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Reconciling with the truth

Sept. 30 is the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. But after an election that saw the issue placed on the backburner, what comes next for federal efforts towards reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people?

Unsplash photograph by Mohammed Alherz



Alice Chen

Heard On The Hill

'We have drive': Indigenous MPs on their election and their future

Another election has come and gone and there was a record number of Indigenous candidates put forward this time, at least 77 people, with the end results showing that the actual count of Indigenous MPs who will sit in the House has also gone up, to 12 from the 10 elected after the 2019 campaign.

These 12 span four political parties. There are Liberals **Yvonne Jones** (Labrador, N.L.), **Jaime Battiste** (Sydney-Victoria, N.S.), **Marc Serré** (Nickel Belt, Ont.), **Dan Vandal** (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.), **Vance Badawey** (Niagara Centre, Ont.), and **Michael McLeod** (N.W.T.); Bloc Québécois' **Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay** (Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, Que.); New Democrats **Leah Gazan** (Winnipeg Centre, Man.), **Lori Idlout** (Nunavut), and **Blake Desjarlais** (Edmonton Griesbach, Alta.); and Conservatives **Adam Chambers** (Simcoe North, Ont.) and **Marc Dalton** (Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge, B.C.).

The Hill Times spoke to a few of them to get their thoughts on the election and what the future holds.

MARC SERRÉ



Liberal Marc Serré has already begun the work in his Ottawa office. The Hill Times file photograph

Mr. Serré, who is Métis, is marking his third time in the House after this election. And as of Sept. 23, he was already in his Ottawa office, cleaning up and preparing for the next session.

This type of dedication isn't anything new to him. During the election, he crisscrossed the tens of thousands of kilometres of

his riding to visit every community.

"I had a chance to talk to a lot of individuals ... my focus is a lot of the work locally, so it's really an honour for a third term to have the trust of the people," he said.

He follows in the footsteps of his father, **Gaetan Serré**, who died in 2017, and his uncle **Benoît Serré**, who died in 2019, both of whom were Liberal MPs in the north of Ontario, with his father representing the very same riding in which Mr. Serré has again won.

As for what's on his agenda?

"I'm going to continue being active with the Indigenous caucus ... we have to make sure that we provide the funding for the communities."

LORI IDLOUT

Ms. Idlout is a fresh-faced rookie, taking over the reigns of Nunavut from well-known former NDP MP **Mumilaag Qaqqaq**.

Of course, she's used to working in high-pressure situations, coming from the world of law. She's driven, too.

"I wanted to be a voice ... and to be given that opportunity is a great privilege," she said.

The approach she's going to take in negotiating with the House at large is one of power, acknowledging that the federal government uses its resources to hopefully find a way to address and recognize the existing issues in her largely Indigenous region.

"[We need to] make sure that we're getting more Canadians to realize that Indigenous people are strong. We have drive ... and we need to focus on that, rather than create more barriers, to make sure that we can succeed as productive members of society," she said.

MARC DALTON



Conservative Marc Dalton cautions against tokenism of Indigenous candidates. Photograph courtesy of marcdaltonmp.com

One of just two Conservative Indigenous MPs, Mr. Dalton's political history spans even further back than his 2019 win in the House of Commons. Since 2009, he's been involved as a Liberal Member of the



New Democrat Lori Idlout says Canadians have to realize Indigenous people are strong. Photograph courtesy of NDP.ca



Indigenous MPs looking forward to taking their seats in the House of Commons during the 44th Parliament say they plan to become active members of the Indigenous caucus, push for action to ensure Indigenous people in Canada can succeed, and work to have priority issues viewed through and Indigenous lens. The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade

Legislative Assembly of British Columbia.

He said he's proud of his Métis background, noting that learning about the culture in general is "important to know" and enriches others.

This win for him is important in representing Indigenous peoples but he cautioned against tokenism.

"You want to have the candidate there to go through the nomination and win on their own right ... [have that] political fire."

While he was surprised by how much of the vote the People's Party of Canada chipped away across the country, he said he still won by a pretty good margin (36.7 per cent of the vote in his riding, almost 12 points ahead of the second-place NDP finisher).

Now he wants to tackle addiction issues, particularly in regard to recovery and support.

"I think it's important to keep people alive. There's no doubt about it," he said.

MICHAEL MCLEOD

Mr. McLeod is one of the longer standing Indigenous MPs, having been elected federally since 2015, like Mr. Serré and Mr. Badawey. As with Mr. Dalton, he comes from a background as an MLA in Northwest Territories and as a mayor of the town he grew up in, Fort Providence.

His election, he said, means that he will be able to "continue to work on the number of things that were identified as priority," like implementing UNDRIP legislation, through an "Indigenous lens."



Liberal Michael McLeod says the whole tone of the House would change if there were 100 Indigenous MPs. The Hill Times file photograph

However, he was disappointed there weren't more First Nations Members this time around. The whole tone of Parliament he said would change if "we had 100 MPs."

Aside from UNDRIP, he said he wants to continue chipping away at the calls to action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and systematic racism.

One thing that makes his experience unique as an MP is the difficulty in explaining Indigenous issues to those outside the community.

"I think Indigenous MPs have the challenge of continually having to educate people about the Indigenous lifestyle and history," he said. "I think you would hear that from probably every northern MP, you're probably going to hear it from mostly Indigenous MPs, but that is our challenge."

Catholic Bishops of Canada apologize for residential schools system

After a summer marred by the discovery of thousands of unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools, and a following series of burning of churches across the country, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops have at last come out with a formal apology, published in a letter Sept. 24.

The letter, it explains, came out of months of regular meetings and conversation with Indigenous leaders at local and national levels. Even its annual Plenary Assembly meeting was focused down to this topic, with "this year's major focus being on healing and reconciliation," the statement reads.

And the end result? A collective statement of apology, remorse, and sorrow.

"We acknowledge the suffering experienced in Canada's Indian Residential Schools," it said in the letter. "Many Catholic religious communities and dioceses participated in this system, which led to the suppression of Indigenous languages, culture, and spirituality, failing to respect the rich history, tradition and wisdom of Indigenous peoples."

Alice Chen

Heard On The Hill



Continued from page 2

The letter went on to “acknowledge” the “grave abuses” committed by “some” members of the religious community.

“We, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, express our profound remorse and apologize unequivocally,” it continued.

It was also heavy on emphasizing the process of healing and reconciliation, with a commitment to provide documentation that will assist in identifying those buried in the mass graves.

It stressed further that it is open to listening to the experiences of Indigenous people.

In December, a delegation of Indigenous youth, elders, and survivors will make their way to meet **Pope Francis** in France.

The group followed up the apology on Sept. 27 with another announcement about the commitment of \$30-million over up to five years “to support healing and reconciliation initiatives for residential school survivors, their families, and their communities.”

Assembly of First Nations National Chief **RoseAnne Archibald** said in a statement that though she welcomed the apology, she was “disappointed that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops did not take the long overdue step of passing a motion/resolution to formally invite the Pope to Canada to offer his apology to First Nations and Indigenous Survivors and intergenerational trauma survivors here on Turtle Island.”

Resources for support

For those in need of support, please contact:

- Residential School Survivor Support Line: 1-866-925-4419
- Indian Residential School Survivors Society toll free line: 1-800-721-0066
- Hope for Wellness 24/7 Help Line: 1-855-242-3310

Sen. Audette joins the ISG



Sen. Michèle Audette has joined the Independent Senators Group. *Photograph courtesy of LinkedIn*

New Senator **Michèle Audette** will find her home in the Red Chamber with the Independent Senators Group. The ISG, which now has a total of 41 members, announced Sen. Audette had joined its ranks in a Sept. 27 press release.

“I look forward to begin work on advancing the goals of the Independent Senators Group. I am committed to invest myself with the passion that has always driven me and to contribute positively to the work of the Upper Chamber,” she said in the release.

Appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on July 29, Sen. Audette came to the Senate directly from the Université Laval, where she has been assistant to the vice-rector of Academic and Student Affairs, and senior adviser for reconcilia-

tion and Indigenous education. She spent three years as the president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada and was one of five commissioners who conducted the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

“We look forward to working with our new colleague who is an outstanding individual that has dedicated her career to moving forward the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the governments of Quebec and Canada. Senator Michèle Audette is a recognized Indigenous leader, a MMIWG inquiry commissioner and a former assistant deputy minister in the Quebec government. She is a strong addition to our team and to the Senate,” Sen. **Yuen Pau Woo**, ISG facilitator, said in the release.

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The Hill Times



Study period at Roman Catholic Indian Residential School, [Fort] Resolution, Northwest Territories.

Photograph courtesy of Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Library and Archives Canada



RECONCILIATION, SHIPS, AND PROTECTING HAIDA VALUES

By **Russ Jones, Council of the Haida Nation Advisor and Robert Lewis-Manning, Chamber of Shipping President**

Canada recently made a political commitment to a renewed nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership. This has been reinforced in the passing of Bill C-15, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. Despite diverse views regarding reconciliation and the complexity of charting a course that respects the uniqueness of Indigenous groups, there are practical examples of partnerships between First Nations and Canada that provide measurable impacts and a stepping stone for further positive action towards a shared model of governance. One such achievement is a collaborative effort called the Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping between the Haida Nation and Transport Canada, in collaboration with the commercial marine industry.

Haida Gwaii is a remote archipelago located on Canada’s north Pacific Coast that is home to a rich abundance and diversity of marine life, lush rainforests, special marine and terrestrial protected areas such as Gwaii Haanas Haida Heritage Site and National Marine Conservation Area and the Haida people who have lived there for thousands of years. In June 2020, the Council of the Haida Nation, Transport Canada, and the shipping industry agreed to implement a 14-month trial Voluntary Shipping Protection Zone. This zone encompasses an area that extends 50 miles west of Haida Gwaii and aims to increase the reaction time to recover a disabled ship before it can cause irreparable damage to the unique coastal ecosystem of the archipelago. This followed earlier work by the Haida Nation and Transport Canada in 2018 to update the Pacific Places of Refuge Contingency Plan for Haida Gwaii waters. These initiatives were the result of a near miss shipping incident that raised awareness about

the risk of shipping to Haida Gwaii. In 2014, the cargo ship SIMUSHIR lost power during a foul Pacific storm and came dangerously close to grounding on Haida Gwaii before it was recovered by the Canadian Coast Guard. The Haida Nation led a collaborative Lessons from the Simushir workshop in 2015 that identified these and other potential measures needed to improve marine safety in the Haida Gwaii archipelago. The Voluntary Shipping Protection Zone now requires ships to transit farther offshore when it is safe to do so, thereby increasing the reaction time to recover a vessel in distress and avoid a situation such as the SIMUSHIR.

The implementation of the recent Voluntary Shipping Protection Zone was not the product of a traditional regulatory process, but rather the consequence of a unique pilot program called Proactive Vessel Management. This initiative under the Oceans Protection Plan included pilot projects in the Pacific and Arctic regions intended to develop an innovative approach to addressing Indigenous and coastal communities’ concerns relating to commercial shipping. The project represents significant and unprecedented collaboration between the Council of the Haida Nation, the Government of Canada, and the maritime shipping industry, along with other advisors and partners, and supports commitments made by the Government of Canada and the Council of the Haida Nation to advance collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation. The initiative is co-led by the Council of the Haida Nation and Transport Canada, operating under the collaborative governance structure established in the 2018 Reconciliation Framework Agreement for Bioregional Oceans Management and Protection.

Since the Voluntary Shipping Protection Zone was established, there has been increasing compliance by ships transiting the coast. This level of progress in a relatively short period of time was no accident, but the product of a shared governance model, strong analytical resources, and the leadership and commitment of everyone involved

in the project. A key experience that accelerated trust-building was the hosting of a two-day workshop by the Council of the Haida Nation on Haida Gwaii. For many industry representatives and federal regulators, this was a first visit to the region and a crash course in Haida history and cultural awareness. The governance partners and marine industry stakeholders developed a high level of trust through shared experiences, mutual awareness, and a willingness to listen and learn.

Other collaborative work underway through the Reconciliation Framework Agreement includes efforts to improve marine incident preparedness, response and recovery in the British Columbia North Coast including Haida Gwaii in partnership with the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Province of British Columbia. The Proactive Vessel Management initiative is unique in its broader partnerships involving the shipping industry. It has increased the level of coastal protection for the Haida Nation, and identified additional challenges to consider in the future. The Haida Nation has expressed interest in a more permanent measure such as an Area to Be Avoided under the International Maritime Organization similar to those in place for the Aleutians and Washington State (the Olympic Peninsula National Marine Sanctuary). The dialogue has prompted a conversation about a longer-term approach and how the Voluntary Shipping Protection Zone may become a common shipping practice and be incorporated into integrated marine planning on Canada’s North Pacific Coast. Perhaps more importantly, it has validated that shared values, mutual understanding, and respect can have a positive impact and be a catalyst for incremental and meaningful change.

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Stories, Myths, and Truths



Not only do Canadians need to come to grips with the facts that the country has ardently fought against Indigenous rights, and just as resolutely stood idly by as children died. But Canadians are also coming to grips with the fact that the federal government is still not acting in the best interest of Indigenous kids, writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in their riding, or they will be immediately noticed for their arrogant refusal and lack of empathy. It truly is empathy that matters. Racism is really about a lack of empathy, a lack of caring about another human. To avoid that label, it's time every MP committed to their own learning.

MPs: learn about Canada's history, the history that wasn't taught in schools. Learn about the white supremacy that founded the Indian Act, the blasé racism that underwrote the residential schools, the uncaring system of government that turned its back on Indigenous children which contributed to their deaths at residential schools, and then learn about the strength of that same system to resist change. Because now you are part of that system.

Bring others along in your learning. Talk to your peers about your learning. Talk to your family. Talk to Hill staffers. Talk about your learning in committees, in Question Period, in the closed-door meetings.

Challenge others to refuse to accept the status quo because it hasn't helped the rights of Indigenous peoples at all. Challenge your riding office and political staff to apply an Indigenous lens to every single decision your office makes: will this support Indigenous voices and inclusion, or not? If it doesn't support Indigenous voices, inclusion, and success, then how can we possibly put forward a policy or position which actively excludes a group by culture?

Then gird yourself for the fight. The Hill more often than not will protect itself over the lives of Indigenous peoples. Find yourself a circle of support and mentors to help you in the fight for the rights of the Indigenous citizens in your riding, as it will indeed be a fight.

What does it take to do real reconciliation?

It is a particularly painful journey for generations of Canadians brought up in the insidious myth that the federal government knows what's best for those Indigenous communities. Not only do Canadians need to come to grips with the facts that the country has ardently fought against Indigenous rights, and just as resolutely stood idly by as children died. But Canadians are also coming to grips with the fact that the federal government is still not acting in the best interest of Indigenous kids.

Concerted and relentless demands for change are the only way forward. Citizens of all cultures and backgrounds are needed to add their voice and am-

Reconciliation is not superficial lip service, it is not a policy, it is not an approach to apply across a system, nor is it led by the federal government. It is about changing hearts and minds, changing the process of how to make policy, changing the system, and changing the federal government from the inside out.

Rose
LeMay

*Stories, Myths,
and Truths*



the right to clean water for Indigenous communities or quality education for First Nations kids or equitable health services for Inuit, we have heard it before. "We are committed, and it's going to take some time." It really means "your life is not worth my urgency." When Alberta says it won't recognize Sept. 30, have no fear that First Nations in Alberta fully understand the implications.

Reconciliation is not superficial lip service; it is about changing hearts and minds. Reconciliation is not a policy; it is about changing the process of how to make policy. Reconciliation is not an approach to apply across a system; it is about changing the system. Reconciliation is not led by the federal government; it is

about changing the federal government from the inside out.

How do we know? Because superficiality, a reconciliation policy, some more talk, and tears—it hasn't changed a thing in the life of that First Nations four-year old living in an uninsulated house with 15 other family members, without clean water or a sewer system, without daycare, without access to a doctor. Iterations of the same policy made by the same bureaucracy conveniently arguing for its own jobs and status quo—it should come as no surprise that it hasn't changed a thing for that First Nations child.

So how does reconciliation happen now?

Change occurs individual by individual, leader by leader. We choose to be open to new information, we choose to learn more, and we choose to integrate new ways of being. We don't do change, we change.

It's not easy. It involves learning and integrating knowledge that will challenge assumptions of what Canada is. Thousands of Canadians took another step in their reconciliation journey this summer in learning about the rediscovery of unmarked graves of children at residential schools.

“

MPs: learn about Canada's history, the history that wasn't taught in schools. Learn about the uncaring system of government that turned its back on Indigenous children which contributed to their deaths at residential schools, and then learn about the strength of that same system to resist change. Because now you are part of that system.

plify the demand. Perhaps then the managers of central agencies who work to protect the status quo, and political party insiders who focus on easy wins for quick visibility, maybe just maybe they will hear the demands.

The 44th Parliament will start just after the very first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. MPs will be noticed immediately for their humble commitment to learn more about

Build your circle of Indigenous peoples back home for advice and strength.

It will help to be clear on the goals of reconciliation. Build your hope for the future because hope is what fires reconciliation. Consider our future ... the Inuit baby who is born in community because there is excellent health care and midwifery. Born sur-

Continued on page 9

Hope remains for Liberal action on Indigenous promises, but spotty record leaves many advocates skeptical

Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, says the Liberals have had to be dragged ‘kicking and screaming’ to effect change.

BY ALICE CHEN

After an election that saw little talk of Indigenous issues, advocates decry a “scaling down of ambition” over time by the Trudeau Liberals and argue the need for continued public pressure to effect real change—but hope remains.

For Legacy of Hope Foundation president Adam North Peigan, there’s mainly fragile faith.

“We do have a lot of faith, but at the same time there’s a lot more work that needs to be done to bring about meaningful reconciliation for the Indigenous,” said Mr. Peigan.



Newly elected NDP MP Lori Idlout says the Liberals need to stop fighting Indigenous people in court, while Liberal MP Marc Serré argues that ‘no other federal government has done as much for Indigenous communities.’ Screenshot courtesy of NDP.ca, The Hill Times file photograph



For him, the passion for working on these issues comes from a history of hardship.

“My parents went to residential school ... and I’m part of the ‘60s scoop,” he said. “I’ve [been inflicted with] my own hardship, my own trauma, and I’ve come out on the other side to be the man that I am

today—and I want to see that for all of the survivors right across Canada.”

This election cycle, the Liberals promised mainly to continue work that’s already started, with reference to investments to supply clean water and to fully fund Jordan’s Principle in the party’s platform. It also includes mention of past work: imple-

mentation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through legislation given royal assent on June 21, and the handing of jurisdiction over child welfare back to Indigenous governments.

Overall, the Liberal platform was graded as a “B” by the Native Women’s Association of Canada’s Election 44 Party Platform Review, with high scores for rights for Indigenous women and self-determination, while lower marks were given for justice and economic development.

But, by contrast, on Sept. 24 the federal government filed an appeal seeking to overturn a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling on the systemic underfunding of First Nations child welfare.

Mike Coates, co-founder and executive chairman of Rubicon Strategy, called the Liberals’ efforts on Indigenous issues “more virtue signalling,” and suggested they likely “won’t execute meaningful policy change.”

Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, said the Liberals have had to be dragged “kicking and screaming” to effect change.

“There absolutely needs to be public pressure on this,” she said.

However, some, like Makivik Corporation president Pita Aatami, were most positive. Mr. Aatami said he’s “pleased with the outcome of the this year’s federal election,” in a Sept. 23 press release. He emphasized this was because the files they were working on with the Trudeau government prior to the election could be picked up and worked on with ease.

Continued on page 20

LISTEN | LEARN | REFLECT | HONOUR

Ducks Unlimited Canada applauds the Government of Canada’s continued investment in Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and the Indigenous Guardians program. As we face the mounting threats of climate change and habitat loss, we believe Indigenous-led conservation is essential to protecting nature and supporting biodiversity in Canada. A substantial, long-term financial commitment towards Indigenous-led conservation is a vital component in our collective efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

As part of our ongoing conservation partnerships with Indigenous communities, Ducks Unlimited Canada supports Indigenous Peoples across the country as they work to advance stewardship activities on the land. We have been a proud supporting partner of Indigenous-led conservation for more than 50 years. To learn more visit ducks.ca/working-with-indigenous-peoples

On the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, we seek to listen, learn and reflect on the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, amplify their voices, and participate in ways that honour this day of remembrance.



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Ducks Unlimited Canada’s mission is to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for the benefit of North America’s waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

Opinion

Our kids deserve equality and equity. We share a common positive hope and vision where our children are happy and healthy, surrounded by the love and care of their families living in safe and vibrant communities, writes AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald.

Unsplash photograph by Rene Bernal



Colonialism and its policies hurt our children

The truths that must be told will force us to abandon the beliefs that no longer serve us. When we nullify false narratives, the real work of building a fair and just society will move beyond aspiration to reality.

RoseAnne Archibald

Opinion



Non-Indigenous Canadians are grappling with the truth that this country is built upon genocide.

Further, we have proof and horrific evidence that our families, particularly our children were the innocent victims in, what I call, institutions of assimilation and genocide. Our ancestors, grandparents, and parents always prayed that our children and babies would return home, but not in the way that we are witnessing today.

As I had heard of the first 215 children recovered from unmarked graves on the lands of Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc, I

cried, and I still feel emotional at the thought of them and the thousands of little ones who have been recovered since then. First Nations and non-Indigenous peoples of this land will continue to grieve as the numbers rise, with many more institutions to be searched. However, I am hopeful because this tragedy has created empathy and built allyship across Turtle Island. We all stand together asking, "What can be done to bring justice?"

We can say definitively, colonialism and its policies hurt our children. In 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott, a former Indian Affairs agent, pushed and passed an amendment to the Indian Act leading to school attendance being compulsory for all First Nations children younger than 15 years of age. This was blatant targeting of our children and families, the reverberations of which are still felt today.

Finally, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action No. 80 will be fulfilled. On Sept. 30, a day of Truth and Reconciliation will be marked as a federal statutory holiday to honour the lives of our little ones and those who lived to tell their stories, our Survivors.

Often when governments talk about Reconciliation, they don't acknowledge that there must be truth before Reconciliation. The truths that must be told will force us to abandon the beliefs that no

longer serve us. When we nullify false narratives, the real work of building a fair and just society will move beyond aspiration to reality.

First, we must acknowledge that overt, covert, and systemic racism is the oozing wound that

All the prosperity, peace, and safety enjoyed by non-Indigenous Canadians is the great gift of First Nations to everyone. Whether First Nations have signed treaties or not, the fact remains that First Nations uphold their inherent

rights. The Treaty did not create the rights, rather it affirmed the sovereignty, rights, and responsibilities of the Nations who entered into Treaties.

During my visit to Mi'kmaki (which Nova Scotia is part of), I witnessed first-hand and up close how these God-given rights are being criminalized, and worse, how the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) enforcement officers harass and intimidate rights holders who are simply trying to feed their families. Ultimately, it is again our children who suffer. The DFO and the federal government are taking the food out of our children's mouths.

It is always our children who suffer the most. Our children live in overcrowded substandard houses, our little ones attend schools not funded to the same level as non-Indigenous schools, our kids deserve equality and equity. We share a common positive hope and vision where our children are happy and healthy surrounded by the love and care of their families living in safe and vibrant communities.

It's incumbent upon all of us to find the healing path forward for the sake of our children and grandchildren and the seven generations ahead.

RoseAnne Archibald is national chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

The Hill Times



There is a refusal to acknowledge and accept that First Nations were placed here by the Creator and that we have a sacred duty to love and care for the land, water, and resources for future generations. All the prosperity, peace, and safety enjoyed by non-Indigenous Canadians is the great gift of First Nations to everyone, writes AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald.

Photograph courtesy of the Assembly of First Nations

must be healed in Canada. There is a refusal to acknowledge and accept that First Nations were placed here by the Creator and that we have a sacred duty to love and care for the land, water, and resources for future generations.

rights and responsibilities.

An example of this is the Peace and Friendship Treaty signed by the Mi'kmaq and French settlers in 1725. Contained within that Treaty are provisions regarding hunting, fishing, and

Canada did not succeed: we are still here and we are powerful

As we move forward from the 2021 election and through the next months as a new Parliament forms, we must choose to make reconciliation a central priority.

Stephanie Scott

Opinion



Canada is just emerging from a federal election and, although the makeup of Parliament did not shift much, the outcome will determine the future of reconciliation.

The election followed a summer where the discoveries of more than 1,300 unmarked graves at former residential schools across the country inspired calls for action. Each of the five major parties spoke directly to reconciliation in their platforms, with some calling for the implementation of all of the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The successful Liberal campaign pledged funding for a permanent home for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), as well as sustained funding for work on missing children and unmarked graves.

A record number of 77 Indigenous candidates ran for election. One-in-five Canadian voters included reconciliation as part of their “top five” issues—double the amount from 2019.

Yet despite this, reconciliation faded into the background.

This echoes what Indigenous peoples have experienced for years. Real action on reconciliation has stalled in the nearly six years following the completion of the TRC and only 14 of the 94 Calls to Action have been completed. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across the country still face extreme disadvantages, including food insecurity, overcrowded and inadequate housing, lack of safe drinking water, suicide and mental health crises, loss of language, and more.

But while Canada is still at the very beginning of this work, we have seen some movement.

This Sept. 30, the federal government, five provinces (British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador), and two territories (Yukon and the Northwest Territories) will recognize the inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a moment for all people—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—to come together to reflect on the violent and ongoing legacy of the impacts of colonialism across Turtle Island.

This past summer, many Canadians acknowledged the truth of that legacy for the first time. For too long, Canadians have ignored the country’s violent history and attempts to assimilate Indigenous peoples. Some were apathetic to the harms experienced by Indigenous children forced to attend residential school. Despite the TRC report, the truth remained out of sight and out of mind.

We are beginning a new chapter of our understanding of the devastating impacts of residential schools and the legacy of colonialism, with more people engaged than ever before.

All levels of government across the country must commit to real reconciliation. They can begin by recognizing this important day and making space for reflection and remembrance.

This week, people across the country have also had the chance to participate in Truth and Reconciliation Week, hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. The educational programming over the past few days gave students, educators, and other people across the country the opportunity to hear from Survivors, Elders,



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Knowledge Keepers, and many other Indigenous leaders.

Hearing directly from Indigenous peoples is vital to continue this truth-telling and to spark a national conversation about the future of reconciliation. The compelling words of Survivors, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers illustrate that Canada did not succeed: we are still here and we are powerful. Many still hold our language, our culture, and our songs.

That’s also why—with the little time many Survivors have left—the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a significant time to centre their voices while they can still share these important stories themselves.

On Sept. 30, we will come together to honour all Survivors and the lives of those


lost to Canada’s residential school system. We will remember the children who came home and those who did not. Each child stolen from their family is a tragedy and every death; each loss of a single child is beyond words.


As we move forward from the 2021 election and through the next months as a new Parliament forms, we must choose to make reconciliation a central priority. Reconciliation is a path we must all walk together each day, not just on a statutory holiday.

Stephanie Scott is the executive director of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in Winnipeg and Anishinaabe from Roseau River First Nation.

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126 SPARKS





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Editorial

Reconcile with the truth and make long-awaited change

The months prior to the federal election could not have made a starker case for action on eliminating the systemic barriers, discrimination, and outright racism against Indigenous people in Canada.

The announcement by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation of what is likely the remains of approximately 215 children on the grounds of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C., at the end of May shook many Canadians who had been living in blissful ignorance of the long-told horrors revealed by residential school survivors.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission spent six years travelling the country, gathering stories and accounts, and working to engage Canadians on the history of the system that stole Indigenous people from their homes and fought to assimilate them into the government's and the church's preferred mould. The commission's work wrapped in 2015 with a massive report and 94 calls to action, and yet, after the Kamloops discovery, many expressed shock and ignorance.

Flags were lowered nationwide in mourning, and that shock and disbelief continued as the Cowesses First Nation in Saskatchewan announced the discovery of about 751 unmarked graves at the former Marieval Indian Residential School on June 24.

Politicians of all stripes vowed to never forget and to take action to rectify these historic wrongs, while contemporary injustices raged on.

It had only been a few months prior to the discovery in Kamloops that an October suspicious fire destroyed a lobster boat belonging to a Mi'kmaq fisher in Nova Scotia and a mob attacked and vandalized a pair of Mi'kmaq lobster compounds, as First Nation and non-Indigenous fishers clashed over the moderate livelihood fishing the Mi'kmaw have an inherent right to.

This came mere days after the death of Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman in Quebec, who filmed herself being insulted by hospital staff before she passed.

The feds convened emergency meetings on systemic racism in the health-care system, but that path towards change and action only came after someone died, in a very public way—much as we saw with the outcry after the death of George Floyd in the U.S. and other instances of police brutality in Canada that were captured on camera, such as against Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations Chief Allan Adam. This has been a problem for countless years and only gets noticed when it's caught on video.

The election was a missed opportunity to put the spotlight on issues that require urgent attention. Political leaders should lead, and the political will wasn't there to ensure that reconciliation with this country's Indigenous people remains a priority. Hopefully, all those who are going to be taking seats in the House in the new Parliament will spend Sept. 30 reflecting on what needs to be done to move forward with real, concrete action, and not just more promises to do better.

The Hill Times

Letters to the Editor

Don't let party rhetoric rewrite history, says reader

Re: "Politics This Morning: O'Toole on the hot seat with Tories just days after election; Green-turned-Liberal MP Atwin wins in Fredericton," (*The Hill Times*, Sept. 23). In this morning newsletter, you wrote, "The Conservatives—Canada's founding political party that governed from Confederation in 1867 through to 1896—..." While a common refrain, and indeed one repeated ad nauseum by the current and present leader of the party during the campaign, and in campaigns past, this is not accurate.

The Conservative Party of Canada is not Canada's founding political party. I'm not sure where this fable got its start, though I suspect it may have started to emerge during John A. Macdonald's last campaign ("The old flag, the old policy, the old leader"). In any case, the original political alliance that led to the formation of Canada was a coalition uniting Canada East and Canada

West called the "Liberal-Conservative Party." The Canadian Encyclopedia cites that the "Clear Grits" of Canada West led by George Brown partnered with the Conservatives of Macdonald and George Étienne Cartier in Canada East to form the "Grand Coalition" in 1864—this led to successful conventions leading up to Confederation in 1867.

Now, I'm old enough to remember the current Conservative Party of Canada only being formed in 2003, when the Progressive Conservative Party merged with the Canadian Alliance. Please don't let one political faction in Canada claim ownership of our collective origins. The foundation of Canada was indeed a coalition of Clear Grit and Bleu Tory, East and West, French and English, Catholic and Protestant, Liberal and Conservative. I believe your readers and all Canadians would appreciate that explanation.

Shane O'Neill
Aylmer, Que.

Speak out for ambitious climate action, says Quebec reader

Do you remember fall 2019? We have witnessed something remarkable: hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in Canada to demand action to deal with a growing climate crisis.

On Friday, Sept. 24, young climate strikers from around the world returned to the streets. They reminded us that, despite 18 months of a global pandemic, the climate emergency is raging. They come together to remind the world that their future is on the line and we are running out of time.

UN climatologists last month issued a "code red for humanity" with their latest

global scientific assessment of the crisis. Their science shows that the climate crisis is accelerating. The assessment concludes that without immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions this decade, limiting heating to safe levels (1.5 C or 2 C by the end of the century) will be out of reach.

To implement the necessary transformational change, it is up to each of us to keep the pressure on our new elected officials to face the climate crisis now.

Denise Beamish
West-Brome, Que.

There are lessons to be learned from snap election call: letter writer

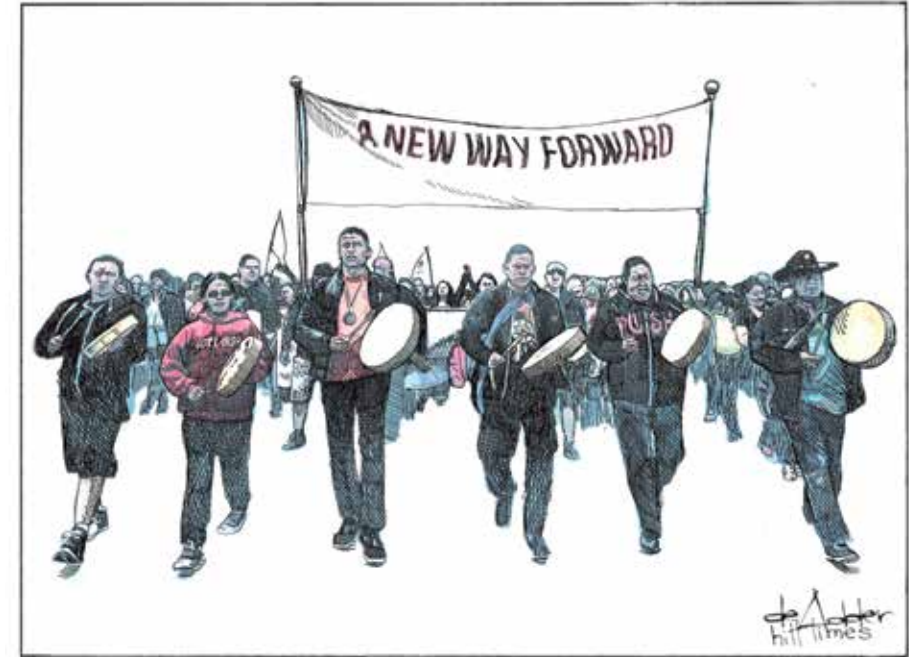
Parliamentary sovereignty in Canada is a constitutional principle. That it can be dissolved by a decision of two individuals—the prime minister and the Governor General—undermines its sovereignty.

As has become clear from recent events, Parliament can be dissolved and a fresh election called by the Governor General on the advice of the prime minister in total disregard of widely reported voices raised against it by opposition parties, a raging pandemic exposing prospective voters to high risks of serious infection, and an expenditure of \$600-million.

The law needs to be seriously looked at so as to avoid a repeat of such a situation. A possible alternative could be that the process of dissolution (except at the end of the parliamentary term) be based on a parliamentary resolution tabled by an MP and supported by at least 60 per cent of the Members of Parliament calling on the prime minister to advise the Governor General to dissolve Parliament and call fresh elections.

This would give only the Parliament the right to dissolve itself, which would be more in keeping with the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.

Ghazy Mujahid
Mississauga, Ont.



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Truth and reconciliation holiday a chance to untangle unexamined family ties

These revelations of systemic Indigenous abuse actually caused me, for the first time, to further research my own familial roots.

Scott Taylor

Inside Defence



OTTAWA—The current sense of national shame began on May 28 with the media reports of some 200 unmarked graves discovered on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. The majority of those bodies are believed to be those of Indigenous students attending the facility.

Then, in rapid succession, came the reported findings of more unmarked graves at four other former residential schools: Brandon, Man., Marieval, Sask., Cranbrook, B.C., and Kuper Island, B.C. The largest single discovery was at Marieval, with an estimated 751 graves, putting the collective total at just under 1,400. There are presently 21 investigations underway in search of additional unmarked graves at former residential schools. It is

estimated the number could climb to 4,100 bodies.

The implementation of the residential school system dates back to its authorization by then prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald on July 1, 1883.

Macdonald's stated goal was to isolate Indigenous children from their families and to cut all ties they had to their culture. In hindsight, this practice has been widely denounced as a form of cultural genocide. These graveyard discoveries suddenly put an entirely new spin on things, and Canadians were shocked to discover this sad chapter in our nation's history.

The public outpouring of emotion was immediate with demonstrators wearing orange and carrying signs proclaiming "All lives matter." In many towns and cities across Canada, statues of Macdonald were either vandalized or toppled. As early as June, the Trudeau Liberals ordered flags to be flown at half-mast in recognition of this historical tragedy. To date they remain there, as no one quite knows what would be a suitable marker signifying that we have paid proper respect to the victims. Some have suggested that the new Sept. 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation federal statutory holiday would be that occasion.

For me, these revelations of systemic Indigenous abuse actually caused me, for the first time, to further research my own familial roots. Growing up in Toronto, I knew that my maternal grandmother Pauline



Pupils of Mohawk Institute are pictured in Brantford, Ont., in September 1934. Scott Taylor writes that he now knows that under the terms of the 1885 Indian Act, it would have been mandatory for his grandmother Pauline to attend the Mohawk Residential Institute at Brantford until the age of 16. Photograph courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

was a Mohawk born on the Six Nations of the Grand Reserve near Brantford, Ont.

Our family also knew that Pauline had left the reserve in 1930 at the age of 16, soon after married my grandfather—a Scotsman—and by doing so, she cut all ties with her Mohawk roots. By marrying a "non-Indian" she legally lost her status as an "Indian."

Given the current attention on this subject, I now know that under the terms of the 1885 Indian Act, it would have been mandatory for Pauline to attend the Mohawk Residential Institute at Brantford until the age of 16.

This particular school was notorious for its abuse of students.

The food quality was substandard and the school was nicknamed the "Mush Hole" by attendees. Students who "escaped" were placed in a purpose-built prison in the school's basement. Described as essentially a dark closet, students would be kept in there for days at a time. Shock treatment for the infraction of bed wetting and the close-cropped hair for males and females led to the students being referred to as "Mush Hole baldies."

In 1985, under Canada's new Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the previous law was changed, allowing those Indigenous women married to "non-Indians" to reclaim their status. However, by that juncture, Pauline was 71

years old and had been cut off from the reserve for 55 years. As a result, not only myself, but my sister and our cousins were never connected to our Indigenous relatives. That is going to change. Through my maternal aunts and uncles, I am starting to assemble the genesis of a family tree and I plan to reach out to Pauline's extended family on this first ever National Day for Truth and Reconciliation holiday.

The National Indian Residential School Crisis Hotline can be reached at 1-866-925-4419.

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

The Hill Times

Stories, Myths, and Truths

What does it take to do real reconciliation?

Continued from page 4

rounded by family and aunts and uncles, blanketed in love. Brought up in safety with daycare and excellent schools fit for any Canadian kid. The Inuit youth who never knows what suicide is, but instead is deeply connected to land and culture and community and self-identity. Or the First Nations school which leads the country on academic success. Or the Métis community hospital which leads the world in the integration of mainstream and Indigenous ways of health care. Build your vision.

Because this is what reconciliation is intended to achieve, and don't let anybody tell you otherwise. Reconciliation is about changing the country so we are truly proud to be an Indigenous country.

Start on Sept. 30. Go to a First Nations or Inuit or Métis community in your riding to show your respect. If there is a search for unmarked graves occurring in your riding, your place is there to stand with them and show your quiet support.

As an MP you have a few years, or four, to make a difference for Indigenous citizens in your

riding, but regret for inaction lasts much longer than your term. Take your place as a leader for the fundamental changes needed to bring about reconciliation.

Rose LeMay is Tlingit from the West Coast and the CEO of the Indigenous Reconciliation Group. She writes twice a month about Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. In Tlingit worldview, the stories are the knowledge system, sometimes told through myth and sometimes contradicting the myths told by others. But always with at least some truth.

The Hill Times



The 44th Parliament will start just after the very first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada and MPs will be noticed immediately for their humble commitment to learn more about the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in their riding, or they will be immediately noticed for their arrogant refusal and lack of empathy, writes Rose LeMay. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Opinion



Officials and school children outside the Fort Providence Indian Residential School, 1920. For the last 150 or more years, there has been a concerted effort to take the Indigenous spirit out of the child, through the residential and day school system, the Sixties Scoop, and the child welfare system, writes David Chartrand. The question Canadians must ask is this: given all the effort put into taking our identity away from us, and the centuries of harm done to our people, how long should it take to put that spirit back in the child? *Photograph courtesy of Library and Archives Canada*

We have a long way to go to put meaning behind the word ‘reconciliation’

The concerted effort to take our Indigeneity out of us has been terrifyingly successful in many cases. This can't be dismissed as oral tradition, fables, or campfire stories. It did happen, is happening, and will happen again if we do not confront this dark stain on our country and change our pathway.

David Chartrand

Opinion



Sept. 30 is National Truth and Reconciliation Day.

But what does that mean? For some, it means a day off work. For others, it means seeing flags at half-mast.

For the Red River Métis, the origin and core of the Métis Nation, it's fair to say we probably hear the word "reconciliation" from people who too often don't fully understand its meaning. Not

that there is anything wrong with talking about reconciliation, but what matters more is what is being done to put meaning behind it. Are the people talking about it giving back to the affected communities? Are they making real changes?

Vital to facing the truth portion of truth and reconciliation is understanding how the Indigenous peoples of Canada got to where we are today—people living on lands with little value, or with no land base at all. People often living in abject poverty, with little to no health care, and no economic investment in our communities.

For the last 150 or more years, there has been a concerted effort

to take the Indigenous spirit out of the child, through the residential and day school system, the '60s Scoop, and the child welfare system, which apprehends Indigenous children—including Métis children—at an alarming and disproportionate rate.

It took many decades and many systems to get us to where we are today, with entire generations of families having lost their culture, their identity, their values and even their sense of self-worth. And, importantly, there has been a loss of trust in the Canadian and provincial governments. The concerted effort to take our Indigeneity out of us has been terrifyingly successful in many cases.

This can't be dismissed as oral tradition, fables, or campfire stories. It did happen, is happening, and will happen again if we do not confront this dark stain on our country and change our pathway.

So, the question Canadians must ask is this: given all the effort put into taking our identity away from us, and the centuries of harm done to our people, how long should it take to put that



A young boy with other students and nun in a classroom at the Pukatawagan Residential School, Manitoba, circa 1960. National Truth and Reconciliation Day represents a chance for all Canadians to spend time reflecting on the enormity of what has been done to the First Nations, Inuit, and Red River Métis, writes David Chartrand. *Photograph courtesy of Library and Archives Canada*

spirit back in the child? Is it realistic to expect to mend the results of this systemic racism in a year, or six, or even 10?

National Truth and Reconciliation Day represents a chance for all Canadians to spend time reflecting on the enormity of what has been done to the First Nations, Inuit, and Red River Métis. Making the necessary changes will take time and effort. Repeating the word reconciliation or lowering and raising a flag over and over again is not enough.

On Sept. 30, I encourage each Canadian to take a hard look at their own lives. Are they waking up in a warm, safe bed? Are they taking a paid day off or are they going to a job that allows them to support their family? Do their children have what they need to achieve success in school? Can those children eat a breakfast of fresh fruit and have a drink of clean water before they head to a school that can help them achieve their dreams?

In short: how does your life compare to the realities of the Indigenous experience in Canada? How does it compare to the lives

of the children who died at residential and day schools or are suffering from the results of the '60s Scoop or child welfare systems?

If this honest reflection on what truth and reconciliation mean does not shift thinking, inspire action, and deliver results, I don't know what will. I only hope that we start making real progress before our Elders leave this world. After all, it is they who have suffered the most and fought the longest for reconciliation with this country we all love. They deserve to see that their resilience, courage, and heart made a difference.

For the Red River Métis, making reconciliation real starts with families and children. In the last several years, we've seen an ideological shift from the federal government towards a nation-to-nation relationship with us, that is starting to make change. People are feeling the difference and lives are being improved. But make no mistake, we still have a long way to go.

David Chartrand is president of the Manitoba Métis Federation. *The Hill Times*

Annual “BUY VETERAN” Campaign Kicks Off Across Canada

Encouraging Canadians to Support Veteran-Owned
Businesses During Remembrance Week, and Beyond



Esprit de Corps magazine is honoured to announce that we are now officially part of the Prince's Trust Canada 'Buy-Veteran' Campaign.



Publisher Scott Taylor

Publisher-Owner Scott Taylor is proud of his military service and to have this magazine recognized as a veteran-owned enterprise.

We are eager to assist in promoting fellow veteran-owned businesses across Canada.

Prince's Trust Canada, a national charity established by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, is launching its annual awareness campaign to encourage Canadians to celebrate and support our veterans in more ways than one. In addition to showing our gratitude during Remembrance Day to those who served our country, there are tangible ways that Canadians can support veterans year-round such as buying from a veteran-owned business, or lending mentorship to aspiring veteran entrepreneurs.



Scott Taylor serving with 2PPCLI on exercise in West Germany, 1985. He and wife Katherine Taylor founded Esprit de Corps in 1988.



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After the vote: what Indigenous leaders said about Election 44



Clockwise from top left: ICC Canada president Monica Ell-Kanayuk, Manitoba Metis Federation president David Chartrand, Makivik Corporation president Pita Aatami, Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare, Union of BC Indian Chiefs president Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, and Southern Chiefs' Organization Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. *Photographs courtesy of Facebook, the MMF, Makivik Corporation, the AFN, and the UBCIC*

Monica Ell-Kanayuk, ICC Canada president:

“We view the results positively for the issues that we speak out on at the international level for Inuit.

“We will continue to work with this government, and engage with the other parties, to ensure that the issues we speak on behalf of Inuit are understood, at the United Nations, Arctic Council, and the UNFCCC process, to name a few. The next major international climate change meeting—COP26—starts on Nov. 1 in Glasgow, Scotland. We want Canada at the table because the stakes are so high for all of us. I hope there will be a new cabinet named soon so that a new

environment minister is in place in time for this vital international meeting.”

Native Women’s Association of Canada:

“The country will go forward with a government that is essentially the same as the one that has been in place since 2019. But, while the vote did not significantly alter the makeup of seats in the House of Commons, the Liberal government’s attention to issues that affect the lives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women must change.

“While the Liberals have made promises through three different election campaigns,

they have not followed through in ways that meet the needs of the Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people that NWAC represents.

“We look forward to working with this government, under its new mandate, to enact the policies that are genuinely needed now to bring substantial change, especially as they relate to reducing the violence that continues to be directed against us, and to respecting our basic human rights.

“We look forward to meeting, face to face, with Prime Minister Trudeau and with the leaders of all opposition parties in the coming weeks to discuss the urgent steps that must be taken to make reconciliation a reality.”

Tungasuvvingat Inuit:

“Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) congratulates the Liberal Party of Canada on being re-elected in leading the nation as the federal governing party. TI is pleased with the relationships with the Liberal government and we look forward to continued support for the growing urban Inuit population across Ontario.

“As we reflect, we are pleased with the accomplishments achieved, the increased interest in strategic partnerships and the increased funding. We are encouraged and look forward to ongoing favourable outcomes in our relationship with the Liberal government. It is important to note that the 2016 Census released data that substantiated urban Inuit populations that exceed 40 per cent. Based on the explosive population growth, the need for services and programs for urban Inuit continue to match the population increase. Identifying and addressing these unique needs as the national public government will require a policy framework that focus on Inuit living away from the North.”

Assembly of First Nations National Chief RoseAnne Archibald:

“I offer congratulations to Prime Minister Trudeau and the Liberal Party on their re-election. I look forward to continuing to work with the Liberal government and all parties to address First Nations priorities as set out in the Healing Path Forward platform,

while continuing to make transformative change for our children, communities and Nations.

“I recognize every First Nation citizen who chose whether to vote in this election or not and offer my sincerest congratulations to all of the Indigenous candidates—you’ve made us all proud. There is a healing path forward and we can get there by working together. I committed to working with all parties after the election to ensure that Canada guarantees equality and equity as we heal, as we rebuild and strengthen First Nations.”

Pita Aatami, Makivik Corporation president:

“I’m pleased with the outcome of this year’s federal election. This government first took office in November of 2015, and from that day forward we started the long process of educating the government and their officials on the issues that Inuit across the Arctic face every day. This is a process that we find ourselves in each time a new party is elected to office. With the Liberals re-elected it means that we can pick our files back up from where they were left when the writ was dropped and get right back to work.

“I look forward to [Bloc MP-elect] Sylvie Bérubé’s visit to Nunavik this time around. It’s very important to us that you visit the region that you represent and that we discuss how you can help us in our priorities. The reality of the communities across Nunavik is drastically different when compared to a city like Val d’Or, and the only way to truly understand the constituents that you serve

in Nunavik is to come to the region and meet us in person. We look forward to your visit to Nunavik and the talks that follow.”

Southern Chiefs’ Organization Grand Chief Jerry Daniels:

“Now that this campaign is behind us, I look forward to continuing the work that we have started with the prime minister.

“Even though they find themselves in a minority situation when it comes to governing, I can say with confidence, the MAJORITY of Canadians want to see concrete action when it comes to finally implementing the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry. Now I hope this is the last time we go to the polls for a while and that we can get back to the work that matters.”

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs president:

“Unfortunately, the lacklustre federal election not only marked Prime Minister Trudeau’s failure to fulfill key commitments to Indigenous peoples, including his promise to bring clean drinking water to all Indigenous communities during his first five years in office, but highlighted the continued sidelining of many important Indigenous issues and the devastating forced departure of Jody Wilson-Raybould as a result of the sordid SNC-Lavalin affair.

“It is 2021 and Indigenous peoples have seen enough symbolism and two-faced, empty talk. The time is now for our basic rights to be fulfilled—for Indigenous peoples to have clean drinking water and

to exercise their jurisdiction and care over their children. While the discovery of the remains of former Indigenous students in unmarked graves at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in May renewed conversation around reconciliation, UBCIC is disappointed to see that this conversation did not continue into the election. We would like to remind Trudeau that not only has he yet to visit Kamloops and the former residential school site, but B.C.-wildfire ravaged communities and homes still need the attention that was diverted to an unnecessary election. Ultimately, the election represents a colossal waste of taxpayer’s money that could have been invested in Indigenous health and childcare, housing and homelessness, and emergency management equipment and infrastructure.”

Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare:

“I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on his re-election and the new and returning Members of Parliament, as well as the 10 Indigenous candidates who were elected in the 44th federal election.

“I hope this election presents a renewed focus on Indigenous issues. While I am pleased to continue our important work alongside Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet, I must remind the prime minister that many promises have not been kept, and the government’s approach to addressing Indigenous issues cannot continue to be politicized.

“We require the Government of Canada to work with us to develop an action plan that addresses the critical issues affecting First Nations in Ontario. This plan must be based

on a renewed relationship and full commitment to moving our shared priorities to the forefront.”

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami:

“ITK extends warmest congratulations to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for his re-election ... and for the confidence demonstrated at the polls for a strong minority government and a collaborative and ambitious multi-party system. Inuit look forward to continuing our productive working relationship with the federal government and advancing the Inuit-Crown relationship, including the shared priority areas identified by the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee.

“In line with our priorities for the election, we call on the government to prioritize completion of an Inuit Nunangat Policy in partnership with ITK, and to adopt and implement it within the first three months of taking office. We also look forward to contributing as full participants to a promised First Ministers’ Meeting related to Indigenous issues and reconciliation.”


David Chartrand, Manitoba Metis Federation president:

“Prime Minister Trudeau has kept his word to the Métis Nation, he has kept his commitments, and we have never in our history seen a prime minister devote so much time to our file.

“The Métis Nation matters to him, the citizens of Red River who founded this province are finally being included in Confederation and to where we belong. It’s just a great feeling to have a government that understands and wants to make a difference, but that also backs up its words.”


The Hill Times

Federal ridings that contain former residential schools




Northwest Territories, NT
Michael McLeod – Liberal
Number of schools: 14

- Akaitcho Hall
- All Saints Residential School (Aklavik)
- Bompas Hall
- Brent Hall
- Federal Hostel at Fort Franklin
- Fleming Hall
- Grandin College
- Grollier Hall
- Hay River Residential School
- Immaculate Conception Residential School (Aklavik)
- Lapointe Hall
- Sacred Heart Residential School (Providence Mission)
- St. Joseph’s Residential School (Fort Resolution)
- Stringer Hall




Kenora, ON
Eric Melillo – Conservative
Number of schools: 7

- Cecilia Jeffrey (Kenora, Shoal Lake)
- Cristal Lake
- McIntosh
- Pelican Lake (Pelican Falls)
- Poplar Hill
- St. Mary’s (Kenora, St. Anthony’s)
- Stirland Lake (Wahbon Bay Academy)




Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, MB
Niki Ashton – NDP
Number of schools: 6

- Churchill Vocational Centre
- Cross Lake (St. Joseph’s, Jack River Annex)
- Fort Alexander (Pine Falls)
- Guy Hill (Cleanwater, The Pas)
- Norway House United Church
- Notre Dame Hostel (Norway House Roman Catholic, Jack River Hostel)




Yukon, YT
Brendan Hanley – Liberal
Number of schools: 6

- Carcross (Chooiluta)
- Coudert Hall (Whitehorse Hostel/Student Residence)
- St. Paul’s Hostel
- Shingle Point (Aklavik)
- Whitehorse Baptist Mission




Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, QC
Sylvie Bérubé – Bloc Québécois
Number of schools: 8

- Carcross (Chooiluta)
- Coudert Hall (Whitehorse Hostel/Student Residence)
- St. Paul’s Hostel
- Shingle Point (Aklavik)
- Whitehorse Baptist Mission




Foothills, AB
John Barlow – Conservative
Number of schools: 4

- Sacred Heart (Brocket)
- St. Cyprian’s (Queen Victoria’s)
- Jubilee Home, Peigan)
- St. Joseph’s Residential School (High River, Dunbow)
- Sarcee (St. Barnabas)




Skeena-Bulkley Valley, BC
Taylor Bachrach – NDP
Number of schools: 4

- Kitimaat
- Lejac (Fraser Lake)
- Lower Post
- Port Simpson (Crosby Home for Girls)




Cariboo-Prince George, BC
Todd Doherty – Conservative
Number of schools: 2

- Anahim Lake Dormitory
- Cariboo (St. Joseph’s, William’s Lake)




Courtenay-Alberni, BC
Gord Johns – NDP
Number of schools: 3

- Ahousat
- Alberni
- Christie (Clayquot, Kakawis)




Brandon—Souris, MB
Larry Maguire – Conservative
Number of schools: 2

- Brandon
- Elkhorn (Washakada)




Grande Prairie-Mackenzie, AB
Chris Warkentin – Conservative
Number of schools: 2

- Assumption (Hay Lakes)
- Sturgeon Lake (Calais, St. Francis Xavier)




St. Albert-Edmonton, AB
Michael Cooper – Conservative
Number of schools: 2

- Edmonton (Poundmaker)
- St. Albert (Youville)




Sault Ste. Marie, ON
Terry Sheehan – Liberal
Number of schools: 2

- Shingwauk
- Wawanosh Home




Thunder Bay-Rainy River, ON
Marcus Powlowski – Liberal
Number of schools: 2

- Fort Frances (St. Margaret’s)
- Fort William (St. Joseph’s)




Timmins-James Bay, ON
Charlie Angus – NDP
Number of schools: 2

- Bishop Horden Hall (Moose Fort, Moose Factory)
- St. Anne’s (Fort Albany)




Abitibi-Témiscamingue, QC
Sébastien Lemire – Bloc Québécois
Number of schools: 1

- Amos (St. Marc-de-Figuery)




Banff-Airdrie, AB
Blake Richards – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Morley (Stony)




Medicine Hat-Carston-Warner, AB
Glen Motz – Conservative
Number of schools: 2

- St. Mary’s (Blood, Immaculate Conception)
- St. Paul’s (Blood, Anglican/Church of England)




Brantford—Brant, ON
Larry Brock – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Mohawk Institute




Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, SK
Kelly Block – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- St. Michael’s (Duck Lake)




Chilliwack—Hope, BC
Mark Strahl – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Coqualeetza




Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, BC
Alistair MacGregor – NDP
Number of schools: 1

- Kuper Island




Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, BC
Frank Caputo – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Kamloops




Kings—Hants, NS
Kody Blois – Liberal
Number of schools: 1

- Shubenacadie




Kootenay—Columbia, BC
Rob Morrison – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Cranbrook (St. Eugene’s, Kootenay)




Lac-Saint-Jean, QC
Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe – Bloc Québécois
Number of schools: 1

- Point Bleue




Lakeland, AB
Shannon Stubbs – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Blue Quills (Saddle Lake, Sacred Heart)




Lambton-Kent—Middlesex, ON
Lianne Rood – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Mount Elgin (Muncey, St. Thomas)




Manitouagan, QC
Marilène Gill – Bloc Québécois
Number of schools: 1

- Sept-Îles (Seven Islands, Notre Dame, Maliotenam)




Moose Jaw-Lake Centre-Loanigan, SK
Fraser Tolmie – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Regina




North Island-Powell River, BC
Rachel Blaney – NDP
Number of schools: 1

- St. Michael’s (Alert Bay Girls’ Home, Alert Bay Boys’ Home)




North Vancouver, BC
Jonathan Wilkinson – Liberal
Number of schools: 1

- St. Paul’s IRS (Squamish, North Vancouver)




Portage-Lisgar, MB
Candice Bergen – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Portage la Prairie




Prince Albert, SK
Randy Hoback – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Prince Albert (St. Alban’s)




Red Deer-Lacombe, AB
Blaine Calkins – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Ermineskin




Saint-Maurice—Champlain, QC
François-Philippe Champagne – Liberal
Number of schools: 1

- La Tuque




Souris—Moose Mountain, SK
Robert Kitchen – Conservative
Number of schools: 1

- Marieval (Cowessess, Crooked Lake)



West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, BC
Patrick Weiler – Liberal
Number of schools: 1

- Sechelt Residential School



Winnipeg South Centre, MB
Jim Carr – Liberal
Number of schools: 1

- Assiniboia (Winnipeg)

Source: School names and locations courtesy of National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation online archive. Compiled by Ian Campbell.

Note: While the list of schools on the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement is closed and cannot be added to, based on a ruling from a B.C. court, the NCTR continues to update and add to its list as more information becomes available. Sometimes schools that were relocated to a new location are considered to be two separate schools on one of these lists, but the same school on the other list. Many schools were known by multiple names.

This list was originally published on Aug. 18, 2021, and has been updated to reflect the Sept. 20 election results.

Opinion

A fresh look at reconciliation through the post-election haze



So where do we go from here? First, pre-election polling suggests that Indigenous reconciliation is a 'matter that matters.' Let us hope the federal party leaders and their political machines hear this message loud and clear and well consider it going forward, writes Sen. Dan Christmas. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

The recent election failed to contain significant enough consideration of ways forward to achieve the goal of reconciliation. But as Edward Kennedy once said, 'the work continues, the cause endures.'

Independent Senator
Dan Christmas

Opinion



Just days after the 44th federal election, I've spent a great deal of time reflecting upon the place in Canadian society for meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. I do so in part because one wonders about the degree of sincerity among

the federal parties given the reality that it hardly figured in the recent campaign.

Doubtless there will be pundits and politicians, commentators, and critics who will cynically suggest that pursuit of reconciliation has been fruitless and in vain. I'm not one for throwing rocks in the domain of public discourse. I believe that this is a perfect opportunity to reflect on where we are and to offer thought on where we may yet go, were we to adopt a fresh perspective on Indigenous public policy.

The recent election failed to contain significant enough consideration of ways forward to achieve the goal of reconciliation. But as Edward Kennedy once said, "the work continues, the cause endures"—and we must push into the harness and move ever forward.

So where do we go from here? First, pre-election polling suggests that Indigenous reconciliation is a "matter that matters." An early August *Globe and Mail*/Nanos Research poll showed that more than half of Canadians (52 per cent) said reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples was important to them in terms of influencing their vote in a federal

election. Let us hope the federal party leaders and their political machines hear this message loud and clear and will consider it going forward.

Second, clearly there is much unfinished business to which Parliament must attend. Of the 94 Calls to Action of the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, as of June 30, 2021, only 14 Calls to Action have been completed, 23 are in progress with projects underway, 37 are in progress with projects proposed, and 20 have yet to be started. This must be accelerated by all means.

Similarly, on June 3, 2021 the *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People National Action Plan: Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ People* was released. The report is responding to the 231 Calls for Justice calling upon various organizations to take action to end the causes of this violence.

Then of course, there is the matter of unsafe drinking water in First Nations communities. Throughout the campaign, Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller tweeted about how many tainted water advisories the Trudeau government has lifted.

While this is good news, it bears repeating that three successive auditors general have said the problems in solving the drinking water issue and that of unsafe housing on reserves and dismal living standards on many, including a second-rate education for many Indigenous children, cries out for real attention to these matters. The failure to do so has seen the situation described as "unacceptable" (Sheila Fraser), an "incomprehensible failure" (Michael Ferguson), and "honestly disheartening" (Karen Hogan).

If these comments can't be the impetus for a fresh and more assertive approach to these issues, I don't know what further proof is required.

Then of course, there is the escalating rift around respecting Supreme Court-affirmed rights. The maritime Moderate Livelihood Fishery has been a simmering cauldron for more than 20 years. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans' unilateral imposition earlier this year of its "New Path" policy for governance of the Indigenous fishery was an unmitigated disaster—and one which very likely cost the minister her seat in the recent election.

These and many other endeavours in the Indigenous domain desperately require a fresh look. Each has its own pressing sense of urgency.

Truly co-operative management in Indigenous affairs is absolutely critical to our success moving forward. This means sharing the pen on the drafting of Indigenous legislation. This means vastly improving the methods of consultation and accommodation around program and policy development. This means recognizing the ability and competence of Indigenous communities to manage their own affairs—and it definitely will require the sharing of responsibility for oversight and governance.

There is much to be done in the new Parliament—and I'm delighted that there are three new Indigenous MPs as well as a new Indigenous Senator in the Upper Chamber. We have mountains to climb and it's hoped that all Parliamentarians will acknowledge Canadians' support for pursuit of reconciliation—and work together across political lines to make it a reality.

Independent Senator Dan Christmas represents Member-tou, N.S.

The Hill Times

Continued on page 22



The Centre Block building on Parliament Hill, pictured from Gatineau, Que., in August 2020. A proposed class-action lawsuit against the federal government by a pair First Nations public servants is seeking \$25-million in punitive damages for all former employees of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and all current and former employees of Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, or Indian Oil and Gas Canada who experienced harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, culture, ethnicity, or gender. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Indigenous public servants pursue class-action lawsuit against feds for harassment, discrimination in workplace

A pair of plaintiffs say they experienced harassment and discrimination as a result of their identities, including through belittling gestures, microaggressions, racist remarks, and denial of fair advancement opportunities.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

Systemic racism in federal Indigenous departments and agencies has led to human rights and Charter violations, allege two First Nations public servants—one current, one former—pursuing a multi-million-dollar class-action lawsuit against the federal government.

A statement of claim—the opening salvo for a possible class-action suit—outlining the experiences of lead plaintiffs Yvette Zentner and Letitia Wells was filed with the Federal Court in Calgary on Sept. 14. The pair are represented by lawyer Mathew Farrell of Guardian Law Group LLP.

Ms. Zentner is a member of the Siksika Nation in Alberta and has been working for Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC), a special operating agency within Indigenous Services Canada (ISC),

since 1997. Ms. Wells is from Kainaiwa First Nation, a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy from the Treaty 7 Territory, and is a former contract employee of IOGC, where she worked from September 2015 until the end of March 2020.

Both women say they experienced harassment and discrimination at work as a result of their Aboriginal identities, including through belittling gestures, microaggressions, racist remarks, and denial of fair advancement opportunities, but felt disempowered from reporting their experiences through internal processes and were denied “Indigenous practices and cultural methods of conflict resolution.”

The proposed class action, first reported by APTN News, is on behalf of all former employees of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and all current and former employees of Crown-Indigenous Relations Canada (CIRNAC), ISC, or IOGC who experienced harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, culture, ethnicity, or gender.

The claim outlines that Ms. Zentner has “frequently” been denied training for advancement offered to others and has been denied “promotions for which she was qualified,” with, in one case, the non-Aboriginal family friend of someone she has filed two formal harassment complaints against being hired instead. Both complaints against that individual were found not to meet the threshold for harassment—one having been handled by the individual’s superior, rather than an independent third party—after which, the statement of claim describes that the person laughed at Ms. Zentner at work.

Continued on page 17

Continued from page 16

Numerous complaints of harassment and abusive conduct by the same individual prompted a 2014 Workplace Assessment, reads the statement of claim, but while meeting with the third party hired to conduct it—who was later awarded a multi-year contract at the IOGC—no notes were taken and Ms. Zentner was allegedly told it was because they’d “already heard it before.” That assessment “was vague and resulted in no meaningful change,” and the individual who was the subject of complaints was given authority over the “steps of action taken to remedy the harassment.”

In another instance in 2016, someone found guilty of harassing Ms. Zentner by an external company was later promoted within IOGC.

Ms. Zentner, through the statement of claim, reports having been “threatened with legal action in slander for bringing harassment concerns to the human resources manager.”

“The harassment and dismissal of her complaints have taken a serious toll on Yvette’s physical and mental health, and she has experienced significant depression as a result,” reads the statement of claim.

Ms. Wells is a single mother of two and is currently studying a double major in law and society and international Indigenous studies at the University of Calgary. She is also a survivor of domestic and sexual abuse, she told *The Hill Times*.

As outlined in the statement of claim, she said she believes she lost her contract as “retaliation for speaking up about her experiences of harassment at the IOGC.” She reports having “frequently” had her “intelligence questioned”; facing “microaggressions, belittling physical gestures” and overhearing “racist language at the IOGC”; and being “singled out as a victim of aggressive micro-management.”

In one instance outlined in the claim, Ms. Wells experienced a “trauma flashback when her supervisor aggressively grabbed her arm in an effort to physically remove her from her cubical to have a private meeting in a board room.” An unofficial complaint over this incident “and the surrounding harassment she experienced” resulted in “no meaningful change.”

Days after a complaint was launched by a superior over the harassment Ms. Wells was experiencing, she was demoted from her position “as retaliation for filing a complaint,” alleges the claim, and when her contract was terminated roughly two months later—after she had gone on sick leave—“no reason” was indicated. The claim also alleges that Ms. Wells “was denied promotions because she resisted sexual advancements by” a superior.

“The assault, ongoing harassment, and dismissal of her complaints have taken a serious toll on Letitia’s health, and she has suffered serious mental health consequences, including suicidal ideation as a result,” reads the statement of claim.



Letitia Wells worked as a contract employee for Indian Oil and Gas Canada from September 2015 until March 2020. Photograph courtesy of Letitia Wells

In an interview with *The Hill Times* last week, Ms. Wells spoke about her experiences and her decision to pursue a class-action suit.

She said when she left the IOGC, she had intended to “walk away in peace,” but continued to reflect on her experiences and pray for guidance.

Last April, she was contacted by the APTN’s Brett Forester, who was working on a story about Indigenous public servants’ experiences. The resulting piece, “Death by a thousand cuts,” included interviews with “several former and current employees, many of them First Nations women,” who described a “work environment frequently marred by systemic racism, sexism, bullying, insidious revenge and fear,” reads the piece.

After it went public, Ms. Wells said Indigenous people across Canada contacted her to thank her for speaking out and share stories of their own. Among them was Ms. Zentner—the pair were acquainted from their time working for the IOGC—and it was then that they decided to find a lawyer and pursue a class-action case, driven by their experiences and “the failure of the grievance processes within” the federal government.

“Within that company, we have seen the violence that we’ve endured, the harm that we’ve endured, the microaggressions, the micromanagements, the piling of the exec team, the tactics of toxic authority,” said Ms. Wells. “It’s a poisonous environment for authentic Indigenous people, and all we’ve ever wanted to do was make a change—make a change and contribute to the federal government, and help them reach reconciliation. And they’re failing at it, they don’t understand it.”

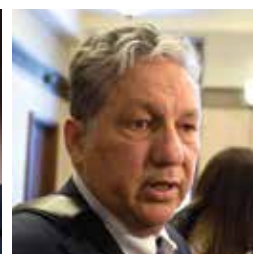
While she’s now gone from the company and “safe,” Ms. Wells said it’s about “the safety of those that are still in there and the hardships they’re continuing to go through.”

In May, the plaintiffs began to compile the experiences of other current and former Indigenous public servants as evidence of the systemic harassment and discrim-

ination faced within the federal government and now have “well over two dozen” such accounts.

Specifically, the statement of claim argues their section 15(1) Charter equality right was unjustifiably infringed “through discriminatory harassment which directly and adversely affects Aboriginal and female workers.”

Moreover, it argues the federal government owed a duty of care, including to “maintain a workplace that is safe and free of harassment,” which was breached, and that multiple sections of the Canadian Human Rights Act have been breached, including for “differentiating against employees based on their Indigeneity and gender,” “limiting advancement opportunities” based on Indigeneity and gender, and for harassment based on “gender, race, colour, and ancestry.”



Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett, left, Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller, and Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal promised a ‘thorough review’ to address claims of a toxic work environment by Indigenous staffers in their departments following an April APTN story. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

It lays out that they are seeking unspecified damages and \$25-million in punitive damages.

But beyond that, Ms. Wells said she wants to see Indigenous-led, trauma-informed “safety outlets placed within the federal government for Indigenous people to turn to,” something she said wasn’t available to her.

“I felt dismissed right from the top. I felt that nobody understood what I was trying to say because they didn’t carry the inter-related trauma experience ... to understand the microaggressions and how they triggered me, and the continuous attacks after that from a hierarchy of management,” said Ms. Wells.

“Those grievance processes aren’t there to support you, they’re there to support the government,” she said earlier in the interview.

“The federal government has absolutely no safety outlets for Indigenous people who govern themselves by Indigenous laws to turn to.”

The federal government’s response

In April, in response to the APTN story, a joint statement from Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett (Toronto-St. Paul’s, Ont.), Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller (Ville-Marie-Le Sud Ouest-Île-des-Soeurs, Que.), and Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.) said the ministers were “deeply disturbed” by the stories of racism in their departments and pledged to “conduct a thorough review to address the matter.”

The Hill Times reached out to all three ministers’ offices last week, as well as the Treasury Board Secretariat, seeking a response to the allegations outlined in the Sept. 14 statement of claim and an update on the “thorough review” that had been pledged. Questions to the minister’s offices were directed to their departments’ shared media relations team.

Danielle Geary, a spokesperson for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, said “senior officials” at CIRNAC and ISC “began the dialogue of developing a Deputy Minister Action Plan to address the alleged racism, harassment, and discrimination against Indigenous employees” in April, the “groundwork” for which is being led by the Indigenous Employee Secretariat, which serves both departments “in collaboration with the Indigenous Voices Council

to harassment and violence in the workplace,” including identifying preventative mitigation measures.

Ms. Geary highlighted the Centre for Integrity, Values and Conflict Resolution as a “resource available” to all departmental staff, including employees of the IOGC, which “can provide support and explore options” for those who have “experienced or witnessed workplace harassment or violence.” The government is also “actively advancing the creation of an Ombudsperson Office in order to help employees and managers navigate existing systems, services and resources, and provide impartial advice on options for resolution to further supplement existing services and resources,” she wrote.

She also highlighted the ISC’s launch of a task force on diversity and inclusion, equity, and anti-racism last May, and noted that CIRNAC and ISC have developed Indigenous cultural competency learning policies informed by a First Nations expert advisory committee.

“Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), and Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC) are committed to the health, safety and well-being of all employees. As departmental leaders within the federal government when it comes to advancing reconciliation and issues impacting the lives of Indigenous peoples, we recognize that discrimination against Indigenous employees is unacceptable and must be addressed,” reads the statement.

“Harassment and discrimination can take many forms and can have significant repercussions. We take all allegations of harassment and discrimination very seriously,” she wrote, noting later that “senior management is committed to continued discussions with employees to address any employee concerns raised and further build a supportive environment, adapted to employee needs and experiences.”

Mr. Farrell told *The Hill Times* he expects further documents related to the certification process—determining whether the court will hear the case as a class-action suit—will be filed in the coming months. That includes a certification record from the plaintiffs, laying out detailed evidence from the many stories collected.

Hundreds of current and former Black federal public servants are already pursuing a proposed multi-million-dollar class-action suit against the federal government. Launched in December 2020, it alleges the government has failed to uphold the Charter rights of Black employees by failing to provide a harassment- and discrimination-free workplace and by actively excluding Black public servants.

Nicholas Marcus Thompson, a spokesperson for Black Class Action Lawsuit, said of the proposed Indigenous lawsuit: “We welcome this legal action and we are open to working with this group and providing any support for the Indigenous community, which has been left behind for way too long and it must be addressed now.”

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Opinion

Advance Indigenous reconciliation with a new fiscal relationship



The last Parliament took a significant step forward in advancing reconciliation with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was first brought forward in 2016 as a private member's bill by former NDP MP Romeo Saganash. This was progress and it has also raised expectations, write Harold Calla and C.T. (Manny) Jules. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canadians must realize that if reconciliation is not dealt with and strategies are not implemented, Canada's economy is going to be impacted.

Harold Calla & C.T. Jules

Opinion



Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples was a theme for every party's platform in the recent election. This is progress, and we congratulate every Member of Parliament on their recent electoral success. Talking about policy is good, but implementation is

key and for too long, Canada has fallen short on implementation. Means and mechanisms are needed on a government-wide basis to implement the policies that have been put forward. How will the government best engage and improve the economic environment for First Nation communities?

This inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is about social and economic reconciliation and bringing recognition of First Nation presence in this country. Too often, that is not the case. Too many Canadians don't know how title and jurisdiction was taken from Indigenous nations or even the communities and original inhabitants of where they live. We think recognition of that is the first step.

Government and MPs in this new minority Parliament are going to have to make tough decisions, and one should be to recognize that the Indigenous policy of the last 150 years has failed.

Canadians must realize that if reconciliation is not dealt with and strategies are not implemented, Canada's economy is going to

be impacted. For much of the past decade, too much of Canada's wealth has been locked up and unrealized. Valuable projects have failed to get off the ground because they did not get the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples for activities on their traditional territories. Indigenous governments face challenges themselves. There are 634 Indian Act nations with a wide range of financial and administrative capacities that may need support to function as modern-day governments. The Canadian government wants confidence that there are ways to mitigate risk in fiscal transfers. But there is also a growth story—Indigenous communities and governments across the country bring a lot to the fiscal table.

During the pandemic, the First Nations Financial Management Board (FMB) undertook research to demonstrate to Canada what the own-source revenue impact would be to First Nation communities. We found that the Indigenous economy was worth \$17.5-billion a year. How many

Canadians know that? We are already contributing. The Indigenomics Institute estimates that, with the right investment and growth, Indigenous people in Canada have the potential to add a \$100-billion annual boost to the national economy. Clearly all will benefit by advancing the Indigenous economy and reconciliation.

The last Parliament took a significant step forward in advancing reconciliation with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This was progress and it has also raised expectations.

Indigenous peoples across Canada are expecting a fundamental change in their relationship with Canada. They want more than just government to help them manage the poverty that has been created in their communities. They are expecting a true nation-to-nation relationship. A relationship that shares power and enables all parties to generate wealth. We encourage every MP to view these raised expectations as opportunities.

These are opportunities to include Indigenous partners, to strengthen Indigenous governments, and to strengthen Canada. Governments need to recognize the necessity for an Indigenous institutional framework that can engage with them as equals.

The First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FMA), 2005, and subsequently the FMB and the First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC), along with other institutions, were the beginning of that process. The FMA framework promotes transparency and accountability from an Indigenous governing body to its citizens, and the strong governance and fiscal management practices which give confidence to external stakeholders.

Over the coming months the FMB and FNTC are going to collaborate with other First Nations on the development of a new Indigenous-led, risk-managed framework for a new fiscal relationship with First Nations and a meaningful implementation of UNDRIP's goal of self-government and the right of self-determination.

We will be calling on all parties to come together and support this framework. It will implement the promises that each party has made, create a government-to-government relationship, and create a new fiscal relationship with Indigenous communities.

We look forward to engaging you in this work.

Harold Calla, executive chair of the First Nations Financial Management Board and member of the Squamish Nation, has experience in international business, as a negotiator in the areas of economic development, land management and finance, and an arbitrator for First Nations in Western Canada. C.T. (Manny) Jules is an Indigenous thought leader and the long-time chief commissioner of the First Nations Tax Commission.

The Hill Times

“Government and MPs in this new minority Parliament are going to have to make tough decisions, and one should be to recognize that the Indigenous policy of the last 150 years has failed.”



Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett, and Justice Minister David Lametti took part in summer meetings with the National Association of Friendship Centres. *The Hill Times* photographs by Sam Garcia and Andrew Meade

'It can only benefit the conversation': connecting leaders with frontline stakeholders a priority for lobbyists on Indigenous-related files

Advocacy work over the past year has emphasized to decision-makers that their approaches to major issues continuing to affect Indigenous people were also of interest to the wider public, says NWAC head Lynne Groulx.

BY STEPHEN JEFFERY

Connecting decision-makers to those directly affected by their policies has been a priority for federal lobbyists working on Indigenous-related files over the past year.

"The conversation has become much broader, much more informed, much more constructive, with everybody," said Isabel Metcalfe, who is currently registered to lobby on behalf of four Indigenous-led organizations. "We're speaking to leaders of the opposition, to prime ministers, to cabinet ministers. It can only benefit the conversation."

Lobbying communications concerning Indigenous affairs reached a high of 125 in May 2021. Lobbyist registrations concerning Indigenous affairs, mean-

while, reached a peak of 863 in July, 2021, the 14th most popular topic. As of Sept. 27, 762 lobbyists were registered to communicate with Indigenous Services, while 567 were registered to communicate with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.

Ms. Metcalfe, who founded Isabel Metcalfe Public Affairs Counsel in 2000, lobbies on behalf of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, and Dadan Sivunivut. She said connecting decision-makers with members of the organizations was important for providing context and informing policy decisions. "They were good opportunities for decision-makers to really listen, to really learn," she said.

Making those connections was made easier with the use of video conferencing during the pandemic. Ahead of the Sept. 20 federal election, the NAFC organized virtual "town hall" style meetings connecting senior political figures with friendship centre operators. The association represents the country's approximately 125 friendship centres providing urban Indigenous people with culturally appropriate vital services, such as shelter, health support, and employment.

Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole (Durham, Ont.) participated in a meeting on June 9, followed by NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, B.C.) on July 28, and Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Ben-

nett (Toronto-St. Paul's, Ont.) and Justice Minister David Lametti (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que.) on Aug. 6. NAFC communications and policy manager Bridget Bowman said the forums gave those who would not otherwise have had the chance to address party leaders a space in which to air their concerns and ask questions.



Native Women's Association of Canada CEO Lynne Groulx says the post-election focus will turn to helping parties and leaders understand the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, in the hope of influencing party platforms during future campaigns. *Photograph courtesy of Twitter*

"We were looking to provide a forum for friendship centres, people within the friendship centres movement, and have on record what their responses are," she said. "We feel like they went really well, and we may actually consider doing it again."

Ms. Metcalfe said the NAFC meetings allowed for honest conversations with political leaders. "A lot of work went into that because everybody at the

centres knew all the questions in advance, everybody knew who was going to be asking them," she said. "They were all shared widely amongst the team so they knew exactly what the questions were. Language is very important, and it allows them to have a real discussion instead of a 'gotcha' where you catch somebody out."

Another meeting was organized between APTN's senior staff and Mr. O'Toole, during which a number of issues affecting Indigenous peoples were discussed. Ms. Metcalfe said these meetings helped to better inform political leaders, which could subsequently affect public policy.

"[Mr. O'Toole] was quite clear at the time that he wanted to change the channel between the Conservative Party of Canada and Indigenous people," she said.

"We had subsequently a number of these big, important meetings which really allowed him the opportunity to listen and to learn, and for them to listen and learn about him. I think that really did impact public policy, so there was a greater level of comfort, of ease, of understanding, of knowledge, between a number of key players."

For the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), advocacy work over the past

year has emphasized to decision-makers that their approaches to major issues continuing to affect Indigenous people were also of interest to the wider public.

NWAC CEO Lynne Groulx, who is registered to lobby on behalf of the organization, said the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools in the spring and summer in particular had touched Canadians from all walks of life. An Abacus Data poll conducted in June for the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation found 49 per cent of those surveyed had a "new appreciation for the damage residential schools caused." The survey was conducted with 3,000 Canadian adults between June 4 and 8, with a comparable margin of error of plus or minus 1.76 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

"It's no longer an isolated Indigenous issue; the Canadian population and mainstream have been sensitized to it with all of these reports," she said. "The finding of the remains of the children from residential schools has really brought everything to light in terms of what's really happened in these residential schools. There's a real outpouring in the mainstream community."

Ms. Groulx said the association's advocacy work will continue for residential school survivors, the implementation of the 231 calls for justice in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls final report, and the 94 calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Now that the election is over, Ms. Groulx said the focus will turn to helping parties and leaders understand the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, in the hope of influencing party platforms during future campaigns.

"If you're a party that's not facing the issues directly and not willing to take it on, let's have a talk about that, let's have dialogue about that; that's what reconciliation is all about," she said. "We'll roll up our sleeves and continue to hold their feet to the fire on advocacy work."

Stephen Jeffery is editor of *The Lobby Monitor*, owned by *Hill Times Publishing*.

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The Hill Times

News

Hope remains for Liberal action on Indigenous promises, but spotty record leaves many advocates skeptical

Continued from page 5

Neskonlith Indian Band Chief Judy Wilson, secretary-treasurer of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, wouldn't pin down whether she was optimistic, but she pointed towards broken Liberal promises, like its unfulfilled timelines for lifting boil water advisories, while emphasizing hope for the future.

Without hope, Colleen Gray, project founder of the Art for Aid Project, said the world would be "bleak."



Cindy Blackstock says Indigenous issues are often seen more as a PR problem than a serious priority. Photograph courtesy of Sarah Fredericks

Even insiders, like former Liberal-turned-Independent MP Jody Wilson-Raybould are negative, as she writes in her new book *"Indian" in the Cabinet: Speaking Truth to Power*.

"While I have no doubt that cabinet understood that Indigenous reconciliation and criminal justice reform are serious and challenging issues, I learned over time that they were not taken seriously from a political perspective," she wrote. "Like governments past we would tinker around the margins but mostly the plan was to stay with a mix of lofty rhetoric and little action."

Both Indigenous re-elected Liberals *The Hill Times* spoke to, Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Ont.) and Michael McLeod (N.W.T.), had better impressions.



Justin Marchand says announced funding for Indigenous housing won't make a dent in the problem. Photograph courtesy of Justin Marchand

"No other federal government has done as much for Indigenous communities," Mr. Serré said, pointing towards investments in housing and tourism. Similarly, Mr. McLeod said he has faith, and that there has been more progress made for Indigenous peoples over the last six years compared to any other party.

But he suggested that the minority Parliament situation may make things more difficult, with Conservatives hindering the effort, while Mr. Serré pointed to the NDP and the Bloc as likely allies to work with as needed.

if they do, they're going to risk not being in power for that long."

And, despite a summer marked by the discovery of thousands of unmarked graves in residential school sites across Canada, sources who spoke with *The Hill Times* note reconciliation with Indigenous peoples was not discussed much this election season.

Ms. Blackstock sees this as a result of the issue being treated as "public relations issues versus as a serious national priority."

Hayden King, executive director of the Yellowhead Institute, said that "given the summer that we had, I'm surprised that politicians and parties did not see the interest among Canadians in talking about Indigenous issues ... but maybe that speaks to the limited attention span Canadians or politicians have."

He said he sees this more as a result of a waning focus on Indigenous issues overall. In 2015, the first Trudeau Liberal government came in with a bold new approach to social policy and land claims, he said. But in 2019, the commitments became much less ambitious "and more muted," said Mr. King, with the most recent election showcasing a "significant absence" of Indigenous coverage. "We've seen this scaling down of ambition," he said.

To combat this, Ms. Blackstock said it's critical—particularly for the media—that attention continues to be paid to these issues, lest the story die.

Mr. Serré pointed towards bias as an impediment to greater discussion, suggesting the view that nothing's been done hinders further discussion about efforts that have been actually made.

Much to be done on Indigenous issues, experts say

Mr. Serré describes the Liberal government's approach on Indigenous issues as one that's less prescriptive in its approach, putting more trust in Indigenous communities. Mr. McLeod, meanwhile, described it as "wrap-around" approach, including efforts to reclaim history and land, and provide proper compensation. Recent federal investments noted by Mr. Serré included those related to internet access and COVID-19 recovery.

However, others pointed out significant gaps in what is being done. Regarding truth and reconciliation and missing and murdered Indigenous women, Ms. Groulx said there is too much focus on finding new answers.

"Why would you be looking for other solutions when they have [already] been given to you by experts?" she said.



Chris Loreto says there needs to be a focus on mental health services and stronger education. Photograph courtesy of Chris Loreto

said, noting the prime minister denied fighting orders to compensate First Nations children in court in a leaders' debate this election. As of writing, settlements and litigation over lack of clean water and underfunded child welfare systems are still pending or ongoing.

Clean drinking water is another hot topic, with boil-water advisories in Indigenous communities originally promised to be lifted by March 31 of this year, per a 2015 Liberal election promise, now hanging with no hard deadline.

Land governance rights are an issue that Mr. King brings up, too.

"In the last election, the Liberals committed to a national treaty office and a national conversation on treaty implementation. They mentioned that in the campaign, and not once after," he said.

Housing and infrastructure are also top issues, with StrategyCorp principal Chris Loreto noting that the money often gets caught up in the bureaucracy of Parliament, rather than flowing through to the communities that need them. He said there needs to be a focus as well on mental health services and stronger education systems for Indigenous people.

Even recently promised funding, like the \$300-million for an Indigenous housing strategy mentioned in the Liberals' 2021 platform, are only going to solve a little less than one per cent of the current housing and homelessness problems that face Indigenous people, said Justin Marchand, CEO of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Service.

Ms. Idlout said she's seen this lack of action first hand.

"[This family] had been on a waiting list for social housing right before Justin Trudeau was elected. And here, they were still on their waiting list, still at the bottom, waiting to be able to enter a home," she said.

While these problems are complex and not easily solved, Ms. Groulx said everyone has a part to play.

"This little hummingbird is going to the water and taking one little drop of water out and putting it onto [a] fire. And all the other little animals are scurrying around and they're saying to the hummingbird 'what are you doing?' ... and the little hummingbird said, 'I'm just doing my part, I'm just doing what I can.'"

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Colleen Gray says more resources are needed to fulfill calls for action and calls for justice for Indigenous people. Photograph courtesy of Colleen Gray

More resources are needed to fulfill the calls to action and for justice from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Ms. Gray said, who emphasized the loss of these women as "haunting" and "torturous."

Similarly, Ms. Wilson said there needs to be actual implementation of existing reports and calls for change, and concrete action taken.

Newly elected NDP MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut) highlighted continuing lawsuits as problematic, saying the focus should be on giving resources, rather than withholding them.

"In 2019 ... [Justin Trudeau] said we're going to compensate [children and families], don't worry. And then two years later ... he still hasn't compensated," she



Judy Wilson says she has hope for the future. Photograph courtesy of Judy Wilson

Heeding the calls to action



The then-commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chief Wilton Littlechild, left, Justice Murray Sinclair, and Marie Wilson are pictured on June 2, 2015. *The Hill Times* file photograph

The Sept. 30 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation fulfills one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action as laid out in 2015. Call to Action No. 80 called on "the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process."

According to the CBC's Beyond 94 project, 12 other Calls to Action have been completed, 29 are in progress, with the remaining 52 either not started or in the proposal stage.

Here at the ones marked as finished from the list:

Call to Action No. 13: We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

Call to Action No. 15: We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-languages initiatives.

Call to Action No. 16: We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.

Call to Action No. 39: We call upon the federal government to develop a national plan to collect and publish data on the criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization.

Call to Action No. 41: We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls.

Call to Action No. 59: We call upon church parties to the Settlement Agreement to develop ongoing education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies

to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary.

Call to Action No. 70: We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Association of Archivists to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of archival policies and best practices.

Call to Action No. 80: We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Call to Action No. 83: We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.

Call to Action No. 84: We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada's national public broadcaster to support reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.

Call to Action No. 85: We call upon the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, as an independent non-profit broadcaster with programming by, for, and about Aboriginal peoples, to support reconciliation.

Call to Action No. 88: We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

Call to Action No. 94: We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: "I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen."

The Hill Times

As unmarked residential school graves have reinforced, Canada can't falter in confronting racism and hate

The government needs to push forward as quickly as possible on this, although Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's continued status as minority government leader could make decisive action difficult.

Les Whittington

Need to Know



OTTAWA—The recent discovery of more than 1,000 unmarked graves of children who disappeared at so-called Indian Residential Schools has awakened Canadians more forcefully to the century-long cultural genocide visited on Indigenous youth and their families.

In all, at least 3,000 Indigenous boys and girls died while in the custody of the church officials who ran these notorious institutions, although researchers say many deaths probably went unrecorded among the 150,000 Indigenous youth interned in the schools. Half of the recorded deaths were of children who weren't named, and in 50 per cent of the cases, the cause of death was never reported, according to *What We Have Learned*, a report by The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

The compendium of horrors to which the children caught in this system were subjected seems almost endless: from poor food, overwork, freezing housing, humiliation, and disease to persistent physical and sexual abuse. Most of appalling of all is that the federal government knew of the worst aspects of this state of affairs and did nothing to stop it for nearly 100 years.

"From the 19th century onwards, the government and churches were well aware of the risk that staff might sexually abuse residential school students," according to *What We Have Learned*. "When it came to taking action on the abuse of Aboriginal children, early on, Indian Affairs and the churches placed their own interests ahead of the children in their care and then covered up that victimization. It was cowardly behaviour. This set the tone for the way the churches and government would treat the sexual abuse of children for the entire history of the residential school system."

"Complaints often were ignored. In some cases where allegations were made against a school principal, the only measure that Indian Affairs took was to contact the principal. In at least one case, Indian Affairs officials worked with school offi-

cials to frustrate a police investigation into abuse at a school."

The report continued: "The full extent of the abuse that occurred in the schools is only now coming to light." As of 2015, federal officials administering the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement had received 37,951 claims for injuries resulting from physical and sexual abuse at residential schools.

This outrage is of course only a small part of the damage done to Indigenous people over the years by the ongoing, systematic race-based discrimination at the heart of enduring government policy. As is widely acknowledged, repairing this situation and moving forward with reconciliation is a multi-faceted, complex challenge that will require many years of commitment and re-examination by Canadians.

But one aspect of this that needs to be confronted now is the continuing expressions of anti-Indigenous racism and hate. Enabled to a large extent by Donald Trump's openly bigoted views, hate seems to have become one of the main reasons for the existence of social media today. And as this upsurge of far-right intolerance has evolved in Canada, Indigenous people experienced an increase in digital attacks and threats after the Wet'suwet'en Nation hereditary chiefs' protest in B.C. And the reaction to efforts to address Canada's treatment of Indigenous people by rejecting homage to the architects of this cultural genocide is likely to turn up the taps of hate on the internet for some time to come.

The Liberals committed themselves in their campaign platform to moving ahead on anti-hate policies and efforts to rein in racism and bigotry on the web. A re-elected Liberal government was committed to: introducing "legislation within its first 100 days to combat serious forms of harmful online content, specifically hate speech, terrorist content, content that incites violence, child sexual abuse material and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images."

"This would make sure that social media platforms and other online services are held accountable for the content that they host," the Liberals said.

The government needs to push forward as quickly as possible on this, although Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's continued status as minority government leader could make decisive action difficult. The Liberals have promised to bring in a balanced policy that takes into account complaints that trying to control user-generated content uploaded to social media sites violates individual liberties. But the right wing will likely fight any crackdown on online hate expression under the idiom of "you have to respect my right to disrespect you." We'll see how far Parliamentarians are prepared to go. But reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples will be forever short-circuited if the rise of outright racism and intolerance inspired by the far right in the United States is allowed to continue to expand here.

Les Whittington is a regular columnist for The Hill Times.

The Hill Times

Comment

Lessons to be learned from Indigenous courage, compassion, and leadership



Former MP and cabinet minister Peter Penashue and former Indspire head Roberta Jamieson. Be thankful for Canada's Indigenous peoples, their courage, compassion, and leadership in trying to make us all better, writes Tim Powers. *The Hill Times* file photographs

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is an important time to look back so we can move forward with our eyes wide open.

Tim Powers

Plain Speak



OTTAWA—On Sept. 30, Canada observes its first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. While it is classified as a statutory federal holiday and in numerous provinces, the hope of many is it is a day of reflection, learning, and reconciliation. Not

unlike Remembrance Day, it is an important time to look back so we can move forward with our eyes wide open.

Early in my career, I was very lucky to be given the opportunity to work at the then-department of Indian affairs and northern development (DIAND). Many thought I was going into a dead-end job with no real reward or learning. Good thing I have never been too bothered by the criticism of others, because from the day I stepped into that department until now I have been on my own journey of learning, growth, and friendship with many Indigenous people who have taught me so much.

When I first worked for DIAND, I was thrown right into Canada's relationship with the Labrador Innu. I learned how the Innu avoided assimilation at the time of Newfoundland and Labrador's confederation with Canada, but for years saw efforts to avoid their unique recognition. Latterly, I saw how a courageous people stricken with so many challenges out-maneuvred various federal governments to preserve and protect their way of life. From stopping a major military project in Labrador to moving a community, they

did it all. Contemporarily, I have seen the Innu advance beneficial partnerships to try to secure their future. Today, as I write, they are involved in a major discussion with the governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador over the future of Muskrat Falls.

I saw the Innu make other history. One of their most capable leaders over the last four decades, and someone I am fortunate to call a friend, Peter Penashue, became the first Innu person to become a Member of Parliament and then join the federal cabinet. Though his time in Parliament and cabinet were brief, it does not take anything away from the significance of that achievement. Peter, to me, typifies the character of many Innu I am fortunate to know. He overcame his own challenges with addictions, government schooling, community suffering, and so much more to demonstrate a formidable strength of character, determination, and wisdom few people possess.

I owe the Innu so much. Not only did my relationship with them force me to step outside my comfort zone to understand the plenitude of hell they went through at the hands of people doing what was best for them, not the Innu, they sent me on an intellectual

journey which opened my eyes further. Two master's theses I did were focused on the plight of the Innu. In doing those pieces of academic work, I dove deeply into the broader history of Crown-Indigenous relations throughout Canada and elsewhere. That history was most often ugly and revelatory.

From others, like Roberta Jamieson, the former head of Indspire, I have learned the challenges and opportunities that exist in the broad arena of education for Indigenous youth. The Inuit have taught me so much about the North and the importance of environmental stewardship, as have Donald Marshall and the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada about the courage to fight for traditional rights for your own and community wellbeing.

Fittingly, so many Indigenous people who fought and continue to fight oppression have given me more than I could and have given them. While some people in Canada, I am sure, will complain about the "wokeness" of a National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, their time could be better spent recognizing the importance of reflection. Recognizing so much still needs to be done to address past wrongs.

Be thankful for Canada's Indigenous peoples, their courage, compassion, and leadership in trying to make us all better.

Tim Powers is vice-chairman of Summa Strategies and managing director of Abacus Data. He is a former adviser to Conservative political leaders.

The Hill Times

News

'Important' and 'symbolic' to speak Indigenous language in same Chamber that repressed their use, says Battiste

Continued from page 15

Prof. Morcom said having MPs speak Indigenous languages can be another way to inspire students to learn heritage languages.

"They see that there are opportunities within workplaces as well as within communities to use the language," she said. "These are languages that can be used in every facet of their life."

She said her hope is that with increased Indigenous representation in the House of Commons, it will lead to an increase in the presence of Indigenous languages in Parliament.

Three new Indigenous MPs were elected in the Sept. 20 vote—NDP MPs-elect Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, Alta.) and Lori Idlout (Nunavut), and Conservative MP-elect Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, Ont.), according to the Canadian Press.

"I would love to see [the use of Indigenous languages in

Parliament] go from something a bit more performative—still important because it emphasizes presence—but to something that's functional within our government because there are decisions made that impact disproportionately Indigenous people, particularly status people living on reserves, and so those decisions should be made with insight into the cultures and realities of those communities."

University of Victoria professor emerita Lorna Williams, an expert on Indigenous language revitalization, said when she first heard the Mohawk language used in the House she was "really moved."

"I thought it was really important," she said, adding whenever Indigenous languages are present, it is a positive step towards reversing the process that has silenced Indigenous languages and made them "invisible."

She said it is helpful to have the languages spoken in Parliament

to have them placed in a "natural place" and not "on the side or separate or only for special occasions."

"We have to be able to make Indigenous languages present and normal as any other language."

Prof. Williams said by having Indigenous languages used in the House of Commons with translation and interpretation, it demands that there are people who can perform the translations and that speak all three languages.

She said it will take "lots of collaborative work" to put in a system that can make translation possible for the many Indigenous languages.

There are 58 Indigenous languages in Canada and more than 90 different dialects, according to the 2018 House Affairs Committee report.

Prof. Williams noted there is a need to be mindful that while providing translation services for Indigenous languages in the House, it shouldn't take away resources from the small group that is work-

ing on language revitalization.

University of Toronto professor Ryan DeCaire, who teaches Mohawk, said while having Indigenous languages spoken in Parliament helps to raise their awareness and show their use in the modern world, he said it doesn't "really help" those who are speaking the language already.

"At the end of the day we need the languages to be spoken as a primary language in the home in Indigenous communities so that intergenerational transmission can be restored," he said in an email. "Usually these things get lots of hype and media coverage, yet have little impact on language use in the home and in community domains."

Technical fixes needed for hybrid Parliament

Since the 42nd Parliament, instances of MPs speaking an Indigenous language in the House have declined.

Mr. Battiste said there has been a technical issue that has made speaking Mi'kmaq more difficult in the hybrid Parliament, noting that it was "a lot easier" to speak Mi'kmaq while physically present in the House of Commons.

He said while making his speech, he can hear the English translation in his ear.

"You could imagine how distracting that would be to be giving a speech in another language and hearing ... the interpretation of what you were saying in your ear simultaneously," he said. "That's something, I hope, that they can work out."

He said the House has "quite easily" been able to accommodate him when he has said that he will be speaking Mi'kmaq.

As he can both read and write Mi'kmaq, he said he doesn't have difficulty making a speech on short notice.

He noted that usually he was given 24 hours to put together a speech.

"For me to whip up a speech in both languages was not overly difficult for the time frame that they requested," he said, noting he also relied on two members of his community to help with editing any speech he made in Mi'kmaq to translate it to English.

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Parliamentary Calendar

First National Day for Truth and Reconciliation happens Sept. 30

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 29

Women of Water—Tessellate Collective is hosting an art installation at the Shenkman Arts Centre 245 Centrum Blvd., Ottawa, between Sept. 27 and Oct. 3. It is a free exhibit with timed-entry slots that use projection mapping to create an immersive experience into the perspectives of 13 Black and Indigenous women in Ottawa, shaping their communities. You can find out more via Eventbrite.

ITK Annual General Meeting—Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's two-day annual general meeting will take place from Sept. 29-30 at the Aqsarniit Hotel and Conference Centre in Nunavut. Natan Obed has been acclaimed to sit again as president.

Energy Storage Canada Conference—As the Voice of the Energy Storage sector in Canada, our virtual Annual Conference will be held on Sept. 29-30, 2021. This year's theme is "Charged & Ready" featuring keynote speakers, informative panels, and virtual tours and workshops. Ticket information can be found at energystoragecanada.org/conference.

Fall 2021 National Healthcare Innovation Summit—The Economic Club of Canada hosts the "Fall 2021 National Healthcare Innovation Summit," an in-depth look at the health-care landscape in Canada and its links to economic recovery and future growth, innovation, and national well-being. Participants include Trish Barbato, president and CEO, Arthritis Society; Juggy Sihota, vice-president, Consumer Health, TELUS; Joe Blomeley, executive vice-president, Individual, Public Sector & Mental Health, Green Shield Canada; Fred Horne, former minister of health for Alberta; Durhane Wong-Rieger, president and CEO, Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders; and Dr. Jason Field, president and CEO, Life Sciences Ontario. Wednesday, Sept. 29, 7:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. For a free ticket, visit economicclub.ca.

A Comparative Perspective on Canadian Fiscal Federalism—The University of Ottawa hosts a lecture on "A Comparative Perspective on Canadian Fiscal Federalism." Alan Fenna, professor of politics at The John Curtin Institute of Public Policy, Curtin University, Western Australia, will explore issues of vertical fiscal imbalance, equalization, and the spending power in Canada against the background of practices in Australia, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. Wednesday, Sept. 29, 9:30-11 a.m. Register via Eventbrite.

Campaigns, Communications, and COVID—Equal Voice hosts the first in a new 'Workshop Wednesday' series: "Campaigns, Communications, and COVID." This event will spotlight women charged with getting the message out on the campaign trail, providing inside look at how the election unfolded from start to finish: what are the media, communications, and strategic PR challenges unique to an election platform and campaign? How has this changed with COVID-19? Participants include Melanie Paradis, director of strategic communications in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition to Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole; Kim Wright, principal and founder, Wright Strategies, NDP strategist; and Amreet Kaur, principal, McMillan Vantage Policy Group, Liberal strategist. Wednesday, Sept. 29, 12-1 p.m. Registration available at equalvoice.ca/toronto_chapter_workshop.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 30

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—In June, the federal government passed legislation to make Sept. 30 a federal statutory holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to provide an opportunity for each public servant to recognize and commemorate the legacy of residential schools, which the government says may present itself as a day of quiet reflection or participation in a community event. The day fulfills a Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action for a day to "honour survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process."

China and the Global Economy—Cong Peiwu, China's Ambassador to Canada, will take part in a webinar on "China and the Global Economy," hosted by the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Cong and CIGI president Rohinton P. Medhora will discuss China's role and influence in issues preoccupying world governments, such as technology, trade, investment, climate change, and cyber and data governance. Thursday, Sept. 30, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Register via Eventbrite.

How Has COVID Affected Public Trust In Expertise?—The University of Ottawa hosts a webinar on "How Has COVID Affected Public Trust In Expertise?" exploring the successes and failures of COVID governance and what they mean for trust in expertise and public sector decision-making over the longer term. Panelists include Prof. Josephine Etowa, Faculty of Health Sciences, uOttawa; Prof. Patrick Fafard, Faculty of Social Sciences, uOttawa; and Maxime Lê, Public Health Project Officer, Ottawa Public Health. Thursday, Sept. 30, noon. To register: issp.uottawa.ca/en/content/how-has-covid-affected-public-trust-expertise.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Planting a Seed Towards Reconciliation—Carleton University hosts a webinar, "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Planting a Seed Towards Reconciliation," featuring Tim O'Loan who will share his personal stories, experiences, and challenges stemming from his four years with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Thursday, Sept. 30, 1-2:30 p.m. Register online at carleton.ca/sppa/cu-events/planting-a-seed-towards-reconciliation/.

Farming and Climate Change: Strategies for a Sustainable Future—The *Globe and Mail* hosts a webinar, "Farming and Climate Change: Strategies for a sustainable future," exploring what policies will support climate change action and strategies for a sustainable future. Panelists include Mary Robinson, president, Canadian Federation of Agriculture; Anjali Marok, Global Sustainability Strategy leader, Corteva Agriscience; and Steve Kenyon, owner, Greener Pastures Ranching Ltd. Thursday, Sept. 30, 1:30-2:45 p.m. Register at globeandmailevents.com.

Kairos Blanket Exercise—The Indigenous Arts Collective of Canada hosts the Kairos Blanket Exercise, an interactive and experiential teaching tool that



The first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, established Canada-wide following federal legislation passed in June, happens Sept. 30. The day fulfills a Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action for a day to 'honour survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

explores the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the land we now know as Canada. Thursday, Sept. 20, 2-4 p.m. Register via Eventbrite.

FRIDAY, OCT. 1

Manning Best Practices Forum III—The Manning Foundation is pleased to work with the Canada Strong and Free Network in presenting its third Best Practices Forum on Friday, Oct. 1 in Red Deer, Alta. The five-hour event will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. local time, and will be available both in-person and online. Once approved to attend the event, a fee of \$20 (which includes lunch and refreshments) will be charged.

Virtual Pink Tea Conversation with Barbara Paterson and M. Ann McCaig—The Famous 5 Foundation hosts a virtual Pink Tea event, featuring Barbara Paterson, the Canadian sculptor who developed the bronze statues known as the Woman are Persons! Famous 5 Monument. She will be joined by philanthropist M. Ann McCaig for a conversation hosted by Roxanne McCaig. Friday, Oct. 1, 2 p.m. ET. Tickets available via Eventbrite.

On the Day of German Unity: A Look at Angela Merkel's Legacy—ISG Senator Peter Boehm, former Canadian ambassador to Germany, will take part in a webinar "On the Day of German Unity: A Look at Angela Merkel's Legacy," hosted by the German Embassy in Canada and the University of Toronto. Other speakers include Sabine Sparwasser, German ambassador to Canada; Peter Mansbridge, distinguished fellow at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy; Daniela Schwarzer, Open Society Foundation; Randall Hansen, director of the Munk School's Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies; Christoph Heusgen, under-secretary for Foreign and Security Policy in the German Chancellery from 2005 to 2017; and Janice Stein, founding director and professor, Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy. Friday, Oct. 1, 1-2:40 p.m. To register: zoom.us/join/register/WN_3V0bJh9T00gO6Qkwm3Z0w

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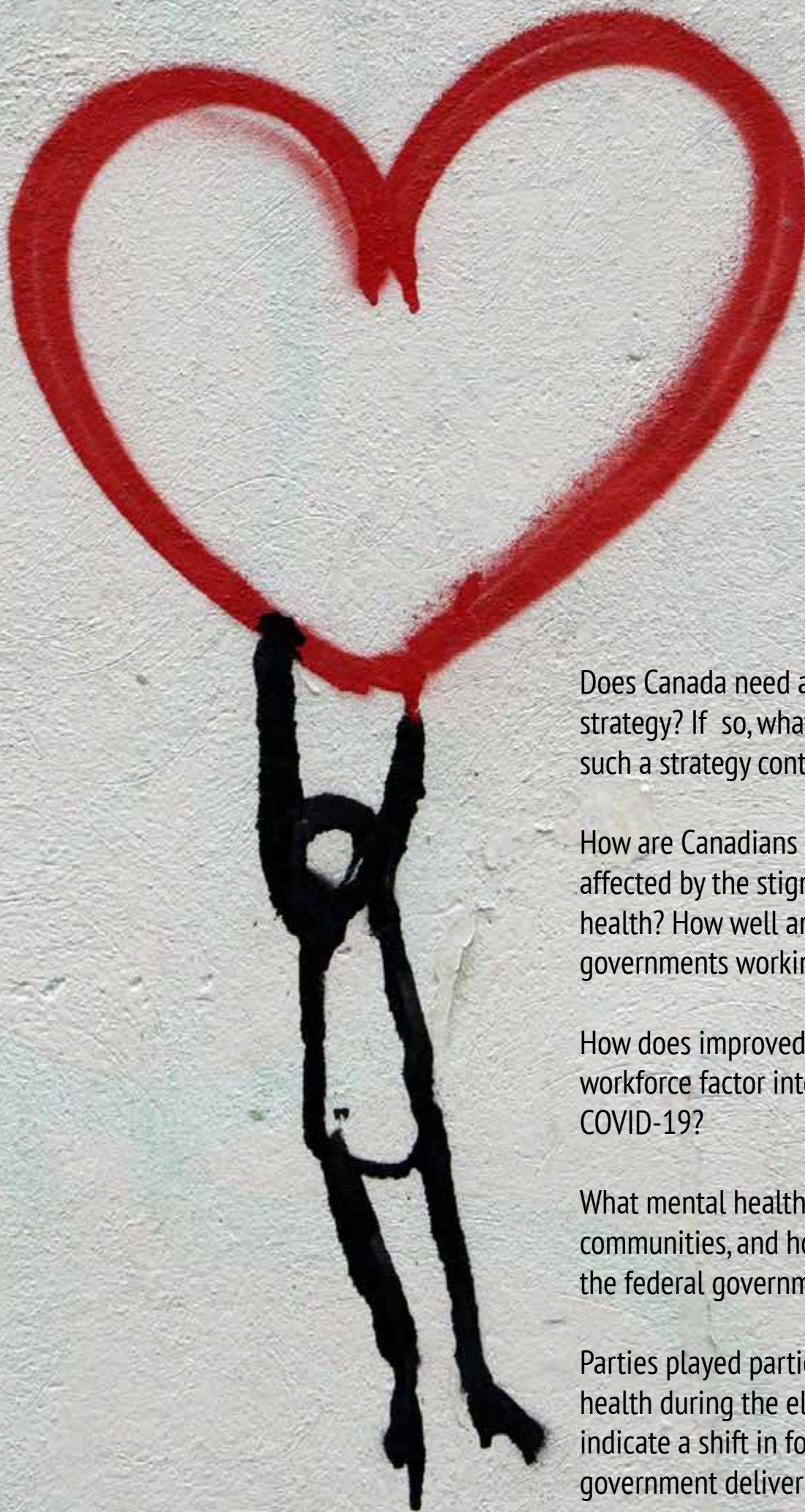
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The Parliamentary Calendar is a free events listing. Send in your political, cultural, diplomatic, or governmental event in a paragraph with all the relevant details under the subject line 'Parliamentary Calendar' to news@hilltimes.com by Wednesday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

MENTAL HEALTH

Publication date: October 4, 2021
Advertising deadline: September 29, 2021



Does Canada need a national suicide prevention strategy? If so, what should the blueprint for such a strategy contain?

How are Canadians with mental health issues affected by the stigma surrounding mental health? How well are mental health agencies or governments working to eliminate the stigma?

How does improved mental health in the workforce factor into economic recovery from COVID-19?

What mental health risks are higher in Indigenous communities, and how can these be addressed by the federal government?

Parties played particular attention to mental health during the election campaign. Does this indicate a shift in focus and will the federal government deliver on its campaign promises?

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