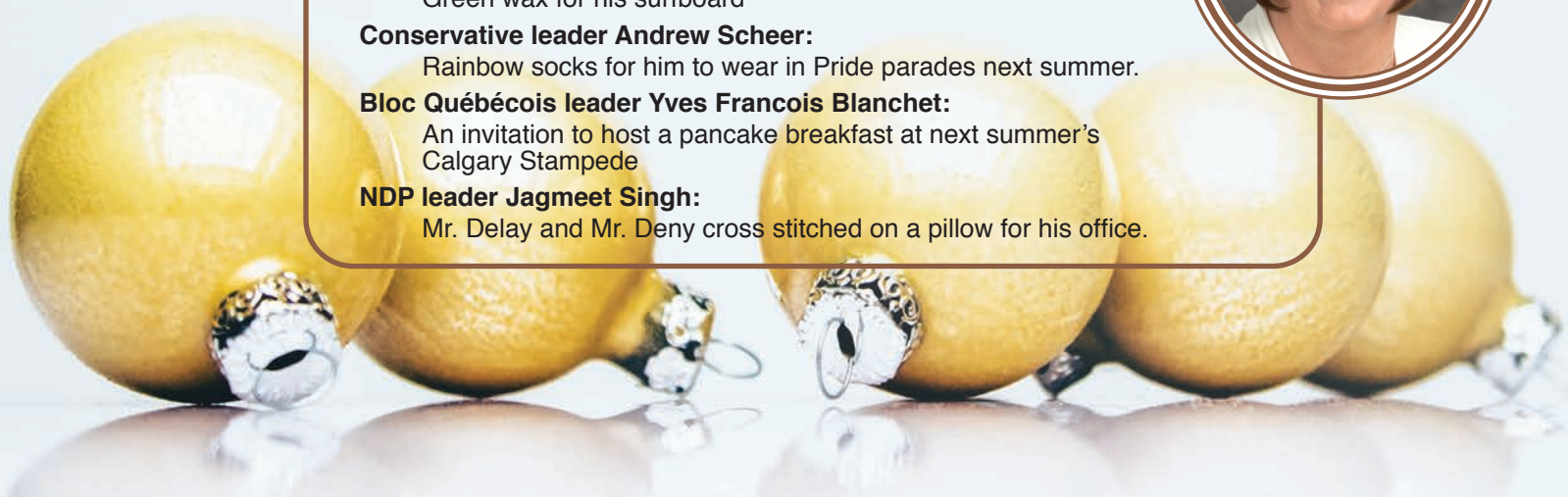
Rainbow socks for him to wear in Pride parades next summer.

Bloc Québécois leader Yves Francois Blanchet:

An invitation to host a pancake breakfast at next summer's Calgary Stampede

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh:

Mr. Delay and Mr. Deny cross stitched on a pillow for his office.





Editors note: Mr. Singh did not get back to us by press time, so the ipolitics team crafted this list on his behalf

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh

Prime Minister and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau:

A copy of the book Llama Llama Time to Share by Anna Dewdney

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer:

A copy of the book "Building Bridges: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity", by Rev. James Martin.

Bloc Québécois leader Yves Francois Blanchet:

An orange pocket square

Green Party Interim Leader Jo-Ann Roberts:

A reusable silicon drinking straw

Editors note: Mr. Scheer did not get back to us by press time, so the ipolitics team crafted this list on his behalf

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer

Prime Minister and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau:

Humility (though the voters may have already given this to you)

Green Party Interim Leader Jo-Ann Roberts:

A basket of frozen prime Alberta beef

Bloc Québécois leader Yves Francois Blanchet:

A new bike, so he doesn't have to use any of that 'dirty' Western Canadian oil

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh:

Shares in Petronas, a joint venture partner in the LNG Canada project in northern B.C. that you and the NDP B.C. government don't seem to see eye-to-eye on



Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet

Prime Minister and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau:

Guy Rocher's biography and a 12 pack of Shawinigan Handshake (do your research...)

Conservative leader Andrew Scheer:

A 3.5g of québécois ben relax...

Green Party Interim Leader Jo-Ann Roberts:

A reusable mug from the house of commons that hasn't been photoshopped.

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh:

Roch Voisine's discography...and Loco Locass's

WE CAN'T GET JADED ABOUT POLITICS

says Catherine McKenna ahead of new Parliament



On an unseasonably cold morning, Catherine McKenna enters her Gatineau office after an early morning practice at her competitive swim club. With flushed cheeks, and carrying an assortment of briefcases and sustainable bags, she explains that for her, "the best days always start with a swim."

During our hour-long conversation, McKenna points to the years she spent becoming a swimmer as something that defines her. Crediting twice daily swims in high school as what kept her organized, driven, and distracted from typical high school drama, she said her role as captain of the University of Toronto swim team further instilled the importance of both teamwork and resilience.

"People always ask what prepared me the most for politics and I think maybe it was law... or maybe it was working for a United Nations peacekeeping mission. But I actually believe it was swimming. It teaches you that you need to work really hard, set long term goals and that you will have setbacks."

Over the past four years, things haven't always gone, well, swimmingly for McKenna.

She became one of the most recognizable names in the Trudeau cabinet — but also one of its most criticized members, having been repeatedly subjected to extensive vitriol online, in person, and most recently, through the defacement of her constituency office.

While serving as the environment minister, she in many ways became the public face of the Liberals' most ambitious climate policies, from the national carbon price to controversial new assessment rules. In this role, she drew praise from some corners, but also derision from angry online trolls who labelled her with the unflattering and sexist name, "climate Barbie."

In fact, the criticism and threats directed towards McKenna became so great that she was eventually assigned an RCMP security detail — a rarity for a Canadian cabinet minister.

Asked if she fears for her safety or considers her position dangerous, McKenna is reflective, citing her experiences in East Timor working on peacekeeping missions and her time in Indonesia. "Once I got caught in the wrong place and students were shot. I have been in situations which by definition are more dangerous, but it is jarring in Canada to have people write words like c%&* on your office, or to be with your kids, going to see a movie, and have them scream at you," she explains, referencing the defacing of her constituency office shortly after she won re-election in the October 21st vote.

"Do people sometimes say things that are violent, or do they harass me? Yes. I hope it isn't something that is dangerous because we do need people to go into politics and this is going to be a huge disincentive," she continues, adding that she worries about her family, especially her young children who "didn't sign up for this." While McKenna says she believes most Canadians are completely reasonable, it's the unknown that is worrisome.

With an especially divisive election in the rear view, and a new appointment as minister of infrastructure and communities, McKenna is determined

to continue to speak up and use her experiences and platform to "change the tone" and improve politics for women, and in general.

Believing that it is incumbent on social media companies to step up and be more responsible, McKenna thinks the ability of people to hide behind fake names on social media and say whatever they wish without any repercussions has the potential to cause even further harm. "If you start normalizing the fact that people can say all of these terrible things online, then it suddenly starts coming offline. Where people think, 'Well if I can say that, why can't I just go tell her how I feel?'"

Beyond the Twitter-sphere, she also won't accept that this type of behaviour is protected by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. "Free speech is incredibly important. I am a human rights lawyer and I believe in free speech, but this isn't free speech. This is people without real names saying mean aggressive hateful things."

A place 'you couldn't be fancy'

The eldest of four children, McKenna says growing up in Hamilton, Ontario, is also something that defines her character, calling it a place "where you couldn't be fancy." Her parents embraced Pierre Elliott Trudeau's policies of multiculturalism and bilingualism and insisted that their children attend a French school. "We are an Irish Catholic family...there were a lot of politics at the table. My dad would take either side of an argument and you would argue the other side."

McKenna also shares a childhood story about a boy on her soccer team who told her that she ran like a girl. Only ten, and one the best players, she remembers feeling deeply insulted - and later motivated - by it. "I never really distinguished myself between being a boy or a girl. I just did stuff." Laughing she adds, "...and I didn't even really play with Barbies," which to her makes the nickname "climate Barbie" even more annoying.

When McKenna decided to enter politics in 2013, she was running an



By Chloe Girvan

international charity called Canadian Lawyers Abroad. Through the charity's work with Indigenous youth and communities in Canada, she says she "...realized there was no possibility of being able to do what I wanted to do without changing the government."

Before running as the candidate for Ottawa Centre in the 2015 federal election, McKenna canvassed her children. Her eldest told her that she had to run for the Indigenous youth that she cared so much about. Her middle daughter told her that she "must run" because there weren't enough women in politics. And her youngest, who was five at the time, said he would go along with it if there was food. During her re-election campaign, McKenna's kids and their friends did some door knocking and volunteered at events; they also attended her swearing-in.

Never expecting to be appointed to a cabinet position so early in her political career, McKenna admits that

earning her chops as the environment minister was a huge learning curve. "It was totally new in the sense that I wasn't an environmentalist. I cared about the environment, but I didn't know a lot about it."

Within days after her appointment to cabinet, McKenna found herself on a plane heading to Paris for the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21) and drowning in lingo. She says that being comfortable saying, "no acronyms, we are going to talk like regular people" and "I have no idea what you are talking about" were two phrases that helped with her file.

Once she got over the initial learning curve, McKenna began to understand that success would require equal parts science and empathy — both head and heart. "Empathy means understanding where people are at and why they react to [a] situation in different ways." Explaining the dichotomy of her role, she asks

rhetorically, "Why are young people out in the streets [demanding climate action] and why do you have [oil and gas industry] workers who are angry?" She concludes, "...the science is the science and you can't change science."

Given all the challenges she has faced, McKenna says what motivates her to push forward is a passionate belief in the importance of politics.

"The decisions politicians make impact people's lives," McKenna insists. "I see this in my constituency office where people are struggling to bring in their spouse because of some problem with the immigration [process]. You can reunite families. We can't get jaded about politics."

Asked about what legacy she hopes to leave, McKenna says she would like to be remembered as a strong woman, and as "someone who really cared about making a difference for Canada."

Sugar Cookie ROLLED

Ingredients

- 1 ½ Cups Butter (Softened)
- 2 Cups White Sugar
- 4 Eggs
- 1tsp Vanilla Extract
- 5 Cups Flour
- 2 tsp Baking Powder
- 1tsp Salt

Directions

- Cream butter & sugar
- Beat in eggs & vanilla
- Stir in flour, baking powder and salt
- Cover and chill for 1 hour (or overnight)
- Preheat oven to 400°
- Roll out dough on floured surface (1/4")
- Cut into shape
- Place 1" apart on ungreased cookie sheet
- Bake for 6-8 Minutes. Cool before serving



Catherine McKenna's family's favourite Christmas treats.

CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE HILL PRECINCT

Speaking of the opening of the new Parliament just three weeks before Christmas, one longtime observer of the place thought it made sense.

“It allows MPs to do something while they’re in town, and gives them cover for attending all their Christmas parties,” said this denizen of the parliamentary precinct.

It certainly did, though the mid-November announcement of the December 5th throne speech caught the capital’s hospitality industry by surprise.

“The House coming back adds a whole other dimension on top of our regular Christmas bookings,” said Sarah Chown, managing partner of the Metropolitan Brasserie on Sussex Drive, just down from Parliament Hill.

The Met is one of the busiest Christmas venues in town, fully booked from mid-November until early January.

The closing of the Centre Block for its renovation and reconstruction — or “rehabilitation” as Public Services and Procurement Canada (i.e. Public Works) once called it — has also created major capacity issues that are most evident during the holidays. As Chown says: “The dynamic has changed.”



Has it ever. Where the Centre Block used to be Party Central, it’s now a construction site, due to be closed for the next decade of holidays. “That’s a government decade, not a real decade,” says a senior Parliament Hill official, who gives it 15 years before it reopens. To state it another way, children now in the first grade could be in their graduating year of university before the Centre Block opens again.

The Centre Block has closed a century after it was rebuilt following the famous wartime fire of 1916, which burnt down everything except the Parliamentary Library, whose iron doors saved what was left of the building and its priceless historical collection of books and papers. After the rebuild of the Centre Block in 1920, it would be another seven years before the opening of the Peace Tower. Even then, construction ran on government time.

In our own time, PSPC has estimated it will cost \$3 billion to restore the buildings on Parliament Hill, a number no one believes since nearly \$2 billion has already been spent, over \$750 million on the upgrade of the West Block alone, including the parliamentary Green Chamber under a glass roof in the courtyard. (Since plans for the refit of the West Block began seven years ago, the House has expanded from 308 to 338 members, meaning there’s six rows of desks rather than five to accommodate all MPs in the cozier new chamber. It’s hardly temporary for them, as for most it is the only House they will sit in for the remainder of their careers.)

But the West Block can never replace the Centre Block as the hub of the Hill. Its function rooms are nowhere near as spacious, not to say splendid. As for dining, there is no sixth floor and thus no sixth floor Parliamentary restaurant with a stunning view across the Ottawa River, and none of its legendary figures.

John Diefenbaker once had an alcove table at the entrance, where he could see you but you couldn’t see him. Evidently, he liked it that way. As former Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney explains: “In those days the buffet was in the front, not the back, of the restaurant, right

beside the alcove, so Dief could see who was coming in and who was with whom at the buffet.” After being ousted as Conservative leader in 1967, Mulroney recalls that Diefenbaker could keep an eye on Dalton Camp and others in Robert Stanfield’s entourage, who had been responsible for the demise of his leadership. “Later on they gave me the alcove,” recalls Mulroney. “I didn’t use it very much. I preferred to have people to lunch at 24 Sussex, but I heard all about Dief and the alcove.”

The Parliamentary Restaurant used to be the home of the Press Gallery Dinner as recently as the late 1980s, when it was supposedly still off the record, before the internet, never mind Facebook and Twitter.

The West Block Cafeteria, a first floor walk-in, was legendary in another sense. For decades it was the run-down site of background breakfasts among backbench MPs, staff and media, usually convened by the likes of Doug Fisher, the former NDP MP turned esteemed columnist. The food was nothing to write home about, but the gossip was great.

The West Block has always been the poorhouse among the three buildings on the Hill, the Centre Block filling governmental and architectural pride of place, with the East Block as essentially the stately home of the Senate and historically the former site of the Prime Minister’s Office.

Some MPs and second tier committees may have had space in the West Block, but nobody ever liked going there except on business. This remains the case today, even with the refurbished building at the centre of the action for at least the next decade.

There’s no parliamentary rotunda to walk through on arrival at the Hall of Honour, and thus nowhere comparable to hold Christmas parties for which the Centre Block was justly renowned. When the Conservatives had 211 MPs in the mid-1980s, Milla Mulroney famously put on black tie Christmas dinners for MPs and their spouses. Dinner for 400 in the Hall of Honour, followed by dancing in the Reading Room. She made it look easy.

By L. Ian MacDonald

Nowadays, the only large hall in the precinct is the Sir John A. Macdonald Building at Wellington and O'Connor, the former Bank of Montreal capital branch, a historic site as the home of Canada's central bank as the "Dominion Banker" before the creation of the Bank of Canada in 1935. For the holidays, the Macdonald is solidly booked, months in advance.

The governing Liberals evacuated their main Christmas party to the nearby Shaw Centre several years ago, to accommodate all the friends and supporters of the Liberal restoration. But Christmas at a convention centre simply doesn't make the Centre Block cut.

Just getting there was half the fun, if not the spirit, of the Centre Block at the holidays. It began with the tree in the rotunda, which reached toward the sky. No official was ever foolish enough to divulge which province the tree came from, for fear of offending the other provinces in a country carved out of the forest. Not for nothing did the Liberals, in their recent election platform, promise to plant two billion trees in the next decade, to fight climate change. "That's right," the platform reads. "Two billion trees." Count 'em.

(And if you don't think this is important in a country famous for trees, consider that for nearly half a century Nova Scotia has provided the City of Boston Christmas tree on the Boston Common, as an enduring thanks to New England for medical and material assistance following the tragic Halifax Explosion of 1917. Every year, thousands of Bostonians show up for the lighting of the Canadian tree on the Common.)

The Canadian compromise on the origins of Christmas trees, as one parliamentary official tells it, is that trees along the main House and Senate corridors of the Centre Block were quietly decorated in the colours of the provinces and territories. "So the Saskatchewan tree would be decorated in green and orange, the Nova Scotia tree in blue and white, and so on," the official explained.

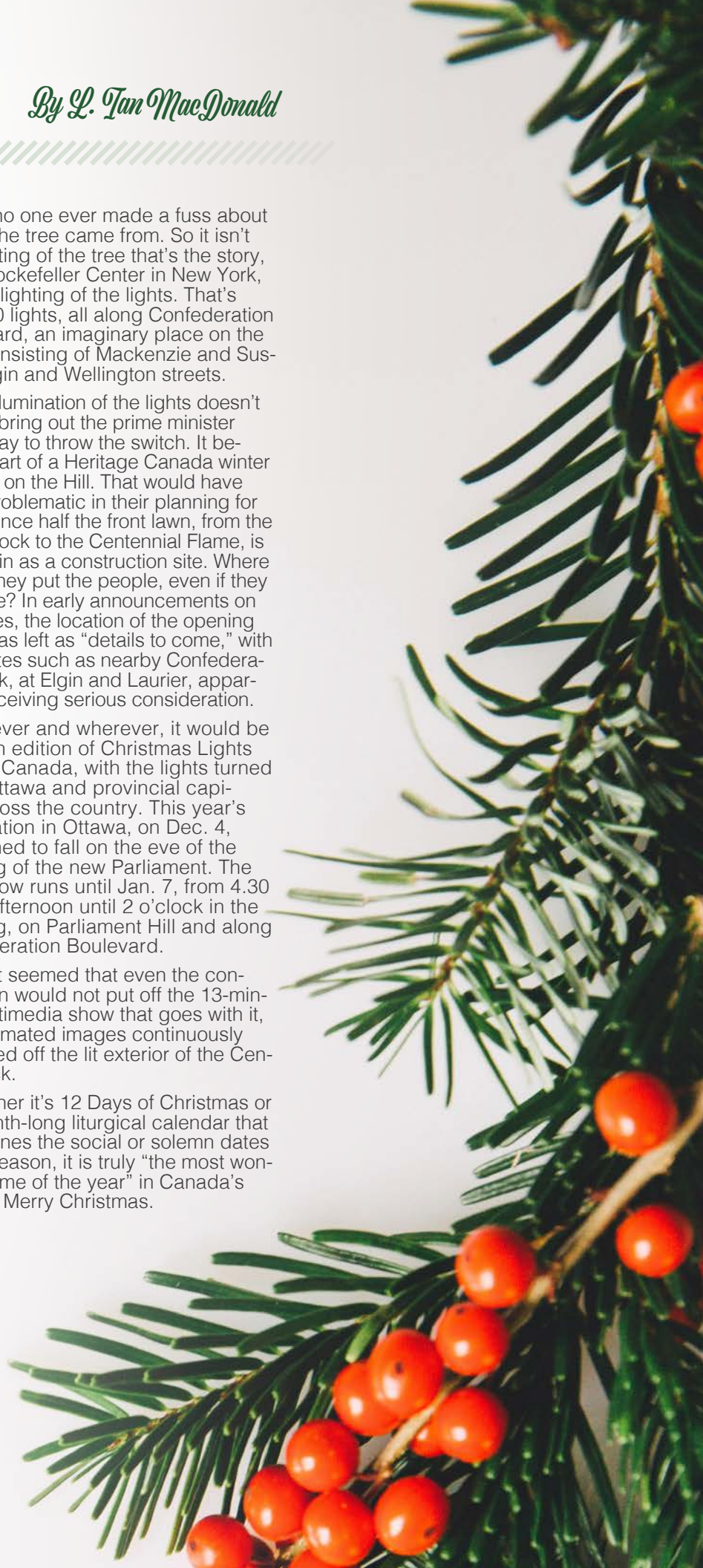
And no one ever made a fuss about where the tree came from. So it isn't the lighting of the tree that's the story, as at Rockefeller Center in New York, but the lighting of the lights. That's 400,000 lights, all along Confederation Boulevard, an imaginary place on the map consisting of Mackenzie and Sussex, Elgin and Wellington streets.

The Illumination of the lights doesn't always bring out the prime minister of the day to throw the switch. It became part of a Heritage Canada winter concert on the Hill. That would have been problematic in their planning for 2019, since half the front lawn, from the West Block to the Centennial Flame, is fenced in as a construction site. Where would they put the people, even if they all came? In early announcements on the dates, the location of the opening show was left as "details to come," with other sites such as nearby Confederation Park, at Elgin and Laurier, apparently receiving serious consideration.

However and wherever, it would be the 34th edition of Christmas Lights Across Canada, with the lights turned on in Ottawa and provincial capitals across the country. This year's Illumination in Ottawa, on Dec. 4, happened to fall on the eve of the opening of the new Parliament. The light show runs until Jan. 7, from 4.30 in the afternoon until 2 o'clock in the morning, on Parliament Hill and along Confederation Boulevard.

And it seemed that even the construction would not put off the 13-minute multimedia show that goes with it, with animated images continuously projected off the lit exterior of the Centre Block.

Whether it's 12 Days of Christmas or the month-long liturgical calendar that determines the social or solemn dates of the season, it is truly "the most wonderful time of the year" in Canada's capital. Merry Christmas.



OFFBEAT CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

The out-of-the box ways Canada's MPs have celebrated Christmas

By Victoria Gibson



A turkey dinner, a glittering tree, carols and gifts exchanged amongst family and friends — these are among the more traditional ways to celebrate the Christmas season. But several of Canada's MPs have bucked the ordinary during Christmases past and present, marking the hallowed holiday with more out-of-the-box events.

Some of the memories shared by federal leaders were idyllic, and none more so than Elizabeth May's. The Green Party's Parliamentary leader recalled childhood Christmases marked by full-fledged outdoor pageants — staged in her family's barn. "I swear our sheep, ponies and one donkey took their roles seriously. Not one of them would wander out of position on those cold and snowy evenings," May reminisced. And, so the story was told, the tradition extended beyond their family. Countless neighbourhood children would be corralled into the show, as well as May and her brother's classmates. At some point, local musicians also volunteered a violin and an oboe.

"My mother was indomitable and the logistics of managing dozens of children, organizing the 'cast' and making sure costumes were in hand, did not phase her at all," May wrote in a recent email to *iPolitics*, noting that her neighbours sent their sons over looking "more regal than the Magi" in a set of shepherd costumes. But the role of baby Jesus always went to one of May's dolls, which would be selected and subsequently swaddled.

"The tradition ended the year that a bunch of little boys decided the best place for their hot chocolate and marshmallows was spilled various places inside the house," May said. "Here endeth good will to (small) men."

There was one particular Christmas that stood out to Nanaimo—Ladysmith's Paul Manly, and it was a bleary-eyed day that took place right in Ottawa. Manly was 19 years old at the time, and living with members of his band. Two of his bandmates-turned-roommates were Jewish, and they marked Christmas Eve with what Manly described as an "annual all night jam session." "Of course I took part," Manly noted.

"I mean it's not like I was going to get any sleep anyway!"

The next morning, he ventured out to his parents' house to open gifts, having not slept a wink. "My parents noticed and teased me about it. It was definitely one of the most memorable ways I've spent Christmas Eve."

Parenthood beget unique traditions for other MPs. Jenny Kwan, the NDP MP for Vancouver East, found herself cutting out giant feet from shimmering paper in preparation for Christmas Eve when her children were small. Back then, when they still basked in the glow of their faith in Santa Claus, Kwan would wait until her kids had safely retreated into their beds — then place the large footprints she'd prepared all around their house.

"The discovery of the giant footprints was a magical moment for the kids," Kwan recalled recently. But the tradition didn't budge as the kids got older, with the paper prints still coming out each year. "Even though the kids now know that Santa is really just me, I still place the giant footprints everywhere just for fun," she said.

She, like several other MPs, noted that holiday meals were also a subject of their unique family traditions. The "Kwan Clan," as she called them, always elected to serve Chinese fondue over more traditional options like turkey, ham or roast beef. Elsewhere in B.C., Fleetwood—Port Kells' Ken Hardie offered up his family's standard Boxing Day breakfast — turkey stew over hotcakes. "Sounds odd, but it's really good!" the Liberal MP claimed.

Ottawa West—Nepean MP Anita Vandenberg's family always made *Balkenbrij*, she said — a Dutch tradition — from a recipe that had been passed down from her grandfather, and his ancestors before that. She remembers her father attaching a particular kind of meat grinder to their dining room table, and spread-

ing newspapers around to catch any scraps that fell and weren't snapped up by her childhood dog: a German Shepherd named Tippie.

Her father would grind pork hocks, a sort of pig knuckle, and liver together in a bowl. "We then boiled it with special spices, added flour and when it hardened, we would slice pieces every morning and fry it in butter and eat it for breakfast," Vandenberg told *iPolitics*. To this day, her parents make the dish every year at Christmastime.

And, if you look closely around the Hill, you might be able to see a few more hints about MPs' offbeat Christmas traditions. Ever seen a curiously-shaped, red-painted wooden board game inside Nathaniel Erskine-Smith's office? It's a crokinole board — one his father-in-law, Terry, and one of his wife's uncles made for his desk. The idea was to give him practice, in the lead up to the annual family crokinole tournament at Christmastime.

Erskine-Smith teams up each year with his brother-in-law, Jeremy. But they aren't exactly on a winning streak.

"We usually lose to Amy's uncles Brian and Rob," he admitted.



A crokinole board MP Erskine-Smith's father-in-law Terry and wife Amy's uncle, Brian, made for his Ottawa office — "branded accordingly."

** iPolitics reached out to each party with a seat in the House, to request stories from their MPs. The Conservative Party did not provide responses by deadline, and the Bloc Quebecois did not answer the request.*

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WHAT TO WEAR TO YOUR HANUKKAH PARTY

Here is this year's collection of ugly Hanukkah sweaters, ready to be pulled off the rack for your next festival of light party.



Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel, I made you out of compostable materials because you might be banned by 2021.



What does your Food Guide think of my celebration of all things fried?



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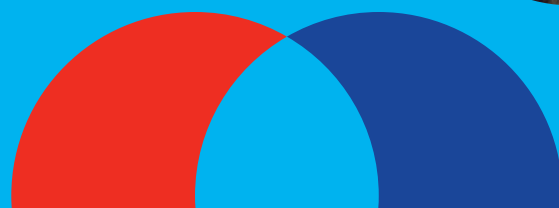
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Kady O'Malley's POLITICAL BOOK LIST

At the risk of stating the obvious, if you're perusing this magazine, it's probably a safe bet that your holiday shopping list includes someone with a seemingly inextinguishable passion for Canadian politics — and an even better chance that, at least as far as your family and friends are concerned, that someone is you.

Whether you're scrambling for last-minute stocking stuffers or looking to drop some highly specific hints on what you hope to find under the tree this season, here's a quick rundown of some of the most-talked-about books to hit the shelves this year.

(Just be ready to play referee if it leads to a rousing post-turkey reboot of the now-wrapped campaign!)

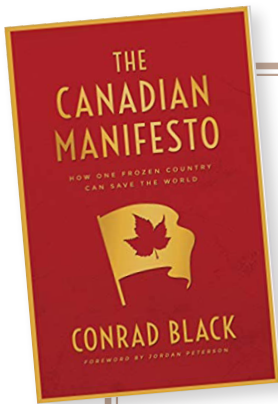


As Justin Trudeau heads into his second go-round in government — this time, without the safety net provided by a working majority in the House — it might be worth scheduling a back-to-back binge read of the two biographies that came out during the countdown to the vote: *Veteran journalist Aaron Wherry's Promise and Peril: Trudeau in Power* which offers a rare glimpse behind the scenes during some of the most closely-watched moments of Trudeau's first four years in office, and *Justin Trudeau: The Education of a Prime Minister*, in which longtime Postmedia columnist John Ivison attempts to figure out exactly what makes the quixotic Liberal leader tick.

If that sounds like it might be too heavy for a cosy fireside reading session, you could always take a break to flip through *Trudeau on Trudeau: The Deep Thoughts of Canada's 23rd Prime Minister* by Ian Ferguson, which bills itself as “a hilarious journey through the mind of the part-time snowboarding instructor, drama teacher, and ‘costume’ enthusiast who is the prime minister of Canada.”

For those with a hankering for more intel on the latest addition to the opposition front bench lineup, there's *Love and Courage*, New Democrat Leader Jagmeet Singh's recollections of growing up Sikh in Canada, which, as the promotional text stresses, is not a “political memoir,” but a “personal and heartfelt” account of the backstory that led to him becoming the first member of a visible minority to lead one of Canada's main federal political parties.

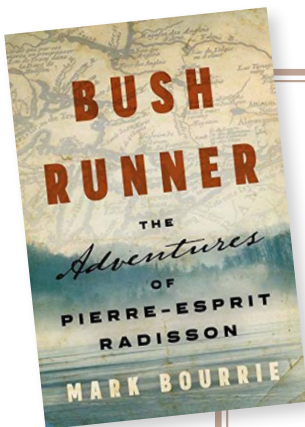
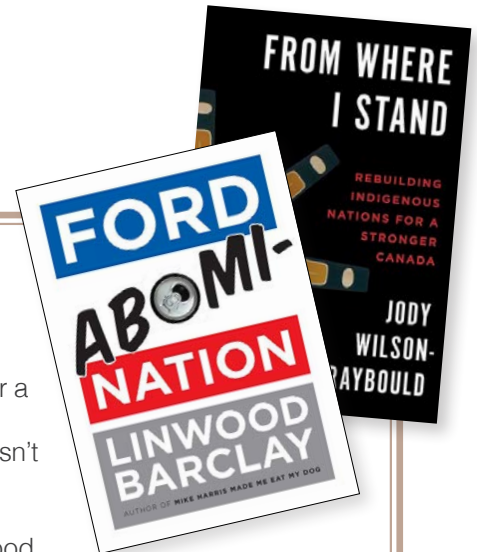




Alas for anyone who may have been hoping to find more about Trudeau's main challenger, neither Andrew Scheer nor anyone else has put pen to paper to tell his story just yet, which means that big and small-c conservative-minded bookworms may have to content themselves with *Conrad Black's Canadian Manifesto*, in which he outlines no fewer than “nineteen visionary policy proposals” to put our “chipper, patient and courteous” nation back on the international front line in honing the “arts of government.”

Those aligned with the avowedly non — or post — partisan crowd will likely find much to mull over in *From Where I Stand*, former Team Trudeau front bencher turned capital-I Independent MP Jody Wilson-Raybould's thesis-style proposal on “rebuilding Indigenous nations for a stronger Canada,” although to avoid disappointment, it's probably a good idea to let them know up front that it doesn't include any juicy tidbits on the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

Meanwhile, clocking in at less than 100 pages, Linwood Barclay's take on Ford Nation — or, as the title puts it, *Ford Abomination* — promises to “put a smile on your face while you contemplate the end of everything that's made Ontario such a great place to live.”

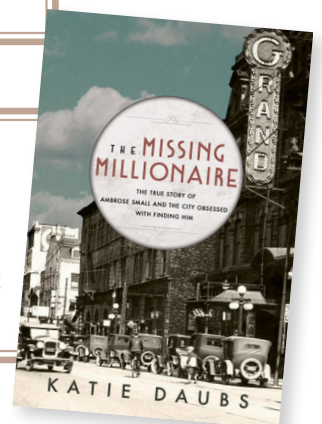


Finally, there are, of course, those who firmly believe that the Yuletide season should be, if not necessarily a politics-free zone, at least a safe space for those looking for a break from relentless bickering over the latest outrage du jour.

If that's the case in your household, you might want to swap out one of the above suggestions in favour of *Bush Runner: The Adventures of Pierre-Esprit Radisson* a full-fledged ripper of a tale by historian Mark Bourrie that chronicles the exploits of what Bourrie describes as “an eager hustler with no known scruples.”

(Which, come to think of it, could describe any number of Canadian politicians past and present.)

Also rich with historical intrigue: *The Missing Millionaire: The True Story of Ambrose Small and the City Obsessed With Finding Him*, Katie Daubs' made-for-Netflix-limited-series account of the Toronto theatre magnate who vanished without a trace a century ago and whose ultimate fate remains one of Canada's most offbeat unsolved mysteries.



CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH THE PREMIERS

interprovincial issues at the table this winter

By Victoria Gibson

We've all got different viewpoints, but we're stuck in this together.

It's a sentiment that can apply to holiday dinners across the nation this winter, as kooky relatives aplenty express their best and most questionable ideas. The fabric that binds us goes beyond a hand to pass the cranberry sauce, so the thinking goes. We each have unique needs, sure, and varying perspectives on mighty big issues. But aren't there ways that everyone can benefit from the unit?

A similar sentiment was explored in Toronto, as Premiers from across Canada meet on Dec. 2 and discuss the state of the federation — the forces that bind the various provinces and territories, and those that threaten to pick them apart. Several weighty debates are ongoing across Canada at the same time.

With Christmastime looming, here are some of the big issues facing the provinces and territories that would surely come up at their holiday dinner table.

Quebec's Bill 21

This controversial piece of Quebec legislation — which prohibits those in positions of authority (read: teachers, judges, etc.) from donning religious symbols like the hijab — dominated a substantial portion of conversation and debate on the federal campaign trail. But discussion about Quebec's secularism law didn't end on October 21st, and it has the potential to become a wedge issue moving forward between provincial and territorial leaders.

We've seen signs of the discussion carrying on across the provinces. In early November, the Ontario government voted to support a motion affirming their support of religious diversity. The motion was introduced by Liberal MPP Michael Coteau, who directly identified the action as a response to the secularism legislation in Quebec. But it didn't specifically mention Bill 21, and stopped short of calling on Quebec Premier Francois Legault to scrap it.

The provincial NDP vowed in response to table their own motion later in the month, which would specifically call on Legault to take action and withdraw the bill — creating a potentially sticky situation for Ontario

Premier Doug Ford, who had just days earlier called Legault a "good" friend in a fundraising email sent out to the masses.

Other Premiers have made statements saying they wouldn't implement similar bills in their own jurisdictions.

Manitoba's premier, Brian Pallister, has been perhaps the most outspoken about his opposition to Bill 21. According to what he told reporters afterwards, Pallister raised the matter during a November tête-à-tête with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Ottawa, describing the law to the press as "unnecessary and divisive."

Legault and Pallister have reportedly agreed to disagree.

The Carbon Tax

The cohort of Premiers crusading against Ottawa's carbon tax were dealt a blow after the federal election. New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs — formerly a staunch critic of the levy — took stock of the ten ridings in his province. Six had gone to the Liberals and one swung Green. Higgs conceded in response that New Brunswick had effectively voted in favour of carbon pricing, and said they'd have to make it work.

But not all Premiers have taken the same tack.

While Ford had said publicly in August that the fate of his carbon tax fight would be decided by the federal election — saying "once the people decide, I believe in democracy. I respect democracy. We move on" — his government is continuing their pushback against Ottawa's levy in the courts. Days after Ford's remarks, Ontario appealed their case to the Supreme Court. Alberta, too, has an ongoing legal case — which argues the federal levy is unconstitutional on consumers, according to the Globe and Mail. Meanwhile, as the outlet noted, Alberta will be imposing its own \$30-per-tonne carbon price on large industrial facilities as of January.

The Supreme Court is being eyed as the final battleground for Saskatchewan's premier, Scott Moe, as well. Until that day comes, Moe has partly placed his hope on the fights being waged by other premiers. "This is

game one. And we were unsuccessful in game one," Moe said this spring, after his government lost their Court of Appeal head-to-head against the feds. "We have game two in Ontario, we have game three in another province, game four in another province, likely game five ending in Alberta," Moe listed. The Supreme Court came last.

Several provinces have filed notices of intervention in Saskatchewan's Supreme Court case (Prince Edward Island was among them, but later revoked its request, according to the Regina Leader-Post.). Though many Premiers see eye-to-eye on their opposition, others, like B.C. Premier John Horgan, have been public supporters of carbon pricing — having maintained a system of their own in B.C. for a number of years.

The Supreme Court hearings on Saskatchewan's carbon tax challenge are tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2020.

Sovereignty, separation and the federation

If any messages were to be gleaned from the October election results, among them would certainly be the rejection of the Liberals in Alberta and Saskatchewan (the party lost all of their former seats) and a strong resurgence of the Bloc Quebecois in the francophone province. With those results came several conversations about the swirling sentiments of sovereignty in Quebec, as well as the suggestion of a separatist push in Alberta.

The latter has been roundly rejected by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, who decried the prospect an interview with *The Current* as "irrational." It would leave them landlocked, he said in October, and cause issues for the province on files such as free trade and pipelines. Legault, similarly, has stamped on separatist hopes in Quebec. He told the *Montreal Gazette* last year that his CAQ government would "never, never" hold a referendum on the "sovereignty of Quebec," despite planning requests to the feds for what he called "additional powers."

But Legault is still far from a vocal proponent of the federation. In May, per the Gazette, he said the province of Quebec wouldn't fund activities that promoted federalism — nor would they pay for activities promoting Quebec sovereignty or separatism. Other premiers have recently been more explicit in their support of federalism.

"We're a miracle in our construction in Canada, and we're more than a sum of our individual parts," Pallister recently told reporters in Ottawa, describing himself at the time as "a Manitoban who is a Canadian first."

Ford — who hosted his fellow Premiers at the meeting in Toronto — has also been stressing the importance of "national unity" since the October vote. "You saw what happened in the last election," Ford said in early November, while speaking to reporters about the necessity of the planned all-Premiers meeting. Earlier that same day, a fundraising email was shot out by Ford's camp that said he'd never seen the country "so divided." The note appeared to sympathize with issues being raised by leaders in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec.

Equalization and other federal transfers

Several provinces have raised concerns in the last year or so with Canada's federal transfer system — a dense subject that would make for a dry, but intriguing conversation over an interprovincial meal.

Some governments, like Ford's in Ontario, have only gone so far specifically as to ask for an increase to the Canada Health Transfer, along with some general asks about fairness and the system reflecting both the needs and priorities of the province. Those requests were made in their fall economic statement. Others, like Alberta, have been pushing for a whole new equalization formula. (Ontario's former finance minister, Vic Fedeli, pushed for a review of the formula last year, but federal finance minister Bill Morneau ruled out changes until 2024.)

In Saskatchewan, Moe has called equalization an "incredibly inequitable and flawed program" — proposing a new formula that would see half the total funding pool distributed on a "per

capita basis," and the other half distributed as usual. In Quebec, Legault has defended his province's receipt of payments from the national system for the time being. Currently, Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador pay into the equalization system and do not receive money in return.

The system of equalization is intended to address the fiscal disparities that can exist between the provinces, and support those with less money to ensure their public services can meet a certain standard. (Another transfer addresses the territories.) The conversation amongst the two camps — those who give more, and those that receive more — would surely stoke fierce debate if the Premiers assembled for a holiday meal this winter.



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Diplomats' *Desserts*

iPolitics asked our friends in the diplomatic community who celebrate Christmas to share the recipes for their favourite desserts. They did not disappoint. And you may note the art of diplomacy doesn't necessarily apply to desserts.

Enjoy!



CHOCOLATE PUDDING for CHRISTMAS PUDDING



Waters



INGREDIENTS

Serves: 10-16

FOR THE PUDDING:

- 175 grams plain flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 40 grams cocoa powder
- 175 grams caster sugar
- 175 grams soft butter
- 60 millilitres plain yoghurt
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- FOR THE SAUCE:
- 125 grams milk chocolate (chopped)
- 125 grams dark chocolate (chopped)
- 250 millilitres double cream
- 75 grams golden syrup
- 4 teaspoons vanilla extract



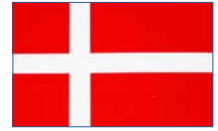
METHOD

- You will need a 1.7 litre / 3 pint heatproof plastic pudding basin with lid.
- Butter your heatproof plastic pudding basin, remembering to grease the lid, too. Make sure you have adequate boiling water in a pan (or a conventional steamer) on the hob to steam the chocolate pud.
- Put the flour and cocoa powder into a processor and blitz to get rid of any lumps.
- Add all the remaining pudding ingredients to the processor and blitz. Scrape the chocolate batter into the prepared basin, smooth it down (the batter will come only halfway up the basin) and put on the lid. Wrap the basin tightly in foil, and steam in the boiling water in the pan or steamer for 1½ hours (by which time the pudding will have risen to about 4cm / 1½ inches below the lid).
- To make the sauce, put all the sauce ingredients into a saucepan and place over a gentle heat to melt, stirring every now and again and then whisking, off the heat, to combine smoothly.
- When the pudding is ready, remove it carefully from the pan or steamer then unwrap from its foil casing, unclick and remove the lid. Put a plate, or a stand, with a slight lip on top, flip both upside down, so plate and pudding are the right way up, and wiggle off the basin.
- Pour some hot sauce over the pudding, so that it just covers the top and falls in glossy drips down the side, and pour the rest of the sauce into a jug or bowl to be served with a spoon.

HER EXCELLENCY SUSAN LE JEUNE D'ALLEGEEERSHECQUE,
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, USES THIS RECIPE BY NIGELLA LAWSON

Risalamande and Mandelgave

(THE ALMOND PRESENT).



This traditional Danish dessert is a treat with a hidden treasure that keeps on giving. 'Ris a la Mande' is a blend of cold rice porridge with added cream, chopped almonds, and vanilla topped with warm cherry sauce. In addition to being delicious, there is a Danish Christmas tradition associated with it. During preparation, the cook will hide a whole almond in the bowl; the one who gets it is the winner of the almond present, which is an additional Christmas gift of chocolate, candy or some other treat.

Christmas is celebrated on December 24th in Denmark. Some people make the rice pudding the day before Christmas eve and eat it with dinner. On Christmas eve the leftovers are mixed with sugar, whipped cream and almonds and served as dessert after Christmas dinner. This is an efficient way to save an hour of time in the kitchen because you don't have to prepare the pudding.

INGREDIENTS

Rice pudding

- 2.25 dl (1 cup) short-grained white rice (pudding rice)
- 1 dl (1/2 cup) water
- 1 liter (4.25 cups) milk
- 1-2 vanilla beans

Risalamande

- 1 portion Danish rice pudding
- 150 g (5.5 oz) almonds
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 5 dl (2 cups) heavy cream
- Serve with cherry sauce



Instructions:

Start by making a portion of traditional Danish rice pudding. You can eat the traditional Danish rice pudding as is, therefore we have made a separate recipe for rice pudding; however, you can also just follow the recipe below which is slightly different and is used to make Risalamande. The only difference between the two recipes is that the Risalamande version of the rice pudding has vanilla.

Rice pudding (the Risalamande version)

- *Step 1: In a sauce pan add the rice and the water. Boil it for about 2 minutes.*
- *Step 2: Add the milk and let it boil while stirring.*
- *Step 3: Add the vanilla paste from a vanilla bean. Add the empty vanilla beans to enhance the flavour.*
- *Step 4: Boil the pudding under a lid at low heat. The rice has a tendency to burn the saucepan so remember to stir regularly. Let it boil lightly for about 35 minutes.*
- *Step 5: Remove the vanilla beans. The rice pudding is now done. Let it cool of in the fridge before you proceed to make the Risalamande.*

Risalamande

- *Step 6: Boil some water and pour it in a small bowl. Add the almonds and let them soak in the hot water for about 5 minutes. One-by-one remove the almonds and press them between two fingers so the peel separates from the nut.*
- *Step 7: Coarsely chop the almonds and mix them with the cooled rice pudding.*
- *Step 8: If you used the completely traditional recipe for rice pudding and boiled the rice pudding without the vanilla beans, then add the vanilla of the beans to the pudding. This is done by slicing open the vanilla beans and scrape out the seeds using a knife. Mix the vanilla with 2 tablespoons of sugar, add it to the cold rice pudding and mix well.*
- *Step 9: In a separate bowl, beat the heavy cream into a whipped cream.*
- *Step 10: Gently mix the whipped cream with the rice pudding.*
- *Step 11: The Risalamande is now done. Put it in the fridge until serving.*

Tip: Serve the Risalamande with some warm cherry sauce. If you want to play the traditional Danish almond-game (mandelgave), leave a whole almond without the peel in the Risalamande – who ever gets the whole almond wins a small prize.

Original Bratislava Rolls

From the Slovak Republic



The first mention of the famous rolls was in a 1599 publication of, The Pressburg Bakery Guild Masters. (Pressburg is the former name of Bratislava.)

The Story

In 1836, Mr. Scheuermann opened a bakery in Bratislava and made his name with his delicious rolls. Thanks to the Western Slovak Union of Bakers, the European Union has recently granted the traditional guaranteed specialty trademark (TSG) for Bratislava rolls. The protection came into force at the end of August 2012 and the following characteristics of Bratislava rolls have been protected since then.

120 min preparation, 12 – 15 min at 200 °C

Ingredients

- 300 g fine flour
- 300 g semi-coarse flour
- 5 g salt
- 180 g butter
- 2 egg yolks
- 40 g yeast
- 60 g powdered sugar
- 100 ml lukewarm milk
- 2 egg yolks (for egg wash)

Poppy Seed Filling

- 200 g ground poppy seeds
- 80 g powdered sugar
- lemon peel
- 1 package of vanilla sugar
- hot water, as needed



Nut Filling

- 100 g ground walnuts
- 50 g powdered sugar
- 1 spoon of rum
- 1 package of vanilla sugar
- hot milk, as needed



Method of preparation

- Bratislava rolls were given a trademark and are included among the traditional specialties of the region. The dough must contain 30% of fat to the overall weight of the flour (i. e. for 600 grams of flour you need about 180 grams of butter. The original rolls must be free of chemicals and handmade, so their shape differs. Allowed flavors include poppy or walnut. Poppy rolls are horseshoe-shaped and those with walnuts are shapes as C.
- 40% of the weight of the rolls must be filling. After the dough rises, 2 “rolls” are made and cut into about 25 g pieces. The pieces are turned into balls and left to rise. The dough should be weighed so the pieces are all the same.
- Add some milk to the yolks, mix, blend and put in a place where there is a strong air current, for half an hour, until they dry out a bit. Then put them into a warm place so the dough rises. By that time, the cracked glaze is formed on the surface.
- Shape the fillings into rolls and set them aside. Make small balls from the filling, wrap it in cane sugar and shape it into a horseshoe or a C. The filling must be shapeable and thick. Bake in an oven heated to 200 ° C for about 12 min.
- Enjoy!

“Vanillekipferl” (Vanilla Crescents)

Popular Christmas cookie in Austria!



Ingredients

- 180g butter
- 70g ground almonds
- 50g sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 210 g regular white flour
- Icing sugar
- Vanilla sugar

Steps to Make it

- Mix all the ingredients to form a short-crust dough and leave it in a cool place for one hour to rest.
- Roll out the dough to a thickness of about 1 cm before cutting into 2 inch pieces and forming crescent-shaped biscuits.
- Place the cookies on an ungreased baking tray and bake at a moderate temperature (350°F) for around 8 - 10 minutes or until they turn to a golden brown.
- Mix icing sugar and vanilla sugar together, then toss the hot cookies in the mix.
- Store the cookies in a sealed tin for several days for them to become crumbly.



Catfish Paprikash

From the Embassy of Hungary



INGREDIENTS

- 4 catfish fillets
- 30 dkg of smoked bacon
- 30 dkg pasta
- 40 dkg cottage cheese
- 2 dl sour cream
- 2 heads of onion
- 10 dkg of flour
- salt
- pepper
- 1 tbsp paprika powder
- 1 clove garlic (grated)
- 1 tomato
- 1 green pepper
- 3 dl fish broth

Directions

- Cut the smoked bacon into cubes and fry it in a pan over a low heat until crisp.
- Remove the bacon cubes. Boil the water and when the water is boiling add the pasta and cook it for 8 minutes, then strain.
- Sprinkle the cooked pasta with 3 tbsp. of oil, then mix the cottage cheese and stir with half of the baked bacon cubes. Salt it to taste.
- Cut the fish into 2-3 cm cubes. Add the flour, garlic, pepper, salt and 1 teaspoon of paprika powder to a bowl and mix well. The fish cubes are rotated one at a time in the spicy flour and fried in the fat of the bacon for 2-3 minutes and then removed.
- In the remaining fat, fry the onion cut into small cubes until golden brown. Add the chopped peppers, cook for 3 minutes, then cook with the chopped tomato for another 2 minutes, sprinkle with the remaining paprika powder, salt, pepper, add 2 dl of fish broth.
- Carefully place the fish in the sauce thus obtained and leave to cook for 5 minutes. Use the remaining spicy flour and 1 dl of fish broth to create a mixture with the sour cream, and add it to the sauce.
- Cook for another 3-5 minutes and serve with cottage cheese pasta and bacon.



Szarlotka

INTERESTING FACT: SZARLOTKA VS. APPLE PIE

The Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Ottawa celebrates Christmas with a traditional Polish dish called szarlotka, which is similar to good old apple pie. The Polish version has a unique crust and the filling tends to be less sweet. Some variations include raisins and almonds, some have meringue on top and some have a crumble topping. Regardless of the top-ups, our friends at the Embassy recommend you make it the day before you serve it to let the flavours meld because it's even better on the second day!



INGREDIENTS

For the filling

- half a lemon
- 6 large apples
- 4 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon

For the dough

- 450g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 200g unsalted butter, cut into pieces, plus extra for greasing
- 225g golden caster sugar
- 3 egg yolks, plus 1 whole egg, at room temperature
- 1 tbsp natural yogurt
- 1 tbsp lemon zest (from the half a lemon, above)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

TO SERVE

- icing sugar, for dusting
- 300ml pot whipping cream
- 1 tsp cinnamon

METHOD

• Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Grease and line a 20 x 29cm baking tray with parchment paper. For the filling, zest the lemon half and leave aside for the dough. Peel, core and thinly slice the apples, then squeeze over the juice of the lemon to stop fruit from turning brown. Put the apples in a large pan and add the sugar, 200ml water and cinnamon. Cook for 5 mins, then remove from the heat and leave to cool in the liquid (you'll need this later).

• To make the dough, put the flour and baking powder in a food processor or into a large bowl and pulse or stir to combine. Add the butter and mix again until the mixture is sandy. Add the sugar, egg yolks and egg, yogurt, lemon zest and vanilla extract and mix into a dough. Tip it out onto a floured surface. Bring it together with your hands and roll it into a ball.

• Split the dough in half, wrap one half in cling film and freeze for 1 hr. Roll out the other dough half so that it is big enough to fill the bottom of the lined tray. With the palm of your hand, push the dough about halfway up the sides of the tray until the whole base is covered. Prick the dough with a fork and bake in the oven for about 15 mins until it is golden and lightly springy to the touch.

• Spoon over the apple filling, with about half the cooking liquid, then set aside.

• Remove the dough from the freezer and coarsely grate, as you would a block of cheese. Sprinkle the grated dough over the apples and bake for 40-45 mins until it is golden and the topping has cooked through. Leave to cool completely, dust with icing sugar, then cut into squares. Whip the cream until thick, stir in the cinnamon and serve alongside the cake.

Nutrition: per serving

Kcal 398 • fat 16g • saturates 9g • carbs 60g • sugars 33g • fibre 3g • protein 5g • salt 0.1g

Embassy of the Republic of Poland



Pan de Pascua

Traditional dessert from the Embassy of Chile



Ingredients

- 1/4 cup salt butter, softened
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon mix of cinnamon, ground cloves and nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon rum
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup nuts, chopped
- 1/4 cup candied fruit

Steps to Make it

- Preheat the oven to 200°C / 395°F degrees.
- Spread olive oil in to the baking pan.
- Mix butter with the sugar until smooth and creamy.
- Stirring all the ingredients by hand in the listed order (one by one) until the mixture is just combined.
- Transfer the dough to the baking pan and bake for about 50 minutes or until a wooden skewer inserted into the middle of the cake should come out clean. If the cake is not yet done, return it to the oven and check it again every 5 or 10 minutes until done.
- Remove from the oven and let cool at least for an hour.

Christmas Punch

A Christmas punch thick enough to eat,
from the Embassy of Mexico.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 kilo of diced guavas
- 1 kilo of apples, cut into six slices
- 1 kilo of peeled and sliced sugarcane
- Half a kilo of peeled, diced and pitted tejocote
- 250 grams of prunes
- 250 grams of raisins
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Sugar, as desired
- 1 bottle of red wine
- Rum or brandy, as desired

Directions

Place all fruits, cinnamon and sugar in a pot with enough water to cover them. Cover the pot and let it simmer for 1 hour. Uncover and pour in the bottle of wine, let boil for 10 more minutes. The better the wine, the better the punch will taste. If it is too cold outside, or you enjoy a strong punch, try pouring some rum or brandy into it. Serve hot in clay jugs.

For 16 people



The Aussie “Pav”

From the Australian High Commissioner Natasha Smith



The Aussie “Pav”

In my household we take desserts seriously, especially at Christmas. Usually there are a number of desserts to choose from, but a pavlova is always one of them. There is a long-running debate between Australia and New Zealand about where the pavlova originates (of course it’s Australia!). The popular, meringue-based dessert is the source of Australia and New Zealand’s sweetest rivalry, but we both agree that it’s not Christmas without a “pav”.

INGREDIENTS

Meringue ingredients

- 6 egg whites, room temperature
- 1½ cups white sugar
- 2 tsp corn starch
- ½ Tbsp lemon juice
- ½ Tbsp vanilla extract

Cream topping

- 1½ cups cold heavy whipping cream
- 2 Tbsp white sugar

Fruit topping

- 4-5 cups fresh fruit (berries, mango, passionfruit, etc.)

Method (meringue)

1. Preheat the oven to 250°F with the rack in the center of the oven. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Using a stand mixer, beat 6 egg whites on high speed for one minute until soft peaks form. With the mixer on, gradually add 1½ cups sugar and beat for 10 minutes on high speed, or until stiff peaks form. The mixture will be smooth and glossy.
3. Use a spatula to quickly fold in ½ Tbsp lemon juice and ½ Tbsp vanilla extract, then fold in 2 tsp corn starch and mix until blended.
4. On the parchment-lined baking sheet, form the meringue mixture into a large round (approximately 24 centimeters) with the edges slightly higher than the center. Bake at 250°F for 1 hour and 15 minutes then turn the oven off. Without opening the door, let the meringue sit in the hot oven for another 30 minutes. The outside will be dry and crisp to the tap and the inside will be marshmallow soft.
5. Transfer the meringue with the parchment paper onto counter, or a rack, and allow it to cool to room temperature. Once cool, you can top it.

Assembly

1. Beat cold heavy whipping cream with 2 Tbsp sugar for 2 to 2½ minutes, or until whipped and spreadable.
2. Pipe or spread cream onto the pavlova and top with fresh fruit. Serve and enjoy!

Daim Mousse with Strawberries Marinated in Elderberry

From the Embassy
of Sweden



INGREDIENTS

Mousse

- 2 ½ dl whipping cream
- 100 g dark chocolate
- 56 g Daim (IKEA)

Marinated Strawberries

- 4 tbsp elderberry concentrate (IKEA – “flädersaft”)
- Grated peel of ½ lime
- 250 g strawberries



Directions

1. Bring half of the cream to a boil in a pot. Remove from heat. Chop the chocolate in smaller pieces. Mix into the warm cream. Stir until smooth. Add the rest of the cream. Let cool and place in the fridge until the following day.
2. Mix the elderberry concentrate and the lime peel. Clean and halve the strawberries, place in a bowl. Pour the mixture over and let marinate a few minutes until shiny.
3. Finely chop the Daim and mix into the chocolate paste, whisk until the consistency of mousse. Shape the mousse into eggs with two moistened spoons and place in serving glasses.
4. Serve the mousse with the marinated strawberries garnished with mint.

Melomakarona by Stelios Parliaros

From the Embassy of Greece

'Melomakarona' is a traditional Greek dessert served primarily during the Christmas holiday season. This recipe is a favourite of the Embassy of Greece and was created by the famous Greek Pastry Chef, Stelios Parliaros, who is a friend of Ambassador Dimitris Azemopoulos.



INGREDIENTS

- 400g x orange juice
- 530g x sunflower oil
- 1200g x flour
- 30g x icing sugar
- 1 x teaspoon x baking soda
- ¼ x teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/6 x teaspoon clove
- 50g x melted butter
- zest of 1 orange

For syrup

- 500g x water
- 700 g x sugar
- 1 x orange cut into half
- 2 x cinnamon sticks
- 100g x honey

To garnish

- extra honey
- ground walnuts



Directions

In a saucepan, add water, sugar, orange and cinnamon sticks. Put on the fire, bring to boil for 1 minute and withdraw. Pour the 50 g of honey and let cool.

In a deep dish add all liquids and butter. Add the icing sugar and all the herbs together mix manually and add flour. Continue stirring gently by hand from the centre outwards so as not to “discomfort” the dough. Shape into small balls. Place them on a baking sheet and bake in preheated oven at 160 degrees C for about 25 minutes until they get a dark golden colour. After taking them out of the oven, pour them in the cold syrup. With a spoon stir them for 1 minute. Remove them and leave them in a strainer to drain. Sprinkle with honey and grounded walnut and let them dry.

Chocolate Spekulatius Mousse

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, by Chef Christian König



INGREDIENTS

- 250g cream
- Vanilla sugar or aroma
- 80-100g chocolate coating (dark or milk chocolate)
- 100g Spekulatius (almond cookies)
- 40g sugar
- 200g sweet cherries
- 2cl Bailey's liquor (alternatively vanilla sauce)
- Peppermint bouquet
- Chopped hazelnuts
- Orange zests



Directions

1. Chop up the Spekulatius (almond cookies), but not too small.
2. Melt the chocolate coating using a double boiler (not too hot!) and stir the sugar into it.
3. Whip the cream together with some vanilla sugar or aroma until stiff and add the Spekulatius crumbs, then immediately fold in the chocolate coating.
4. Pour everything into small bowls or one big bowl (portion with ice-cream spoon later), cover and refrigerate for 3-4 hours.
5. Pit the cherries and cut in half, then mix together with the Bailey's liquor (or vanilla sauce).
6. After the cream, vanilla sugar or aroma, Spekulatius crumbs and chocolate have cooled for 3-4 hours, pour the cherry and Bailey's (or vanilla sauce) mixture over it and add the peppermint bouquet, chopped hazelnuts and orange zests as decoration.

Hill Times Chocolate Mousse

In an act of journalist diplomacy, the iPolitics team reached out to our friends at The Hill Times for their favourite holiday dessert recipe. And they delivered!

Publisher Anne Marie Creskey shared the following recipe, which is adapted from a column in one of her favourite newspapers, The Guardian. As she points out, "...it's a moose you don't need a rifle to eat." Ouch!



INGREDIENTS

Makes four servings

- 4 medium eggs
- 120g chocolate (at least 70% cocoa)
- 2 tsp sugar

Directions

- Break the chocolate into pieces and put in a bowl over, but not touching, a pan of simmering water. When the chocolate begins to melt, turn the heat off, but leave the bowl over the water.
- Separate the eggs.
- Whisk the egg whites into soft peaks, add the sugar, and whisk briefly.
- Mix the egg yolks quickly into the melted chocolate and then whisk in a third of the egg white
- Fold the rest very gently into the mixture until just combined, be careful not to overmix.
- Scrape into bowls and refrigerate for at least four hours until set.
- Garnish with shavings of dark chocolate or a sprinkle of large flaked salt

First Session, Forty-third Parliament

46-46-46 Elizabeth II, 2019

STATUTES OF CANADA 2019

CHAPTER 25

An Act to ensure Sincerity And Niceness To All

aka The Santa Act

ASSENTED TO

Dec. 25, 2019

Bill C-9

RECOMMENDATION

Her Excellency, Mrs. Anya Claus, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada, recommends the appropriation of public revenue under the circumstances, in the manner and for the purposes set out in a measure entitled, "An Act to ensure Sincerity And Niceness To All".

SUMMARY

This legislation, the SANTA Act, will provide for peace and joy to be practised by members of both chambers of Parliament.

The objectives of the Act are to prevent Parliamentarians from descending into partisan attacks and end cross-isle bickering that occur both in-and-outside of the chambers and have proven disruptive and detrimental to democracy.

The Act

(a) establishes the Office of Sincerity And Niceness To All and the position of SANTA to enforce provisions restricting hostility and un-festive miserliness that chambers red and green have become dependent upon, and to ensure they honour the holiday spirit in their heart and try to keep it all year.

(b) establishes the Naughty List and Nice List; hereby known as the Lists, to which members of the Senate or the House can be categorized.

(c) enables SANTA authority to appoint members of the Senate, or the House, to the Lists and censure them for naughtiness (reducing their stipend to a lump of coal), or reward them for niceness with a brick of gold, the latter of which members should aspire to attain in earnest.

(d) establishes the title of Sanctimonious Character Restrictive Of Our Government's Effect, to be known in short as SCROOGE, and applied by SANTA as a label to members of the Senate or the House whose partisanship exceeds that of the penalties of the Naughty List.

Season's Greetings
from

FORUM
FOR YOUNG
CANADIANS



FORUM
POUR JEUNES
CANADIENS

vous souhaite
de Joyeuses Fêtes

CHRISTMAS NOT WHAT IT WAS ON PARLIAMENT HILL



By Jim Naumetz

It's not all gloom and doom, but the sparkling Christmas lights that lit up Parliament Hill and thrilled children for three decades won't be around this year.

And it might be that way for years to come as the Hill's venerable Centre Block, now nearly 100 years old, faces a massive renovation and construction overhaul expected to take more than a decade to complete.

Even interior decorations and seasonal trappings, at least for the House of Commons, will be a shadow of their former yuletide stature this Christmas.

The halls and foyers of West Block, a temporary home for the House of Commons until Centre Block work is done, are too confining or too narrow to accommodate the festive faux pine trees that lined the Centre Block halls, along with a towering Christmas tree in the marble-floored foyer outside the original Commons chamber.

"The decorations in West Block will be different from what we are used to seeing in Centre Block, due to space limitations," said the communications director for the House of Commons Speaker.

"For instance, there will be no tree in the foyer outside the Chamber; trees will line one side of the hallway leading from the visitor welcome centre (an underground entrance off the northeast corner of the building) to West Block," said communications director Heather Bradley.

"A few other trees will also be placed throughout the building where space permits," Bradley said. "There will be wreaths displayed in the foyer and placed on either side of the northern doors, and a few festive window arrangements."

A popular outdoor spectacle, a winter "lightscape" multimedia show projected onto the stone front wall of Centre Block from Dec. 4 to Jan. 7, will survive. The Canadian Heritage department describes the show as a "13-minute fairy tale" that runs nightly, in a loop, from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m.

The Christmas light extravaganza in front of Centre Block, which has kicked off Christmas Lights Across Canada in Ottawa and provincial capi-

tals since 1985, will take place instead at a city location several blocks away, Confederation Park.

Bushes of small trees that once supported the lights along the Parliament Hill driveway were removed to make way for construction.

Nearly a third of the rising lawn in front of Centre Block has turned into a mass of disturbed earth for construction of a new paved roadway to maintain a throughway for vehicle circulation on the confined Hill.

"There is no plan to reduce the construction work," said Marc-André Charbonneau, a spokesperson for Public Services and Procurement Canada, also known as Public Works and Government Services Canada and in charge of the massive Centre Block project.

"The front lawn road is expected to be completed by the end of December," another spokesperson for the department, Stéphanie Hamel, said in response to a follow up question.

"Public Services and Procurement Canada is supporting Canadian Heritage by ensuring that the required infrastructure is in place to carry out their holiday events and activities successfully," another spokesperson, Charles Drouin, had said earlier.

A "friendship tree" decorated with ornaments gifted from state visits and Parliamentary associations and formerly located in the Centre Block Hall of Honour for Christmas, will be located in the visitor welcome centre. A children's tree, festooned with decorations made by children and previously also set up in the Hall of Honour for Christmas, will be located in a foyer near the visitor centre.

The Library of Parliament says approximately 265,000 visitors have taken guided tours of the Senate and the West Block so far this year.

Despite the restrictions, a festive spirit is showing signs on the Hill. Waterloo Liberal MP Bardish Chagger turned up recently with individually wrapped chocolates, made in her home riding, with a seasonal Santa Clause theme.

Political parties are staking out turf for their caucus events, with the Liberals setting Tuesday Dec. 10 as the day for their celebration at the nearby Shaw Centre, with the NDP and Conservatives booking the spacious Sir John. A. Macdonald building across Wellington St. from Parliament Hill. The NDP slotted Monday Dec. 9, but the Conservative party did not disclose a date.

A popular spot during the holiday season, the Parliamentary Restaurant, is considering extending its limited space, half the size it had in Centre Block, to a committee room across one of West Block's narrow hallways.

The Senate, meanwhile, located in the spacious temporary Senate of Canada Building several blocks down Wellington St. from West Block, has room to spare.

"The Senate will continue its tradition of installing Christmas trees and festive decorations in the Senate of Canada Building," said Victor Deng, press secretary for Senate Speaker George Furey.



LOBBY GROUPS LOOKING TO GENERATE BROAD SUPPORT

in expanded minority government playing field

By Marco Figliotti

Faced with the country's first minority government in eight years, Canada's most active lobbying groups say they'll be changing tactics to target a broader range of elected officials and bureaucrats as they look to generate wide support for their key initiatives.

"A minority Parliament really brings with it fresh opportunities and I think what we're seeing unfold right now is that Canadians want to see their various parties and governments work to deliver competent results," said Carole Saab, executive director of policy and public affairs with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the lobby group for almost all local governments in Canada.

"Building bridges, driving solutions is really where local governments excel. We're going to be working with all the parties to build solutions and navigate them across the board."

Saab said the FCM always targets a broad range of political parties in Ottawa, but acknowledged that in a "minority parliament that takes on heightened importance."

Of course, the Trudeau Liberals were reduced to a minority government in the October election, where they won 157 seats, 27 fewer than the party took in the 2015 vote. The Conservatives gained 22 seats from its 2015 showing in the fall election to win 121 seats, though it was not enough to boot the Liberals from power.

The NDP, which had its second-best performance in history in the 2015 election, saw its seat haul drop 20 to a total of 24 in the Oct. 21 vote, while the Greens were able to jump up to three seats, including its first-ever outside of B.C.

Aside from the Conservatives, the only other party to see its seat count increase by double-digits compared to 2015 was the Bloc Québécois, which grabbed 32 seats, up from only 10 in 2015.

Considering this new political landscape, where no party is capable of passing legislation in the House by itself, lobbyists are stressing the importance of building consensus and staking out common ground to advance their policy goals.

Corinne Pohlmann, the senior vice-president of national affairs for the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, the major lobby group for small business owners, said her group is preparing a "strategy around how to bring forward the issues that are important to our members," including exploring policy issues that are "potentially shared by more than one or two parties."

In terms of the group's major asks, Pohlmann pointed to intergenerational transfers as one of the more pressing concerns, saying while the CFIB's research shows that 72 per cent of small business owners want to exit their business for the next 10 years, an obscure tax rule makes it more costly to transfer that business to a family member than a stranger.

"(Small business owners) are getting older, like the rest of the population. And we have to find ways to make sure we can transfer those businesses to the new generation, because there's literally like \$1.5 trillion dollars of assets that are going to be transferred," she explained in an interview.

"So we need to do this successfully in order to make sure we are retaining jobs in their communities."

Pohlmann said the Liberals, Conservatives, NDP and Bloc have all mentioned that this is "something that needs to be looked at," making the issue "something that potentially could be an area of focus early on" in the new Parliament.

As for the CFIB's other major asks, Pohlmann pointed to reducing barriers to interprovincial trade and slashing red tape for businesses, as well as reducing swipe fees on credit cards, something the Liberals committed to on the campaign trail.

Currently, businesses pay a fee to facilitate credit card transactions based on the combined total of the price of the product of the product and the associated sales tax. The Liberals, Pohlmann noted, promised to eliminate swipe fees on the sales tax portion during the fall campaign.

Derek Nighbor, president and CEO of the Forest Products Association of Canada, told iPolitics that he believes the biggest opportunity for his industry

group comes from the "green economy space," citing commitments in the Liberals' 2019 federal budget around "innovation in forestry and driving and expanding the bioeconomy," as well as leveraging Canada's forestry products to "fight climate change."

"So that's going to be really core to our work with this government: continuing to identify an opportunity to create good paying jobs in these rural and northern communities and also, at the same time, drive climate benefits based ... on forest management," he said in an interview.

Nighbor also said FPAC wants to work with the Liberals on best practices to achieve the party's campaign pledge of planting two billion more trees in Canada, while noting the group will continue to monitor trade issues with the U.S. and other important markets like Japan and China.

Furthermore, he noted that the group wants to work with the government to develop strategies to support more than 6,000 people in the B.C. forestry sector that are out of work, largely because of fallout from the "mountain pine beetle outbreak and a couple of really tough forest fire seasons."

"One of the other things we'll be asking the government about is what is the plan and how can we work together to provide support to those, you know, over 6,000 families that are without jobs and those rural and northern communities that are hit pretty hard by those job losses," he added.

Saab of the FCM stressed the importance of getting out to an early start in the new Parliament, saying the "first hundred days of any government — in a minority context all the more so — are critical."

In fact, in the week after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named his new cabinet, the FCM hosted a large gathering of its members in Ottawa to discuss their top priorities for the new Parliament and released a "first hundred days" plan that laid out how tackle issues like getting more infrastructure built, modernizing transit, improving housing affordability, addressing climate change and improving rural internet access.

In terms of the FCM's priorities, Saab said members want this new

Parliament to building on “the progress of the past four years.” She also noted that the FCM has struck a new group of Western municipal leaders to appeal directly to the federal government amid the ongoing economic downturn in the region.

During the campaign, the FCM also called for the permanent doubling of the Gas Tax Fund for local infrastructure. Despite the name, the funding is no longer attached to the federal gas tax.

In the 2019 budget, the Trudeau government announced a one-time doubling of the fund to improve infrastructure, though the FCM wants to see this made permanent to help municipal governments better address long-term priorities.

Kevin Lee, the CEO of the Canadian Home Builders’ Association, the major lobby group for the residential construction industry, said his organization was pleased to see how housing affordability was a key issue in the recent election campaign and wanted to continue having discussions on how to address this with all the parties in this Parliament.

“We always try and engage with all parties, but obviously, with a minority government, that becomes even more important,” he explained in an interview with iPolitics.

“The fact that so much attention was given to these issues (housing affordability) in the campaign does bode well hopefully for some collaboration to move forward. How that’s going to be done will be very interesting to follow and we’ll continue to put our best recommendations forward.”

In the run-up to last spring’s budget, the CHBA urged the Trudeau government to restore the 30-year mortgage for “well-qualified” first-time homebuyers and adjust the terms of the stress test for mortgage applicants by the loan’s “terms and conditions.”

Once those changes were implemented, the lobby group said the federal government could then explore additional options to improve housing affordability and access, such as increasing the tax rebates for first-time homebuyers, simplifying building codes, reinstating a national energy retrofit tax credit and improving data collection.

The Trudeau Liberals didn’t restore the 30-year mortgage, though the Conservatives and NDP promised on the campaign trail to do so if elected to power. The Conservatives also promised to review the stress test, which the Liberals have not pledged to alter.

The stress test requires borrowers to show they can handle a two-percentage-point increase in the current interest rate, though homebuilders, developers, realtors and others in the residential real estate market have faulted the test for driving down sales. However, the Trudeau government has justified its introduction on the need to ensure Canadians aren’t over-extending themselves to buy a house, raising concerns about the country’s consumer debt load.

The other major issue for the CHBA, according to Lee, is climate change and its effects on housing affordability, including efforts to support homeowners making ‘green’ renovations.

“They’re good ways to address climate change (when it comes to) housing, and we gotta make sure we do those things in ways that Canadians can afford (and) ... so home ownership isn’t impinged because we’re trying to accelerate things too quickly,” he explained.

“So we do look forward to working with the government on the climate change agenda, especially on the renovation retrofit market, and again all parties, and put forward ideas about how to move forward with the Canadians who renovate their house to be more energy efficient. And so we’re looking forward to working with all parties on that as well.”

With the new cabinet introduced, Lee explained that the CHBA was moving ahead with its Hill-centred lobbying activities, including regular meetings with MPs, Senators and other officials, and their traditional spring Lobby Day.

Mary Van Buren, president of the Canadian Construction Association, also laid out in broad strokes her group’s plans for the next year.

With the Trudeau cabinet now installed, Van Buren told iPolitics via email that the CCA will reach out to “all new ministers and parliamentary secretaries for the relevant departments with which we interact most frequently.”

The CCA, she said, is also looking to build on its summer Hill at Home initiative with a “smaller, more targeted effort that focuses mostly on parliamentarians whom we haven’t previously met with” following the spring budget. As part of its Hill at Home initiative, the CCA trained its members on how to meet with MPs on their home turf during the federal campaign.

According to Van Buren, the CCA will be conducting a full-scale “Hill Day” in Ottawa during its board meetings in November 2020. A ‘Hill Day’ or ‘Lobby Day’ generally refer to

meeting blitzes organized by industry associations between their members and parliamentarians.

“Our intention is to keep pressing upon our four core themes from the Construction4CDNS election advocacy campaign during which our membership sent over a thousand letters to their local candidates emphasizing stable long-term infrastructure funding, renewing investor confidence, recruiting and retaining a diverse and tech-savvy workforce, and advancing innovation and technology,” Van Buren explained.

Marc Brazeau, president and CEO of the Railway Association of Canada (RAC), which represents the country’s biggest railway operators, said his group would be focused on working with members of both “House and Senate committees that deal with transportation matters directly and indirectly,” and advancing the recommendations outlined in its pre-budget submission earlier in 2019.

“RAC members have invested considerable resources into safety, innovation, and environmental sustainability over recent years to help support Canada’s future economy. We want to ensure parliamentarians and policy makers are fully aware of the opportunities and benefits of those investments continuing,” he said in an emailed statement.

Christyn Cianfarani, president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries, the country’s major defence industry lobby group, said in a statement to iPolitics her organization is planning to meet a broad range of MPs at the start of the parliamentary session.

“Our industry is spread out right across Canada, and a new session with fresh faces offers us a chance to get acquainted, or reacquainted, with MPs, connect them with companies in their ridings, and dispel misconceptions about the defence and security sector,” she explained.

“We do this through regular and targeted outreach. The last new Parliament in 2015 saw us connecting directly with about 100 MPs through a variety of activities in the first eight months of the mandate. We have similar plans this time around.”

Cianfarani said CADSI would also continue with its ‘My North My Home’ ad campaign but said the group’s best opportunity to engage with parliamentarians comes at the end of May each year with its annual CAN-SEC trade show, which she noted is CADSI’s “biggest annual event.”

CANADA'S FORESTRY SECTOR TRANSITIONS TO MEET CLIMATE DEMANDS

The forestry sector says it's transforming amid Canada's shift to a low-carbon economy.

Bob Larocque, the senior vice-president of the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC), said the industry has begun to diversify its products to develop more environmentally-friendly materials. The result, he said, has been the emergence of new sector of bioeconomy jobs.

"It's a brand new field," he said. "It's actually being applied and you can actually get a good job out of it."

The Liberal government has prioritized carbon emission reductions since adopting the Paris Agreement in 2015, which aims to limit the global average temperature rise to only one-point-five degrees Celsius. To meet the targets, the government imposed a national carbon tax which increases the cost of fossil fuels in order to reduce consumption. In the 2019 federal election, the party campaigned on net-zero emissions by 2050, despite being behind on their targets to meet 30 per cent reduction by 2030.

Larocque said Canada's forestry sector has always been environmentally friendly. The industry is required

by law to replant all the trees they harvest to ensure sustainable forests, benefiting air quality and biodiversity. But, he said the industry has begun looking at what they use in their products and making them differently to use all the resources "with much less waste."

For example, trees were previously brought to a sawmill and cut to make wood for furniture, or houses. Now, Larocque said mills can make engineered wood which uses all the residue from a tree to make stronger pieces of wood. He said engineered wood like the cross-laminated timber (CLT) replaces steel and concrete, which are higher fossil-fuel based because they require more energy to produce.

CLT is being used in tall wood buildings, as seen as in the University of British Columbia's Brock Commons residence in Vancouver, which, at 18 storeys high, was the tallest mass timber building in the world from its creation in 2017 until it was overtaken by Mjøstårnet in Norway earlier this year.

Larocque also said industry development of biofuels, biomaterials, and biochemicals provides an opportunity to address climate change. Biofuels — fuel made from harvested trees

residues designed to replace gasoline, diesel fuel and coal — reduce emissions as they come from renewable energy sources which have lower carbon emissions than fossil fuels. Meanwhile, biomaterials called lignin, which is the substance that gives trees strength, could be used in adhesives as an alternative to petroleum, which fuels climate change as it releases toxins into the air during its extraction process.

Biochemicals can also be used as a substitute for petroleum. In Toronto, Natures Affinity, a company which aims to reduce petroleum-based plastics, developed BioBinder, a biochemical made entirely from tree products. The organic binder can be used to replace petroleum-based plastics in plastic pots and food packaging.

As the sector diversifies its products, Larocque said the slow growth of jobs seen over the last five years will rapidly increase.

To generate awareness on bioeconomy jobs, FPAC created 'The Greenest Workforce', an online tool which shows jobs current across Canada and provides labour market information with a projection over five years. Job searches can input a postal code





By Rachel Emmanuel

and see what positions are available within a 200 km radius.

Stéphane Renou, the CEO of FP Innovations, a not-for-profit specializing in forest operations, said research on the forestry sector's potential in the bioeconomy began years ago, and now the transition from research to market products has begun. He said entire industry is looking for the people "that can help the industry transform," with openings for advanced materials scientists, advanced chemists, chemical engineers, and more.

Developing talent will be crucial for Canada to remain competitive in the field, said Renou, adding that Canada has enough universities to educate students at home. He said the forestry industry has struggled to attract talent because people don't view it as a high-tech industry.

"I think one of the challenges the industry has is to attract people to the

forestry industry and make them realize this is the future of the bioeconomy, this is the future of the fight against global warming," he said.

As the sector's employment needs grow, Larocque said there's a three-part responsibility to invest in education. The government needs to invest and support education, educators need to invest in curriculum on low-carbon economies, and the industry needs to develop work-learning activities to give students hands-on experience.

Investment in education will be crucial for the sector to remain globally competitive. Larocque said Canada is in a bioeconomy race against Sweden and Finland, who have similar forestry sectors to Canada, but remain ahead in investment in education.

Larocque also said FPAC has been working with universities to develop "climate courses" that study the impact of climate change on the sector as

sustainability conversations that use to be about water and air quality now incorporate evaluations on carbon risks, creating "a new skill set."

"Our world is changing," he said. "Climate is going to become so much more important in all decision making across our industry."



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CANADA'S OLDEST MP

Bring civility back to politics? She knows just how to do it

By Rachel Emmanuel



The 43rd Parliament's oldest MP said the greatest obstacle she faces as a politician is the untrue things that are allowed to be said about people.

Liberal MP Hedy Fry said "vicious lies" are quickly spread over the internet where social media posts aren't held to the same ethical standards as they would be in traditional media.

In her 26 years as a Member of Parliament, Fry has seen the incivility, so common today on social media, enter the democratic process.

Fry was born in San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago, and worked as a physician before running for office in 1993, defeating incumbent Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Kim Campbell. She said politics at that time focused on a candidates' plans for government and policy, rather than the vilification of opponents.

The Vancouver Centre MP first ran for Parliament in 1993, defeating incumbent Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Kim Campbell at a time when she said politics focused on a candidates' plans for government and policy, rather than the vilification of opponents.

She said personal attacks popped up in 2015, but ramped up during the 2019 election campaign, in which she ran for federal office for the ninth time. Fry said the recent federal election seemed entirely focused on personal attacks.

Fry said participants in debates in the recent federal election didn't "even try to pretend that it was about something other than personal vilification."

But the veteran politician has a remedy for the incivility that plagues politics, passed on from her mentor Jean Chrétien, the former Liberal Prime Minister who recruited her to run for the party. Fry said Chrétien taught her that opposition members want to serve the country just as she does, only they have different ideas as to how to progress the country.

The 78-year-old MP said being civil doesn't mean agreeing with those across the aisles, but it can be part of a good debate on policy and legislation.

"If you have arguments, you shouldn't have to resort to becoming personal about it," she said. "Your arguments should stand on their own."

Fry said Chrétien was always friends with opposition leaders because he recognized they believed in the common ground of making life better for Canadians — a lesson she'd like to pass onto the new MPs. She said

Canada's newest politicians should remember that while opposition parties might be an opponent during the election, "they are not the enemy."

"Whatever hardships you face as an MP, MPs from other political parties are facing the same thing," she said.

The longest-serving female MP also said she's counting on women to lead the charge in bringing respect back into the House. She said women ran for office because they wanted to have a say in politics.

"We need to be reminding others and ourselves that we wanted to do things differently, and that we do do things differently," she said.

For members hoping to act on Fry's advice and find some common ground this holiday season, Christmas might be a good place to start. While people may disagree about the date of Christ's birth and whether Christmas is a pagan festival, Fry said the celebration of the birth is ultimately "still a very important thing."

She concludes by saying, "at the end of the day, Christmas is an idea that somebody was born who came to change things, to make it better, to help us become better people."



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DAN CHRISTMAS, THE FIRST MI'KMAQ SENATOR

on his namesake holiday and defending the rights of the marginalized



Photo: courtesy of The Senate of Canada

Thousands of kilometres from the North Pole on Canada's east coast is the home of Canada's Christmases, and among them, Senator Dan Christmas.

Christmas comes from Membertou, a First Nation of less than 2,000 people on Cape Breton Island where a search of the phone books suggests more than one-in-seven of all of Canada's families with the surname of the country's most widely celebrated winter holiday call home.

Christmas cautioned against relying on his genealogy knowledge, but still shared the origin story of how his family came to be known by his last name, as he was told it by one of his aunts.

"A group of French settlers had met (our ancestors) on Christmas Eve... and so they bestowed the name Noel on the family who greeted them," the senator said. "And, of course, the English came and they translated that to English."

Nearby Christmas Island, which is a little less than an hour's drive from Membertou, is likely where that interaction took place. Mi'kmaq records say the naming of the island that covers just a few kilometres against the northern portion of the Bras d'Or Lake was taken from a local Indigenous person.

The name of the current home to many of the country's Christmases is also a reminder of the shared Indigenous-Catholic history in the region,

of which the deep roots are reflected to this day by a Cape Breton demographic that's overly represented by Indigenous peoples and Catholics, when compared against the rest of Canada. Membertou takes its name from Chief Henri Membertou, an early 17th century Mi'kmaq Grand Chief of the region where French colonists would settle as Port-Royal. In a modern historical context he is best known for being the first chief to be baptized by the French. His baptism helped solidify the relationship between the Mi'kmaq and the French, as well as with the Catholic Church.

Christmas, too, has a spot in Mi'kmaq history for being the first from the early inhabitants of Canada's Atlantic provinces to achieve a historic first. His milestone is that of being appointed to Canada's upper house.

Achieving the milestone is something he partially gives credit to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for because of his government's his government's adjustment to what it described as a "merit-based" appointment process.

Christmas chuckled when asked if he ever thought he'd be chosen to be a senator under the former process, where patronage appointments and the use of empty seats to stack the Senate for the government-of-the-day's partisan preference was common-place.

"I thought there was a snowball's chance I ever would have become a Senator, because I really wasn't a very partisan person."

Prior to being selected to sit in the Red Chamber, Christmas, who is 63 years old, spent much of his career in positions of leadership in Indigenous organizations in Nova Scotia. His experience includes serving as a Band Manager for Membertou for five years and as director for the Union of Nova Scotia Indians for 10. While working with the organization that represents

multiple Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq First Nations, he helped organize political and legal strategy to defend Mi'kmaq rights. His work contributed to the Supreme Court victory in the high-profile case of James Simon, which was fought over early treaty hunting rights. Christmas was also an elected councillor in Membertou for 18 years as well as a senior advisory to the First Nation for almost two decades. The advisor role required him to help the Chief and Council with handling the community's day-to-day functionalities. During that time, he helped the band of Membertou recover from near-bankruptcy to become profitable and grow its operations – both in the size of its labour force and in its revenue – more than tenfold.

He describes his own political leaning as being centre-left, but said during his career in management with Indigenous organizations that he learned it was crucial to be able to work with all parties.

"We tried to work well with the Liberals, Conservatives, NDPers, whoever, we just tried to have a respectful relationship with everybody. That's worked well for us here in Membertou, so of course when the time came for me to fill out my application as a Senator I was able to describe my work with all parties and, I think, I hope at least, that was a consideration for being appointed as an independent," Christmas said.

Christmas was one in a group of nine senators who were Trudeau's first appointees through the revamped selection process that he originally hadn't planned on applying through. Beginning in the summer of 2016, leaders of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia began meeting to discuss that a leader from the nation should apply. Christmas wasn't sold until one particular conversation he said he had with former Assembly of First Nations regional chief Morley Googoo.

"I was asked to think about what this would mean for the Mi'kmaq nation and for all its young people if they



saw a Mi'kmaq person in Parliament," Christmas said. "That one point was the one that swung me over to say yes, I'll put my name in."

What followed was a largely logistical series of requests for more information from the government before another phone call Christmas hasn't forgotten.

He had been bugged by officials to chat on the night of October 26, 2016. Christmas was reluctant since he was celebrating his sister's birthday with family at a party hosted by his mother, but ultimately agreed because he was told it was important. When he received a call during the middle of the singing Happy Birthday, he says he almost let it ring-out. Nevertheless he stepped away from the party to pick up the phone and heard Trudeau's voice on the other end.

"I almost dropped the phone," Christmas recalled.

"I remembered his first words," Christmas added. "Tomorrow, I'll be recommending your name to the Governor General to be appointed as a senator for Nova Scotia."

It wasn't long before he committed a low-stakes senatorial gaffe by forgetting to tell family members at his party to keep the news of the appointment to themselves when they overheard him telling his hard-of-hearing mother.

"I left the house that evening and it was all over Facebook. So, I felt pretty bad about it and I didn't breathe another word about it until the following morning when I finally heard that the announcement was made," Christmas said.

After his swearing in later in December, Christmas joined the Independent Senators Group, which, thanks to Trudeau-appointee become the largest caucus in the Senate in October of 2017.

Upon his appointment, Christmas told the Canadian Press that his top priority was using his experience and position to help "rebuild" Ottawa's relationship with Indigenous peoples. So far, he told iPolitics, he's seen "a mix of good things and bad things" from the government. He pointed out that successful passage of legislation like Bill C-91, which seeks to protect and revitalize Indigenous languages in Canada, and Bill C-92, that aims to reduce the mass overrepresentation of Indigenous children in protective care, were moves in the right direction by the government.

In terms of his own achievement thus far, Christmas said his "most satisfying moment" was when Bill C-68 was enacted. Christmas was the Senate sponsor of the bill, which was the oceans' protection partner-legislation to Bill C-69, its more-controversial legislative cousin that reworked the approval process for energy projects, like pipelines, to be built.

Christmas was let down, however, by the Indigenous rights recognition framework that was launched by the government. He also said his "biggest disappointment" since he's been in the Senate is the red chamber's failure to pass legislation reflecting that of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Conservative Senators stalled a private members' bill calling for Canada to pass laws to reflect UNDRIP in the upper house during the last Parliament.

Christmas is hoping the government will introduce legislation pushing for alignment of Canadian law with UNDRIP in the new Parliamentary session. "I take the word of the prime minister – that he said that he would – so I'm really looking forward to that," he said.

A longer-term goal of Christmas' is to see challenges – such as the federal government recently ordered in court against a ruling to pay \$40,000 to First Nations' children removed from

reserves – taken out of that arena.

"We're better able to deal with those issues in the political form than in the court form, so I'm looking to that as well, to find ways to really allow reconciliation to take root in the core of our politics, rather than just waiting for the courts to deal with it, or tribunals," Christmas said.

It's also of concern to Christmas to press for the "direct involvement" of Indigenous peoples in major projects, like those of the energy sector. Trudeau has suggested selling the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project that it bought last year to Indigenous investors, which the prime minister says he wouldn't limit to even a 100 per cent stake.

There's also new legislation Christmas plans to champion in the new session that could be enacted more promptly. Building on the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, which pressed for the recognition of a National Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada, as the group's co-chair, Christmas plans to propose a law that would bring transparency to private companies' supply chains to expose where businesses may be ignoring the use of modern slavery. Jurisdictions including California and the U.K. have passed similar legislation. A bill that would do that will be tabled by Christmas "early" in the coming parliamentary session, he says.

"I became determined to become involved in this crusade to help ensure that there might be a greater exploration and highlighting of Indigenous concerns in issues around human trafficking," Christmas said at a press conference earlier this year, when he was announcing the group's intention to move ahead with supply chain-related legislation. "I want us to become a beacon of hope for those shackled in the misery of sexual exploitation, child or forced slavery, as well as an advocacy voice for parliamentary action."





TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW SENATE OF CANADA BUILDING

Send your answers to ipoliticsquiz@ipolitics.ca before December 20th to enter our draw for a round of golf at Rivermead Golf Club. Answers will be posted on our website the week of December 23rd.



1. The Senate of Canada Building began life as a railway station. It opened on June 1, 1912, the same day as which other Ottawa landmark?

- a. The National Press Building at 150 Wellington St.
- b. The Chateau Laurier hotel
- c. The Supreme Court
- d. Stornoway, now the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition

2. Which Canadian Railway Company built the station?

- a. Canadian Pacific Railway
- b. Canadian National Railway
- c. Ottawa and Prescott Railway
- d. Grand Trunk Railway

3. Charles Melville Hays, the railway executive who pushed for the station's construction in the early 1900s, died tragically shortly before the building's grand opening. How did he die?

- a. He was killed when one of his own company's trains crashed on its way to the ceremony.
- b. He contracted cholera during an epidemic in London, England.
- c. He died when the RMS Titanic sank in the North Atlantic.
- d. He died aboard a passenger liner torpedoed by a German destroyer, an event that helped spark the First World War.

4. Ottawa's central railway station, now the Senate of Canada Building, was modelled on which well known New York building?

- a. Pennsylvania Station
- b. Grand Central Station
- c. Carnegie Hall
- d. Low Memorial Library

5. Who passed through the building in December 1941, three weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, to rally Canadians during the Second World War?

- a. U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- b. U.S. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe
- c. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother
- d. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

6. Ecstatic crowds greeted Elvis Presley at Union Station – now the Senate of Canada Building – when he arrived to play two sold-out shows in Ottawa in April 1957. Fans flooded in from Montreal aboard a special train. What was it named?

- a. The Rock 'n' Roll Cannon Ball
- b. The Mystery Train
- c. The Elvis Express
- d. The Rockabilly Bytown Bullet

7. Dominion Sculptor Phil White created many of the relief ornaments in the new Senate Chamber, including maple-leaf motifs on doors and glass partitions, provincial and territorial crests on the walls and the Arms of Canada behind the Speaker's dais. What did Mr. White use to help speed up the work?

- a. Robots
- b. Assistants
- c. 3D modelling software
- d. All of the above

8. The Canada Science and Technology Museum donated a historic piece of furniture to the Senate of Canada Building that occupied the former train station until the late 1960s. What is it?

- a. The original station master's desk with its contents, including timetables and a pocket watch
- b. One of the original mahogany benches from the train station's General Waiting Room
- c. One of the earliest versions of the Speaker's Chair from the late 1800s
- d. The original Brazilian rosewood table from the third-floor railway boardroom

9. Giant bronze panoramas decorate the walls of three new committee rooms in the rehabilitated Senate of Canada Building. What do they depict?

- a. Canada's east and west coasts
- b. Scenes that evoke Canada's rail history
- c. Scenes that evoke Canadian regions represented by the Senate
- d. All of the above

10. The building's magnificent General Waiting Room features three-storey Corinthian columns and a 13-metre barrel-vaulted ceiling. What material are they made of?

- a. Plaster and paint
- b. Travertine limestone
- c. Marble
- d. Bakelite, the world's first commercial plastic, which was invented in 1907

11. Identify green initiatives that helped the Senate of Canada Building achieve its three Green Globes environmental certification.

- a. Hosting a bee colony on the building's lawn
- b. Sustainably sourced drywall and framing materials
- c. Water-saving fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms
- d. All of the above

Canada's Upper Chamber of Parliament began sitting in February 2019 in the historic complex that served as Ottawa's central train station before hosting First Ministers' conferences and international summits for 45 years as the Government Conference Centre. Take the Senate of Canada Building quiz to test your knowledge about this historic Ottawa landmark.

Senate photos: courtesy of the Senate of Canada.



Are *Christmas lights* a municipal issue?

The hateful emails were coming from across the country, pooling in the inbox of a local mayor.

The writers behind the influx of correspondence were incredulous, frustrated by the suggestion that a municipal politician would take down every Christmas light across her city. The accusations stemmed from a post on Twitter, which claimed that Lisa Helps, the mayor of Victoria, B.C., — would be removing the festive displays to avoid offending certain religious and ethnic groups. The tweet was shared more than a thousand times across the cybersphere, with replies denouncing “political correctness” and an “attack” on Canada’s heritage.

But the trouble with the internet’s ire was this — the claim about Helps was false.

“It was just a cockamamie idea,” Helps told iPolitics in a recent phone call. One of their city councillors had previously suggested reviewing downtown Christmas decorations to see if they could be more secular or inclusive, according to local news reports. Helps believes those comments struck a nerve, which in turn reverberated well beyond their community. Some folks responded by pitting different cultures against one another — a tactic Helps decried as “really not helpful.”

For years, across Canada and beyond, outspoken figures have cried foul about a perceived “war on Christmas”, objecting to the idea of the holiday season becoming more secular, or less Christianized, in order to accommodate other beliefs and cultures. But it was the first time in Helps’ term as mayor that she can recall Christmas lights, or holiday decorations more broadly, becoming an issue substantial enough to fall upon her desk. In her view, the city of Victoria was a place for multiculturalism and inclusion, where city celebrations focused more on the holiday season as a whole than Christmas specifically. Before this fall, Helps says the approach had never elicited complaints to her office.

“We shouldn’t get too caught up in what lights mean,” Helps urged. “Just, it’s good to have lights during the darkness — in that dark time of year.”

While the uproar in Victoria was for

naught this fall, other municipalities have, in fact, sought to regulate or prescribe new rules around holiday decorations in the past — and potentially nip local spats in the bud.

The District of West Vancouver has had a “Good Neighbour Bylaw” since 2004, which prohibits ‘nuisances’ caused by outdoor lights. But there’s a twist to the west-coast rules. They can be ignored when it comes to Christmas, or other holiday-related lights, between November 15 and January 15.

In Orangeville, an Ontario town with a population just shy of 29,000, as of the last count in 2016, local politicians batted around the possibility of prohibiting Christmas lights before Remembrance Day. While the local Orangeville Banner reported in 2015 that council had, in fact, agreed to keep the lights off on town-owned right of ways until at least November 12, Mayor Sandy Brown recently told iPolitics that discussions on the matter had since tapered out. “There wasn’t any chatter about it this year,” Brown said in a mid-November phone call. (He added that he, personally, didn’t find anything wrong with lights being strung up before November 11.)

Orangeville had bigger issues to figure out this year. Namely, they had to find a location for Santa Claus to set up shop for visits. (Their only indoor mall was being converted to “big-box” style retail, Brown said.) “Poor old Santa’s got no place to go!” he lamented. “We’re trying to find a solution, maybe in one of our town facilities.”

Some jurisdictions across the U.S. border have taken a more heavy-handed approach to holiday decor. The city of Aurora, Illinois, has a law that allows residents to be fined for leaving “seasonal decor” like Christmas lights up longer than 60 days past the holiday. Last year, the Aurora Beacon News reported on a proposal to extend that deadline by 30 days, to be conscious of weather-related atrocities that can make light removal in February a daunting task. (The proposal was ultimately sent back to committee, according to later reports.)

Back in Canada, there are several local mayors who are at a loss for Christmas-light related tales, saying

the issue just doesn’t come across their desks with any frequency — like Winnipeg’s Brian Bowman, Toronto’s John Tory, Hamilton’s Fred Eisenberger and Kingston’s Bryan Patterson. “On that issue, all is calm and bright,” Don Peat, a spokesperson for Tory, noted in an email. But other municipal leaders have waged long campaigns to change their jurisdictions’ holiday lighting regimes.

Back when now-mayor of Saskatoon Charlie Clark was a city councillor, a policy was in place in the Saskatchewan city that saw all decorative lighting turned off by early January. Clark butted against the policy, citing the impact of new winter lighting at the time — which he described as a sort of blue, lit-up snowflake — on their downtown and commercial areas. “We’re a northern city, and it gets dark at 4:00 to 4:30 on some of the shortest days of the year,” Clark explained. The lights helped, he thought.

He put forward a motion at the time to extend the winter light season. But after a budget he described as “tough,” a report on the motion that detailed thousands of extra dollars in expenses caused council to balk. Clark culled his request, asking instead to simply extend the lights on Third Avenue, a main street in downtown Saskatoon — estimating the cost to be around \$600. Some changes were made at the time, he said, but it also kicked off a larger analysis on winter lighting. Should they be attached to the street lighting system? Should festive lights stay on all night long, or be switched off after Saskatoon’s bars close up shop?

Earlier this year, the city received a full analysis of the impacts and cost of keeping their holiday lights beaming until March — not just on Third Avenue anymore, but on Broadway Avenue and Broadway Bridge too. “I think like many cities, we’re realizing that decorative lighting actually is quite a cost-efficient way to beautify parts of the city,” Clark said in a recent phone call.

“So there’s been a push to actually expand the amount of decorative lighting there is, and to try and create enabling policies that allow that to happen,” he continued. “There’s been lots of drama, I guess, and discussion. Really, it’s about shifting

By Victoria Gibson

our thinking from Christmas lights to decorative winter lighting, and making that change has required people to think differently.”

Several years ago, city officials in Toronto found themselves embroiled in a small controversy when they hiked the fees charged to a local businessman in the Beaches to string lights along the Boardwalk.

The city argued that the lighting extravaganza was a commercial sponsorship, according to the Toronto Star. Additionally, the city said it put clean-up and maintenance pressures on the park's plate, that it caused extended closures of the trail and that it caused damage to the turf. But several locals were outraged at the prospect of their local tradition being shelved due to higher fees. Eventually, the businessman agreed to absorb the fees himself.

Like many other cities and towns, Toronto has a longstanding history of being illuminated by Christmas lights in the dark winter months. In an archival snap from the 1950s, an embellished tree outside of Old City Hall is neatly cordoned off by a set of ropes, glittering against a dark sky. In another set of photographs, from late December 1957, men in smart hats, women in thick coats, and groups of small children alike are pictured shuffling onto special TTC busses for a tour of lights across the city.

Some Canadian municipalities' lighting traditions are uniquely their own. In the same era as the Christmas-light bus tours around Toronto, an enduring tradition was born from tragedy, just a few hours east. A car accident on Christmas Eve, in 1958, claimed the lives of two friends: Billy Foster and Art "Sonny" Culloden. In their grief the following year, Billy's parents created a display of lights to pay tribute. It's a tradition that has carried on in Belleville ever since, this year marking 60 years.

The project was run privately for many decades. But the city took over operations of the display eight or nine years ago, by Belleville Mayor Mitch Panciuk's count. This year, he says they're expecting a turnout of more than 2,500 people. In just shy of a decade, he told iPolitics that the city has spent around \$250,000 on the memorial display.

Christmas lights in downtown areas will sometimes be paid for by groups like business improvement areas. Georgina — an Ontario town on the south shores of Lake Simcoe — was hit with some surprise holiday costs this fall. According to a CBC report, the municipality found itself facing an unexpected \$30,000 bill to retrofit their hydro poles in order to render them compatible with another \$70,000 of new LED holiday decorations the town had approved. Some festive events are covered by sponsorships.

The event in Toronto's Beaches neighbourhood is one such example, with a private sponsor — though the city issues the requisite permit each year. "We, of course, want to encourage different ways we can animate our public spaces," the ward's councillor, Brad Bradford, told iPolitics. He stressed the importance of incentivizing residents to come to public spaces — in the winter months especially.

But the first-term councillor is inclined to steer away from moves like drafting bylaws or other restrictions on Toronto residents' Christmas light choices. "To me, that seems a little heavy handed and frankly, I think we've got more important issues to put our time and energy towards," Bradford assessed. "I would always just say, you know, try to be a good neighbour, work it out with the people that live with you on your street, as opposed to looking to the government to fix those sorts of relationship challenges for you."

His sentiment was echoed by Matt Luloff, an Ottawa councillor whose Orléans community boasts the notable Taffy Lane light display. He told iPolitics he'd never support rules like those imposed in Aurora, and that he's never heard a complaint about Christmas lights in his ward. "People need to be able to express themselves, and I'm of the mind that you should be able to — within reason — do what you like with your own private property."



iPOLITICS Holiday Quiz

It has been another busy year in Canadian politics. Have you been keeping up with the headlines? Test your attention span and your endurance with iPolitics' Holiday Quiz. If you're looking for answers, though, you'll have to go to ipolitics.ca. Sharpen your pencils...

1. The Ontario government launched a mandatory anti-carbon tax sticker campaign at gas stations across the province. What claim do those stickers make?

- A. "Carbon taxes leave less money in your pocket"
- B. "Ontario has a better way"
- C. "Stephen Harper wouldn't do this to us"
- D. "The federal carbon tax will cost you"

2. In January, a renovated West Block opened as the temporary home of the House of Commons. What happened on the second day MPs returned for the winter session?

- A. A burst pipe led to a flood and foul odour
- B. A small kitchen fire led to an evacuation of the building
- C. The heating system broke, leading to MPs walking around wrapped in blankets
- D. New automatic doors could not open

3. Centre Block is expected to be closed for renovations for at least how many years?

- A. Five years
- B. 10 years
- C. 12 years
- D. 20 years

4. In March, Trudeau tasked this longtime Liberal to probe into the question of separating the attorney general and justice minister role, an issue raised during the SNC-Lavalin affair.

- A. Bob Rae
- B. David MacNaughton
- C. Anne McClellan
- D. Sheila Copps

5. In March, a voting marathon triggered by the Conservatives in response to the SNC-Lavalin affair set a record as the longest one of the 42nd Parliament. How long did it last?

- A. 21 hours
- B. 30 hours
- C. 50 hours
- D. 95 hours

6. An Ottawa-area public figure left their provincial seat to run — successfully — for MP in October. Who was that?

- A. Beverley McLachlin
- B. John Fraser
- C. Jim Watson
- D. Marie-France Lalonde

7. Ontario MPPs were asked to tone down confrontational behaviours in the legislature this fall, including one particular tactic that the provincial PCs had been criticized for. What was that behaviour?

- A. Whistling loudly while others are speaking
- B. Turning around to ignore the opposition
- C. Spitballs and paper airplanes
- D. Repeated standing ovations

8. In January, Canada's ambassador to China was fired amid a diplomatic spat between the two countries. The post then sat empty for most of the year. Who was named in September to take over the job?

- A. John McCallum
- B. Dominic Barton
- C. Meng Wanzhou
- D. David MacNaughton

9. During the first leaders debate, Green Party leader Elizabeth May accused Conservative leader Andrew Scheer of taking foreign policy cues from another world leader. Which leader?

- A. Benjamin Netanyahu
- B. Xi Jinping
- C. Angela Merkel
- D. Donald Trump

10. Jagmeet Singh told reporters on the campaign trail that his party, if elected, would be in 'no rush' to do what?

- A. Decriminalize drug possession
- B. Launch a court challenge against Bill 21
- C. Ratify USMCA
- D. Implement a handgun ban

11. Ontario Premier Doug Ford cancelled two patronage appointments in June, following news reports that detailed personal connections to then-chief of staff, Dean French. One of the appointees was connected to French through their time playing sports. Which Sport?

- A. Hockey
- B. Baseball
- C. Lacrosse
- D. Rugby

12. On election night which riding in Canada had the closest margin of victory?

- A. Yukon
- B. Kitchener-Conestoga
- C. Port Moody—Coquitlam
- D. Hochelaga

13. On the night that the first photograph showing Justin Trudeau with his face painted brown was published by Time magazine, the Liberal leader admitted to a second incident of wearing _____ during high school?

- A. "racism"
- B. "makeup"
- C. "blackface"
- D. "brownface"

14. Who did China appoint as its ambassador to Canada in September?

- A. *Geng Shuang*
- B. *Cong Peiwu*
- C. *Lu Shaye*
- D. *Deng Xiaoping*

15. Who is the youngest person elected as an MP in the October election?

- A. *Mumilaag Qaqqaq*
- B. *Eric Melillo*
- C. *Dane Lloyd*
- D. *Kristina Michaud*

16. Quebec engineering giant SNC-Lavalin is currently banned from bidding on contracts with:

- A. *Libya*
- B. *The Canadian government*
- C. *The International Monetary Fund*
- D. *The World Bank*

17. In August, this Crown corporation admitted loaning US\$41 million to the internationally infamous Gupta brothers in order to buy luxury Bombardier jets was a mistake. The Guptas were at the centre of a massive corruption scandal involving South Africa's Jacob Zuma. Which agency?

- A. *Business Development Canada*
- B. *Canadian Commercial Corporation*
- C. *Export Development Canada*
- D. *Bank of Canada*

18. Which outspoken foreign leader said in April that he is ready to "declare war" on Canada over a dispute regarding exported trash?

- A. *Jair Bolsonaro*
- B. *Donald Trump*
- C. *Narendra Modi*
- D. *Rodrigo Duterte*

19. In May, an apology was made in the House of Commons regarding what past controversy?

- A. *The Mark Norman affair*
- B. *Canada's mismanagement of a midcentury tuberculosis epidemic affecting Inuit people*
- C. *The SNC-Lavalin affair*
- D. *Canada's mistreatment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War*

20. In April, a grim report authored by Environment Canada scientists found Canada's climate was, on average, warming faster at what rate, compared to the rest of the world.

- A. *Double*
- B. *Triple*
- C. *Four times*
- D. *The same*

21. In June, a government advisory panel led by former Ontario health minister Eric Hoskins recommended the establishment of a universal, single-payer public pharmacare system at what eventual annual cost, once fully implemented?

- A. *\$6 billion*
- B. *\$10 billion*
- C. *\$15 billion*
- D. *\$27 billion*

22. What was the NDP's 2019 election platform called?

- A. *In It For You*
- B. *A New Deal For People*
- C. *A Green New Deal*
- D. *A New Deal For Canada*

23. In May the prime minister promised to do this as a way to offset the environmental cost of the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

- A. *Devoting any and all revenues from the pipeline toward climate initiatives*
- B. *Capping oil sands production*
- C. *Ensuring construction-related emissions are offset by purchasing carbon credits*
- D. *Increasing the carbon price*

24. This widely-followed Twitter user was central to spreading false rumours of a Globe and Mail "bombshell" on Trudeau's past during the election campaign.

- A. *Stephen Taylor*
- B. *Sheila Copps*
- C. *Warren Kinsella*
- D. *JJ McCullough*

25. Which government legislation was dubbed the "no more pipelines" bill by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney?

- A. *Bill C-48*
- B. *Bill C-68*
- C. *Bill C-69*
- D. *Bill C-71*

26. Nicholas Kasirer is the most recent appointee to the Supreme Court of Canada. What province is he from?

- A. *British Columbia*
- B. *Ontario*
- C. *Quebec*
- D. *Prince Edward Island*

27. Which Toronto Raptor endorsed Justin Trudeau during the election?

- A. *Kawhi Leonard*
- B. *Masai Ujiri*
- C. *Fred VanVleet*
- D. *Pascal Siakam*

28. Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer removed MP Michael Cooper from the House Justice Committee over what?

- A. *For lashing out on a Muslim witness during a meeting and quoting the manifesto of the Christchurch shooter*
- B. *For poor attendance*
- C. *For deriding "goat herder cultures" during a discussion about Islam's compatibility with Canadian democracy*
- D. *For making sexist comments towards fellow MPs*

29. Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer's election campaign song, *Get Ahead*, was authored by who?

- A. *Chad Kroeger's songwriter*
- B. *Bryan Adam's songwriter*
- C. *Jim Cuddy's songwriter*
- D. *Celine Dion's songwriter*

Meet the iPolitics team



Victoria Gibson



Callie Sanderson



Kevin Smith



Marguerite Marlin





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- Commissioner of Canada Elections
- Correctional Service Canada
- Courts Administration Service
- Department of Justice Canada
- Parole Board of Canada
- Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs
- Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada
- Public Safety Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee
- Supreme Court of Canada

THANK YOU

to all the federal candidates who took part in the **USJE Community Safety Roundtables** and who engaged with our frontline members last fall.

We look forward to working with all Parliamentarians to **keep Canadians safe.**



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