

## Big Media Hit Taxpayers For Six-Figure Grants

Canadian media giants, including newspaper corporations with billion-dollar revenues, have received six-figure government grants designed to help rural weeklies "overcome market disadvantages," records show.

Five large corporations qualified for hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayers' aid, all paid over a two-year period ending last Oct. 24, according to federal documents.

"The editorial department doesn't even know we apply for these grants," said Rick O'Connor, president and CEO of Black Press Group, the largest newspaper publisher in British Columbia. "I doubt if any of the reporters even know we apply for this."

Black Press Group received \$565,988 for twenty-three weeklies in British Columbia and Alberta, including \$40,948 for the *Revelstoke Times Review*; \$44,059 to the *Valley Echo*; and \$35,163 for *Lakes District News*. A subsidiary, Prairie Newspaper Group Ltd. Partnership, received another \$428,932 for weeklies in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Prairie grants included \$45,314 to the *Unity Wilkie Press Herald*; \$33,249 to the *Kamsack Times*; and \$23,736 to the *Deloraine Times & Star*.

"It reduces distribution costs," said O'Connor. "There is a formula. If you have a paid weekly community newspaper, you are eligible."

Publishers' aid was paid by the Department of Heritage through its Canada Periodical Fund, designed to assist media to "overcome market disadvantages," according to a government statement. The grants are unconditional and can be spent on office expenses, wages or other production bills.

"Essentially this is used to offset postal costs," said John Hinds, president and CEO of Newspapers Canada, an industry association. "The challenge a lot of us have with the program is it applies only to paid-subscription papers, while the industry trend is towards free distribution."

Under regulations, magazines universally qualify for federal subsidies; a single publisher, Glacier Big Holdings Company Ltd., received \$893,202 for thirty-one periodicals like *Canadian Plastics*, *Oilweek Magazine* and the *Canadian Mining Journal*.

Hinds noted newspaper grants are restricted to paid weeklies only, and disqualify community newspapers that waive subscription fees.



"A lot of our members struggle with it and some are resentful," said Hinds. "If you're in a community where one publication gets a subsidy and another does not, it causes some problems."

Accounts show grants were typically awarded to media like the *Western Canadian Game Warden*, published by the Alberta Game Warden Association with \$18,623 in aid; *Ricepaper*, an Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop Society magazine produced with \$16,486 in grants; *Canadian Ayrshire Review*, a cattle breeder's periodical published six times last year with \$12,319 in federal funding; and *Briarpatch*, a Regina-based bimonthly published by a non-profit organization with \$26,047 in grants over two years.

"The stated aim of the Canada Periodical Fund is to assist Canadian publications in overcoming market disadvantages," said Valerie Zink, *Briarpatch* editor and publisher. "What we are in fact seeing is the

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### Continued From Page 1

systemic entrenchment of those disadvantages, with public funds subsidizing some of the largest corporate media conglomerates in the world.”

Heritage Minister James Moore declined an interview.

Canada's largest printer, publicly-traded Transcontinental Media Group Ltd., received \$376,754 in grants for seventeen weeklies in Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland & Labrador, including \$45,277 for the *Queen's County Advance*; \$28,754 for *The Labradorian*; and \$27,601 for *the Oxbow Herald*.

Transcontinental reported \$2.1 billion in corporate revenues last year. Executives declined an interview. However, in a statement to *Blacklock's*, senior vice president Ted Markle questioned whether the com-

pany's weeklies were sustainable without federal aid.

“These local papers are often the only reliable source of local information in their region,” Markle wrote; “Without this program, it would be very difficult to continue producing and distributing local papers.”

Another recipient, Torstar Corporation, received \$245,866 for nine Ontario weeklies published by its Metroland Media Group subsidiary, including \$47,618 to the *Walkerton Herald-Times*; \$46,077 to the *Meaford Express*; and \$43,221 to the *Wingham Advance Times*.

Torstar is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and publishes the nation's largest daily, the *Toronto Star*.

“The primary reason for the grant applications is to offset the cost of writing, printing and distributing these small-market news-

papers,” said Lorenzo DeMarchi, chief financial officer of Torstar Corp.

DeMarchi, asked what if any impact the Department of Heritage grants had on news coverage of the ministry, replied: “I don't get a sense it has any effect. I can't imagine that it does. I don't think these weekly publishers feel beholden to anyone over these grants.”

Newspapers Canada's Hinds agreed that coverage of government was not compromised by weeklies that benefit from taxpayers' funding: “It's an interesting question. I most community newspapers are pretty scathing in their coverage of government in general.”

“They don't pull any punches,” Hind said.

 TOM KORSKI



Sun Media Corporation, famed for denouncing taxpayers' costs in welfare and arts funding, applied for more than \$800,000 in federal grants for weeklies in its print division over a two-year period through the Canada Periodical Fund.

The Department of Heritage, manager of the subsidy fund, said in a statement it “is designed to provide eligible Canadian publishers of print magazines and non-daily newspapers with the financial support they need to produce and distribute high-quality Canadian editorial content.”

Sun Media commentators are frequent critics of government subsidies. In a Jan. 19 editorial the flagship tabloid *Toronto*

## SUN MEDIA TAKES \$800,000 IN GRANTS

*Sun* condemned “welfare recipients” who spend money on “booze or cigarettes.” And *Sun News Network* in a 2011 broadcast lamented grants for the arts community: “Can't you do this without a leg up from taxpayers?”

Records show Sun Media Corp., Canada's largest newspaper supplier by its own estimate, received funding totalling \$809,301 over two years, ending last Oct. 24. The funding applications were for 25 corporate-owned weeklies in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, including:

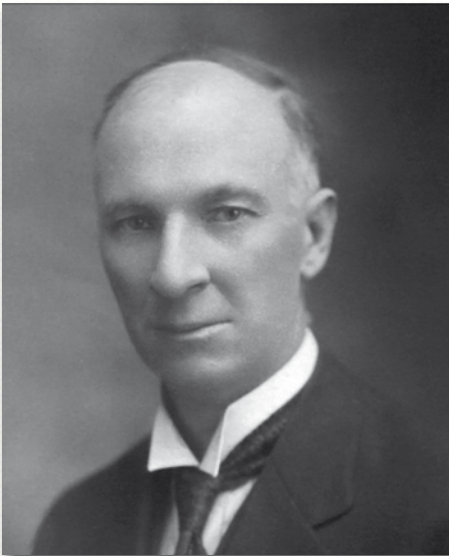
*Barry's Bay This Week* \$48,581.51  
*Dresden-Bothwell-Leader-Spirit* \$28,330.  
*Dunnville Chronicle* \$35,485.90  
*La Sentinelle* \$35,499.75  
*Lakeshore Advance* \$32,715.1  
*Mayerthorpe Freelancer* \$19,801.1  
*Meadow Lake Progress* \$40,224.95  
*Petrolia Topic* \$46,362.2  
*Seaforth Huron Expositor* \$45,481.41  
*The Cochrane Times Post* \$43,462.70

*The Crowsnest Pass Promoter* \$30,608.30  
*The Delhi News-Record* \$30,257.98  
*The Edson Leader* \$18,342.90  
*The Ingersoll Times* \$31,150.90  
*The Lucknow Sentinel* \$39,375.48  
*The Markdale Standard* \$8,336.35  
*The Mid-North Monitor* \$49,231.58  
*The Nanton News* \$26,045.43  
*The Northern Times* \$21,857.00  
*The Norwich Gazette* \$29,724.75  
*The Paris Star* \$16,496.60  
*The Pincher Creek Echo* \$23,093.62  
*The Standard* \$18,983.25  
*The Times (Minden)* \$45,586.09  
*Whitecourt Star* \$44,266.15

*Blacklock's* calls to Sun chief operating officer Julie Tremblay were not returned.

Heritage Minister James Moore, asked for an interview, told *Blacklock's* through a statement: “We will politely decline.”

 TOM KORSKI



**Tom Hyland Blacklock**

A pioneer publisher and war correspondent, confidante of three prime ministers and 1922 president of the Ottawa Press Gallery, Tom Blacklock was mourned at his passing in 1934 as "a keen observer blessed with a sense of proportion." Born in Halton County, Ont. in 1870, he became a frontier editor and first mayor of Weyburn, Sask. in 1903. Assigned to Parliament Hill by the Winnipeg Telegram in 1912 he remained a gallery man for life with columns published from Victoria to Halifax: "As Tom Blacklock used to say, 'That ain't the way I heard it.'"

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# James Rajotte, MP

## THE VALUE OF MONEY

Many Canadians see personal debt as a fact of life and a monthly payment. I think of it as a liability. My father Ron was a math teacher who drilled this into us: pay off your debts as soon as possible. I got my first credit card at 18 and bought a \$500 stereo, then dad explained compound interest to me. "Have fun paying it off," he said. It was a \$500 lesson.

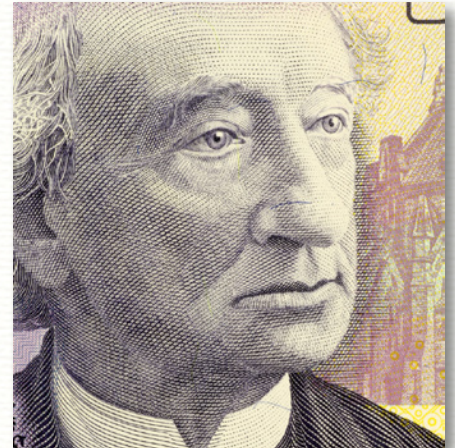
My grandparents settled in Wainwright, Alberta in 1915. They saw the peak of the wheat boom, then the crash, then the Depression. It was a life filled with chores.

You learn the value of money if you don't have much. These lessons shaped our whole family's attitude towards debt. My Poppa wouldn't turn the heater on in the car because he thought it cost. My brother needed transportation so he saved up for a Toyota Echo – and paid cash. My parents are still thrifty. They bought a \$23,000 house in Edmonton in 1967 and paid it off in twelve years. We drove a Chevrolet Suburban for years; it rusted so badly there were holes in the floor, so dad put down a carpet.

Debt can be a necessity in today's society, especially student loans and mortgages. Yet Canadians should keep a timetable on paying their bills.

Nobody is expected to wear a hair shirt, but we should think in terms of needs, not wants. I have never made a purchase on the Home Shopping Channel. I have never borrowed to pay for a holiday or made an impulse purchase at the mall; when I go shopping I make a list and stick to it. In Edmonton I drive a six-year old Ford that gets me from A to B. I own two personal credit cards and pay them off every month; I enjoy zero balances.

With younger Canadians accustomed to low, low interest rates it is becoming very



hard to teach them the lessons of my parents and grandparents. We developed this attitude that more personal debt can be incurred since it is so cheap to manage over time. Yet nobody should take on more debt than they can manage. It is not in the interest of Canada or the financial institutions to have people in a position where they can't pay their bills.

These lessons need to be taught over and over. If you're in the workforce and it's been 20 years since graduating high school math, you may have forgotten what compound interest actually means. Our financial institutions are responsible, but there are cases where due diligence is lacking. Personal debt should not be a permanent reality.

In 2003 I bought a home in Edmonton and the mortgage officer told me, "You can afford twice what you're putting down." I replied, "But I don't need it."

I hope to pay off the mortgage this summer. I'll celebrate by taking my parents out for a Red Robin burger.

*(Editor's note: the author is chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, and five-term Conservative MP for Edmonton-Leduc)*

# Sceptics Get Trademark

A sceptics' organization, Bad Science Watch, is trademarking its name in pursuit of "unbiased factual information" in the drafting of federal regulations.

"We want to be evocative and speak to the activist nature of the organization," said Michael Kruse, chair of the Oakville, Ont.-based group founded in 2012.

"Reaction has been positive," said Kruse.

In an earlier open letter to parliamentarians, Bad Science Watch urged MPs and senators to embrace "good science policy" in

monitoring the nation's health and welfare.

The group to date has countered allegations WiFi signals cause headaches and heart palpitations – "misinformed," reported Bad Science Watch – and the promotion of homeopathic health products as substitutes for vaccinations in children.

"The anti-vaccine messages spread by homeopaths have caused parents to needlessly question the usefulness and safety of vaccines," said the group. "As a result the level of vaccination in Canadian communities has dropped to as low as 62 percent."

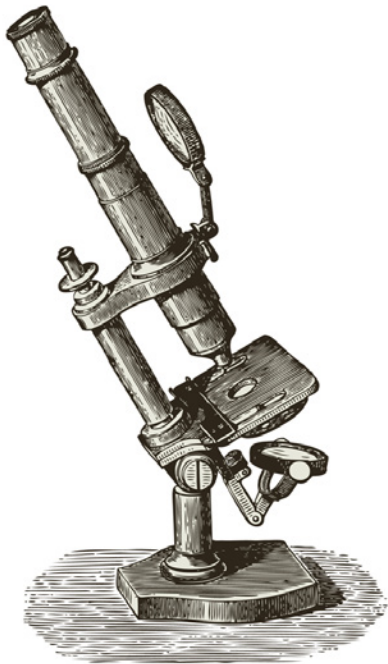
Bad Science Watch is a non-profit organization dedicated to "critical thinking," according to its mission statement.

The group proposed to trademark "Bad Science Watch" for use on reports and advocacy campaigns to "lobby for changes to gov-

ernment and industry policies that are consistent with sound science," according to its Industry Canada application.

Directors include two doctors and a paramedic.

 STAFF



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# Hurry Up N' Wait



A hi-tech federal system designed to speed border crossings for trucking companies has instead resulted in confusion and delays.

The Advance Commercial Information program eManifest, introduced by Canada Border Services last Nov. 1, has been plagued with snarls "above and beyond what could reasonably be attributed to learning-curve issues," said Stephen Laskowski, of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

The electronic system was designed to identify trucks at border points for quicker processing, compared to truckers still carrying paper documents.

Yet the Trucking Alliance reports it continues to receive daily complaints from carriers nationwide who are held up for hours and, in cases, days, due to confusion over the electronic program.

"It is clear from feedback and complaints from CTA members that there is a significant lack of consistency among border service officers in the level of knowledge," said Laskowski, senior vice president.

The Border Services Agency told *Blacklock's* it is continuing to work with industry to "assist in preparing eManifest and to minimize the challenges raised by the Canadian Trucking Alliance."

The agency hosts bi-weekly phone calls where truckers can "ask questions, receive feedback and share best practices with other eManifest early adopters," the agency said.

Deanna Pagnan, the Alliance's director of policy and government relations, said in an interview that truckers made significant investments in technology and

training to accommodate the electronic system.

"The experience of many carriers is causing them to question the value of those investments and the initiative as a whole," Pagnan said. "If these problems experienced at the border level are not corrected in a very timely manner, Canada Border Services will lose the support of carriers and many may revert back to paper processes to save time, money and operational headaches." Pagnan said complaints of conflicting advice from federal border officers are now commonplace.

"Drivers can't get their data accepted and often wait for hours while the situation is resolved," said Pagnan, who noted eManifest is still not in operation at all border crossings.



ALEX BINKLEY

## INVENTORS PATENT SNOW-FREE SOLAR PANEL

Two Ontario inventors have patented a self-cleaning solar panel for sub-Arctic use that removes snow without brush work.

"We have a prototype for field testing this winter," said Montgomery Childs, vice president of Scirus Technologies. "It allows a solar panel to do what it should do, which is to generate electricity."

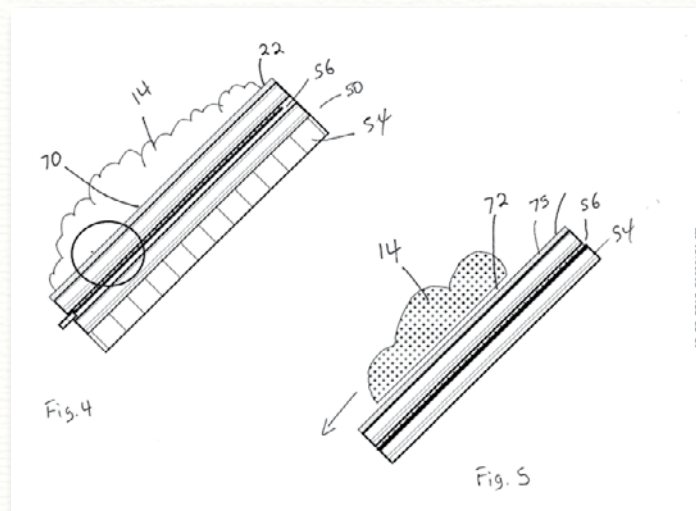
Childs, and co-inventor William DeBurger, filed Industry Canada patent #2758501, a solar panel with embedded electrical

filaments to melt snowfall.

"It's like the defroster in your car," Childs said. "I've done a lot of engineering over the years. This design intent is to efficiently and economically clean solar panels so they actually work in the wintertime."

Filaments add \$15 to the cost of a panel, the equivalent of about five percent of production, said Childs: "I consider this commercially viable."

Scirus Technologies tested a prototype in Sudbury,



Ont., where average January snowfall is 64 centimetres; it snows 18 days out of 31; and the daily average temperature in January is minus 14, according to Environment Canada records.

"The results were good," said Childs, who calculated the technology could clear a solar panel in ten minutes.

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# That'll Be \$20 For The View



A proposed \$5 million increase in national park fees will price the wilderness experience beyond the reach of some visitors, says an advocacy group. Parks Canada has given Canadians till Feb. 18 to comment on its proposal to hike fees amid following a five-year freeze and recent budget cuts.

"We saw from a sustainable perspective that we, like many others, had costs rising," said Andrew Campbell, vice president of visitor experience at the federal agency. "We had a look at the consumer price index as one of the ways to move forward."

Park managers propose to raise all fees by at least 2.5 percent annually including new charges for such services as the National Learn To Camp program, an educational campaign intended to "offer Canadians the opportunity to learn how to plan

and enjoy safe and successful camping trips," according to the department.

The increase would raise the cost of a family single-day park visit to \$20 plus tax.

Campbell said government surveys of visitors to Canada's 42 national parks and 167 national historic sites suggest that "fees never really come to the high element about reasons people are not coming."

"We try to think of what is a responsible amount that should be paid by actual users," Campbell said. "Right now that is set at about 35 percent."

One advocacy group, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, said higher user costs will impact park accessibility.

"Fee increases could make a trip to a national park unaffordable for some Canadians," said Anne-Marie

Syslak, executive director of the Society's Southern Alberta chapter. "Parks are important and also lucrative for government."

The Society estimated national parks currently generate \$5 in economic return for every dollar invested.

Federal spending was cut by an estimated \$29 million last year, prompting shorter seasons at 17 parks and historic sites nationwide and reductions in budgets for some of Canada's best-known attractions.

Spending at Parks Canada sites in Southwest Ontario was cut last year from \$23.7 million to \$9.7 million, a 59 percent reduction. Docu-

ments show budgeting at Cape Breton parks and historic sites was nearly cut in half, from \$41.6 million to \$23.5 million, while spending was reduced 22 percent at Alberta's Jasper National Park, and 16 percent at Banff National Park.

"As Canadians, these are our parks," said Syslak. "We want to ensure the government provides adequate resources, and ensures they are accessible to everyone."

Federal research credits national parks and historic sites with generating \$4.4 billion in tourism and other economic returns.



KAVEN BAKER VOAKES

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# Yes, But Do They Take Pets?



The nation's rents have defied two recessions and a financial panic by rising nearly 50 percent higher on average since 2000 compared to the previous decade, according to federal figures provided to *Blacklock's*.

Rental increases in the period 2000 to 2010 averaged \$184.52 a month, compared to \$124.61 in the previous decade, by official estimate.

"Gentrification in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary, and to a certain extent even Ottawa, is chipping away at rental housing – especially

low-rent housing," said Prof. Alan Walks of the research group Cities Centre at the University of Toronto.

"We've taken old rental stock that was cheap, gentrified it, displaced tenants and replaced it with condos," said Walks.

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, which compiled the data, noted average rent hikes differed sharply between provinces since the turn of the century.

"When you look at the rental market you really have to

look at its reaction to the local economy," said Mathieu Laberge, deputy chief economist for the federal mortgage insurer. "For example, in Alberta it's very cyclical with what happened in the oil industry."

Alberta led the nation with a decade-long rise of \$383 in average rent for a two-bedroom apartment, compared to a \$344 hike in Saskatchewan; \$266 in British Columbia; \$243 in Manitoba; \$230 in Nova Scotia; \$181 in Prince Edward Island; \$171 in Quebec; \$158 in Newfoundland & Labrador; \$153 in New Brunswick; and \$151

in Ontario.

An industry group said the CMHC data was notable, but failed to account for types of rental accommodation.

"I'm not just getting a car, I'm getting a new car," said John Dickie, president of the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations. "Other studies deliberately adjust for quality."

"CMHC does not do that," Dickie said in an interview. "They look at all structures and ask, 'What is the rent?'"

The federation represents owners and managers of some 1,000,000 rental suites nationwide, by its estimate.

"Rents follow the business cycles," said Dickie, adding the past decade saw significant spending on new or improved rental accommodation by pension fund managers and other corporate investors that subsequently raised rents to recoup capital costs.

"That's the main reason rents went up," said Dickie. "You have better units at the end of the period than at the beginning."

 KAVEN BAKER -VOAKES

# And They're Off In Federal Lawsuit



A former federal employee credited with blowing the whistle on misinformation that affected horse wagering is suing for his old job.

Mark Halfacree filed four applications in Federal Court to return to work at the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency, a government board that supervises betting at racetracks nationwide.

"I'm trying to get my job back," said Halfacree. "When I was doing my job in trying to protect the public, I was told: 'Drop this, there's no more action that needs to be taken on your part – and oh, by the way, show up next week for a disciplinary hearing.'"

In 2006 Halfacree raised concerns with the Department of Agriculture over anomalies at Toronto's Woodbine track over so-called "chart lines," the performance records on horses provided to bettors.

"It wasn't just a local issue of bad chart lines," said Halfacree. "This stuff was being fed all over North America."

The charted data included each horse's past finishes, dates of races, track conditions, classification, post position and mid-race position – all information used by bettors to calculate a racer's possible future performance.

"Here you have \$1,500,000 bet a day at Woodbine and that information going across North America, and the chart lines were brutal," said Halfacree, who cited one instance in which a 15-1 longshot was bet to a heavy favourite with \$120,000 in wagering on the basis of inaccurate records that had the effect of "a deception of the performance of the horse."

"The next time he raced he finished seventh; the public got screwed," said Halfacree, who attributed inaccurate

records to sloppy charting.

Woodbine subsequently installed electronic tracking systems and improved charting of performance records. Halfacree, when asked to gauge the integrity of new record keeping at Woodbine, replied: "Perfect."

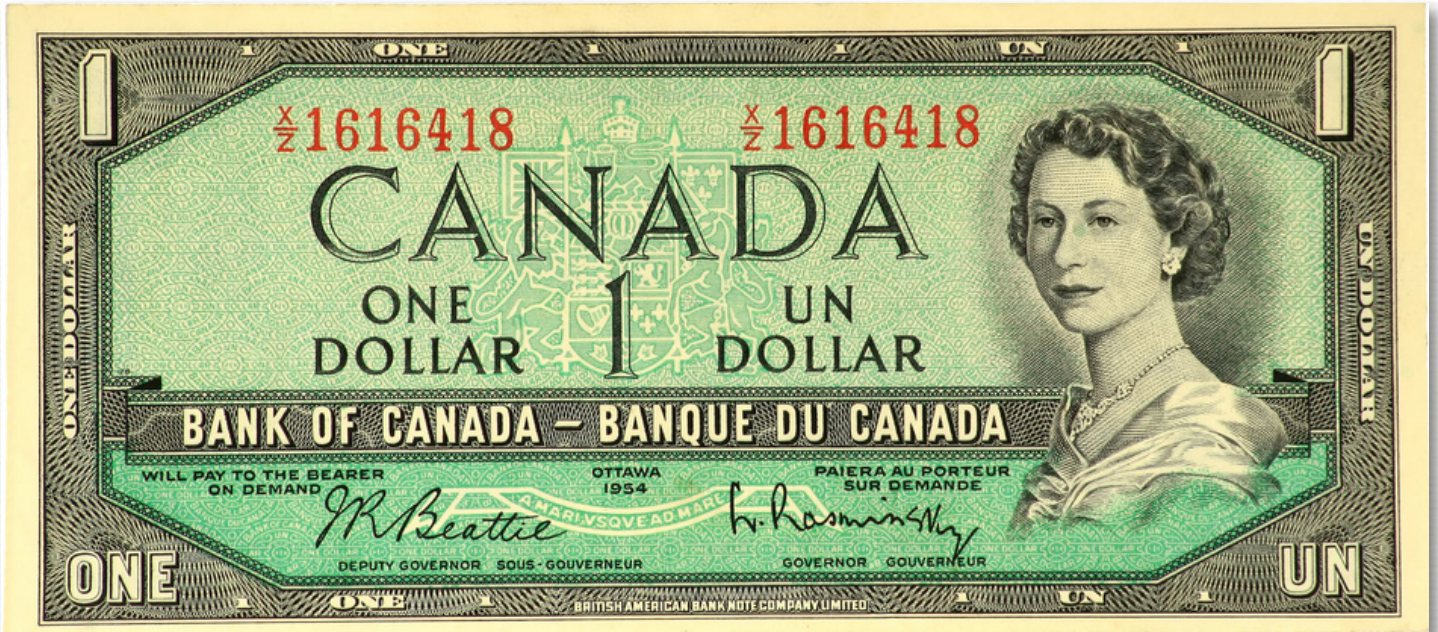
The Department of Agriculture declined comment on the Federal Court applications.

The department, which supervises track betting in the name of agricultural diversification, in August 2011 published new regulations requiring that track operators "provide timely and relevant betting information" for the public.

 STAFF

[PHOTO LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA PA-029614]

# The #1 Crime Fighting Tool



An Ottawa summit on policing has offered little for municipalities seeking federal funding to offset rising budgets for law enforcement.

"There wasn't a lot of talk about that," said Berry Vrbancic, past president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. "We felt strongly that we need to have that discussion."

The federation earlier warned expenses of police forces are "not sustainable for cities," and currently average more than a fifth of municipal budgets.

"A real sign of progress will

be to bring governments, police forces and municipalities together to take a close look at how we pay for police services in Canada," said Vrbancic, a Kitchener, Ont. councillor.

Total expenditure on policing nationwide has nearly doubled from \$6.4 billion in 1999 to \$12.3 billion in 2009, by federation estimate.

"We have to develop a strategy to get the feds to the table on this," Vrbancic said in an interview.

Public Safety Minister Vic Toews declined an interview on the summit, *Strengthening Canada's Policing Advantage*.

Toews earlier issued a statement that senior levels of government share "a strong interest in tackling the increasing cost of policing."

“We have to develop a strategy to get the feds to the table on this.”

In a report, the FCM calculated municipal ratepayers now carry 60 percent of the cost of law enforce-

ment in Canada: "With only eight cents of every tax dollar collected in Canada going to municipalities, cities alone can't sustain expanding policing responsibilities, growing federal priorities that aren't matched by federal dollars, and the range of public safety issues stemming from addictions and mental health disorders."

Documents show Parliament's own direct cost of law enforcement has grown since 2006, with the number of RCMP staff increasing 12 percent to 23,695 employees.

# A \$3 Million Court Fight



The Department of Justice has rung up nearly \$3 million in legal costs in defending money laundering regulations that courts have found unconstitutional, *Blacklock's* has learned.

The expenses cover court battles with the Federation of Law Societies and Law Society of British Columbia over rules that give federal agents new powers to audit lawyers' files for transactions deemed suspicious.

"The litigation has been fairly intense," said John Hunter, past president of the federation. "I have no doubt the government has put in serious time on this. Whether it's time well spent is another question."

The justice department declined comment.

The litigation has cost the government "approximately" \$2,900,000 since 2001, officials said. *Blacklock's* request for a full accounting of expenses under the *Access To Information Act* was dismissed Jan. 10 when the finance department claimed "after a thorough search no records exist." The department subsequently acknowledged it did have accounting documents, but has yet to release them.

"I assume those are in-house costs," said Hunter, senior litigator with Hunter Litigation Chambers of Vancouver. "I can't imagine there are cheques written to outside lawyers."

The Federation of Law Societies in 2001 successfully sued to overturn provisions of the

*Proceeds of Crime Act* (money laundering). The law required that lawyers report "suspicious" transactions to federal agents – a provision struck down as a violation of solicitor-client privilege.

Subsequently the federation in 2004 published its own "know-your-client" rules that restricted lawyers from accepting large cash payments, and other measures.

In 2008, the government again tried to subject lawyers to federal "client identification obligations," requiring that solicitors record the identities of clients using birth certificates or other government-issue ID, and permit federal audits of their files under threat of \$500,000 fines.

"The disappointment is we had in the law societies really stepped up to the plate," said Hunter. "The government did not have to go to litigation."

"We thought we were working to similar ends," Hunter continued. "We're hoping that ultimately the government will accept that law societies govern the profession in this respect."

The BC Supreme Court last September 27 ruled federal regulations were unconstitutional, and treated lawyers as information gatherers for federal agents.

# Medicine For Stereotypes



More than 50,000 Canadians have completed a federally-funded program by the Mental Health Commission to promote awareness of mental illness, documents show.

One in five Canadians experience mental illness at some point in their lives, by official estimate.

"The past year has seen significant progress in the area of mental health reform which has sparked enormous opportunity for the years ahead," said Michael Kirby, commission chair. "All of recognized that if our country was to ever build a better mental health system, it would first need a solid foundation.

"Canadians would have to start talking openly about mental health," Kirby said.

The commission last March released a report *Changing Directions, Changing Lives* that encouraged public dialogue on mental health issues,


"People with mental health problems and illnesses say some of the most deeply felt stigma they experience comes from health care providers," the report noted.

The commission and partners developed a web-based continuing medical educa-

tion program, [cma.ca/stigma](http://cma.ca/stigma), for "family physicians and specialists to help them understand and combat the stigma surrounding mental illnesses."

The program has been accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

The commission said it is also investigating whether media coverage of mental health "is perpetuating negative stereotypes." A team at McGill University is analyzing more than 11,000 Canadian news reports from the period 2005 to 2012 to gauge treatment of the issue: "Findings from the research will better inform how we approach the media regarding mental health issues, and help lead the creation of mental health guidelines for the media."

 STAFF

## A HALF-PENNY FARM TOLL

A Canadian group is seeking a half-penny toll on raspberries, including imports that dominate the market, to aid domestic growers and fund fruit research.

“

We hope it is dealt with quickly.

”

The federal Farm Products Council will open hearings on the proposal from British Columbia growers.

"We do see a significant import market," said Sharmin Gamiet, director of BC's Raspberry Industry Develop-

ment Council. "Imports have surpassed the domestic supply. We first noticed the shift in 2006, and it has become a trend."

Gamiet said Fraser Valley growers, who produce more than 80 percent of the nation's red raspberry crop, face competition from the United States, Chile and Mexico.

"We want to promote Canadian raspberries," Gamiet said. "We want to fund scientific research on the health benefits of this product; once our documentation lands in Ottawa, we hope it is dealt with quickly."

The Council seeks approval to collect a national levy of 0.5¢ per pound of raspberries at the first point of sale.



The proceeds would fund a national growers' agency to oversee "red raspberry research, market development and promotion," the Farm Products Council said in a statement. Federal review of the request will be completed "within weeks," a department official told *Blacklock's*.

 STAFF

## JINX SHIP ENDS JOURNEY IN COURT



The odd journey of the *Altona*, a Pacific container ship contaminated by uranium and moored for months on the British Columbia coast, has finally ended in Federal Court.

Justice Sean Harrington ruled uranium producer Cameco Corp. will not be reimbursed \$19 million for cleaning up the *Altona* after its cargo of concentrated ore, or yellow cake, spilled onboard.

In 2010 Cameco shipped 840 steel drums of yellow cake aboard the *Altona* for delivery to China, when the radioactive cargo spilled during a mid-Pacific storm.

Forced to return to British Columbia after Hawaiian authorities refused entry, the *Altona* tied up at the Port of Vancouver on Jan. 20, 2011 for a three-month cleanup by Cameco.

The Saskatoon-based uranium producer subsequently sued the ship's owners, officers, stevedores who loaded the vessel and the manufacturers of the yellow cake containers, according to court documents.

The vessel's owners subsequently filed for bankruptcy, and the *Altona* was sold for \$4.8 million.

A leading creditor, the German bank HSH Nordbank, claimed money from the sale as payment on a mortgage it held on the unlucky ship.

Cameco argued it deserved proceeds from the sale to recover its cost of clean-up.

"The Cameco position is that it is an innocent victim, blameless for the spill and aftermath," Justice Harrington wrote.

However, in a detailed judgment, Harrington ruled in favour of German mortgage-holders as a priority creditor.

"Cameco incurred the expenses it did as a cost of doing business," Harrington wrote. "It was a condition of its license that it have an emergency plan in place.

"It acted as it should have been required to act, not as a volunteer, but rather to satisfy the obligations imposed on it by law," the judge continued. "There is no reason to change the priorities."

Clean-up of the *Altona* took three months before inspectors with the Canadian Nuclear Regulatory Agency ruled it safe to sell.

Cameco did not respond to Blacklock's interview request.

The *Altona*, renamed the *Meratus Palembang* by Indonesian registrars, left BC last November to resume its Pacific travels.



MARK BOURRIE

## CHILLY THIS MORNING

A POEM BY SHAI BEN-SHALOM



There are many ways to tell someone that you have absolutely nothing to tell him.

Commenting about the weather is one such way

(Editor's note: the author, an Israeli-born biologist, published his first collection of poems *Martians Among Us* in 2012, with In/Words Press; photo by Louise Imbeault)

## Best of Sheree



# Landmarks Ottawa Destroyed:

## A Refuge From Parliament

Alexander Mackenzie, Canada's first Liberal prime minister, once lived near Parliament Hill in a beautiful Gothic Revival home. He was an honest, thrifty fellow who helped transform the country, yet could not stand parliamentary life. "Politics is very low," he wrote. Today the house is gone and forgotten – just like Mackenzie.

Born in Scotland, he arrived in Kingston, Ont. in 1842 as a near-penniless stone-cutter. Mackenzie became a successful contractor in Sarnia, Ont., known for quality work. Mackenzie-built structures can still be found, including the former Essex County Courthouse, now called Mackenzie Hall.

He was sharp-eyed, tight-mouthed, and weather-beaten. Mackenzie did not dress well, and hated to spend money. As prime minister he was pained at paying \$128 for a political banquet, and resolved never to entertain at home due to the cost.

Mackenzie landed in politics as a reformer, elected Liberal leader in 1873, and prime minister less than a year later. "Some people have a theory that a successful politician must necessarily depend on intrigue and doing crooked things," Mackenzie said; "I determined to rule in broad daylight or not at all."

He refused to campaign on public works spending for fear Canadians would think he was trying to buy their votes. When federal contractors sent gifts for the prime minister's wedding anniversary in 1878, Mackenzie had

BEFORE



them returned: "I never felt so mortified in my life."

He grew so weary of reporters and patronage hounds, Mackenzie built a secret staircase from his West Block office so he might evade questions. Cronyism and cynicism were enough to "sicken me of public life," he wrote.

Mackenzie determined to clean up the place. He introduced Canada's first secret ballot in 1874; elections till then were open ballot affairs with widespread bribe-taking. He established the Supreme Court and the Office of the Auditor General, the bane of grafters.

His home and refuge from the meanness of politics was at 22 Vittoria Street, a short walk west of Parliament Hill. From his veranda Mackenzie had a marvellous view of the Ottawa River. The Gothic home had a distinctive rounded bay window, and the tooth-like corner stone patterning that Victorians enjoyed.

AFTER



On losing the premiership in the recession of 1878, Mackenzie remained an MP but sold the Vittoria Street home in 1880. The house survived till 1928, when contractors demolished it to make way for MPs' offices in the new Confederation Building.

And Mackenzie? He refused a title from the Queen – "We have no landed aristocracy in Canada," he explained – and like all honest politicians of his era, died poor.

When Mackenzie passed away in 1892, his estate was so modest MPs voted a \$10,000 trust fund to support his widow.

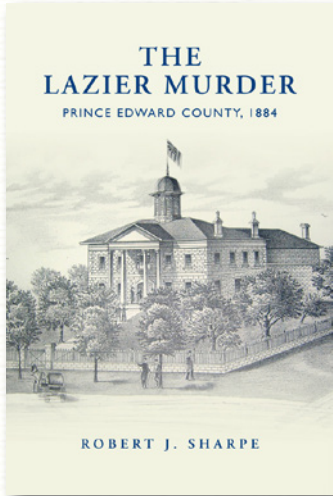


ANDREW ELLIOTT

[PHOTO: LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA PA-028183]

(Editor's note: the author is a federal archivist who chronicles historic architecture at [glebeheritageblog.wordpress.com](http://glebeheritageblog.wordpress.com), and in 2012 wrote *The Glorious Years: Peterborough's Golden Age of Architecture 1840-1940*, Borealis Press)

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Usual Suspects*

If no two murders are alike, all wrongful convictions seem strikingly similar: a shocking crime, an excitable crowd, a round-up of the usual inarticulate suspects.

Author Robert Sharpe, a justice of Ontario's Court of Appeal, documents such an outrage: the 1884 hanging of two men in Prince Edward County, Ont., for a crime they almost certainly did not commit. Sharpe does not call it judicial murder – after all, he's a judge – but the signs are there.

Peter Lazier, a farm equipment salesman, was shot to death in a county farmhouse on Friday, Dec. 21, 1883 at 10 pm. Two armed robbers scuffled and opened fire with a .32 pistol before fleeing the scene. Lazier's killing was the first murder in the county in years.

Within hours, two neighbours were named as suspects. A coroner's inquest convened the next day. Then came the

public outrage, the speedy trial, the gallows.

"While the speed and efficiency of the criminal process in the late nineteenth century was in some respects admirable when compared to the sometimes glacial pace of modern criminal trials and appeals, one is left with a lingering feeling that there was something of a rush to judgment that simply did not allow for careful reflection and deliberation," writes Justice Sharpe.

The suspects were Joseph Thomset, fisherman; and David Lowder, farmer. Both were "rural working people with limited means and little education," the author notes.

No murder weapon was found. No confession was made. No physical evidence linked Thomset or Lowder to the crime, nor did they look anything like the burglars; trial witnesses testified both were far too short.

They even had alibis: Lowder spent the evening with his family, and Thomset was seen to visit a neighbour far away, appearing calm and well-mannered.

Police claimed the suspects' boots matched footprints in fresh snow outside the crime scene – a "highly dubious" supposition, writes Justice Sharpe. Evidence showed about half the county wore boots like Lowder's and

Thomset's, and the footprint "evidence" was contaminated by excitable neighbours who tramped through the snow within hours of the shooting: "Believing that hot pursuit of the killers was imperative, they did not think it necessary to wait for the local constabulary to arrive."

The fix was in. Murder was rare and would be avenged.

Leading the investigation was Belleville's police chief, an ambitious town cop with no professional training whatsoever, "a man anxious to build his reputation as a relentless and clever crime-buster." Managing the trial was a hanging judge so outraged by the crime, "few in the courtroom doubted that the judge had essentially invited them to convict the prisoners." Covering the trial was the panting *Pictou Gazette*, which reported trial

evidence was "breathless," "a great sensation."

Justice Sharpe captures the tragedy in a crisp, carefully-researched account of the tightening of a noose. He writes, "Even the most stalwart supporter of the death penalty must be horrified by the execution of an innocent person."

Prince Edward County never saw a murder quite like the 1883 shooting. The rest of it – the excitement, the crowds, the round-up of the usual inarticulate suspects – is disturbingly familiar.

 HOLLY DOAN

*The Lazier Murder: Prince Edward County 1884* by Robert J. Sharpe; University of Toronto Press; 192 pages; ISBN 9781-44261-5267; \$24.95

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**Alper, Howard** – of Ottawa, reappointed chair, Science, Technology & Innovation Council. Dec. 9

**Beattie, Merri** – of Ottawa, appointed a member, Public Service Staffing Tribunal. Jan. 30

**Bobiash, Donald** – of Ottawa, appointed Ambassador to Indonesia. Jan. 8

**Bobkowicz, Andrea** – of Westmount, Que., appointed a trustee, Canadian Museum of Civilization. Jan. 17

**Bogoroch, Richard** – of Toronto, appointed a member, Patented Medicine Prices Review Board. Dec. 13

**Brazeau, Denis** – of Longueuil, Que., reappointed vice-chair, Canadian Forces Grievance Board. Feb. 9

**Buchanan, Marilyn** – of Whitehorse, appointed a trustee, Canadian Museum of Nature. Dec. 13

**Cadieux Pierre** – of Rigaud, Quebec, appointed a part-time member, Parole Board Quebec Region. Dec. 13

**Carpeneto, James** – of Sarnia, reappointed chair, El Board of Referees for Sarnia district. Dec. 18

**Castelli, Ray** – of West Vancouver, BC, appointed chair of the Canadian Commercial Corporation, with an annual retainer in the range of \$8,000 to \$9,400 and a per diem in the range of \$310 to \$375. Dec. 14

**Claridge, Jayne** – of Callander, Ont., reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for North Bay region. Dec. 13

**Daigle, Nathalie** – of Gatineau, Que., appointed a member, Public Service Staffing Tribunal. Dec. 13

**Dansereau, Claire** – of Ottawa, appointed Senior Advisor to the Privy Council, with a salary in the range of \$216,900 to \$255,100. Jan. 14

**Davies, Philip** – appointed a member, National Energy Board. Jan. 7

**Dodds, Murray** – of Calgary, reappointed a part-time member, Parole Board Prairie Division. Jan. 14

**Guindi, Shahir** – of Beaconsfield, Que., appointed a director, Business Development Bank. Dec. 13

**Fawcett, Sue** – of Calgary, reappointed a director, Business Development Bank of Canada. Dec. 13

**Filliter, George** – of Fredericton, NB, reappointed a part-time member, Public Service Labour Relations Board. Dec. 14

**Flack, Graham** – of Ottawa, appointed Deputy Secretary to Cabinet. Jan. 28

**Fowler, Ian** – of Calgary, reappointed a part-time member, Parole Board Prairie Region. Jan. 14

**Galbraith, Jane** – of Burlington, reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for Hamilton district. Oct. 21

**Gauthier, Jacques** – of Montréal, appointed a member, National Energy Board. Dec. 13

**Goodman, Robert** – of Toronto, reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for North York district. Dec. 6

**Guindi, Shahir** – of Montreal, appointed a director, Business Development Bank. Dec. 17

**Gupta, Susheel** – of Ottawa, appointed acting chair of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, with a salary in the range of \$226,100 to \$266,000, effective April 5

**Hamel, Bruno** – of Ottawa, reappointed chair, Canadian Forces Grievance Board, with a salary in the range of \$139,900 to \$164,500, effective March 2

**Helwer, Sherry** – of Brandon, Man., appointed a director, Canadian Commercial Corporation. Dec. 7

**Hermanson, Elwin** – of Winnipeg, reappointed chief commissioner, Canadian Grain Commission, with a salary in the range of \$226,100 to \$266,000. Jan. 21

**Howald, Robert** – of Toronto, appointed acting president and CEO, Canada Lands Company. Jan. 7

**Huebert, Robert** – of Calgary, appointed a director, Canadian Polar Commission. Dec. 13

**Jean-Louis, Maxim** – of Sudbury, Ont., reappointed a director, Canadian Polar Commission. Dec. 13

**Johnston, Dale** – of Ponoka, Alta., appointed chair, Farm Credit Canada. Dec. 13

**Jolicoeur, Renée** – of Ottawa, appointed Associate Deputy Minister of Public Works, with a salary in the range of \$188,600 to \$221,800. Jan. 14

**Jollette, Denis** – of Ottawa, reappointed a full-time member, Parole Board of Canada, effective Feb. 18

**Keenan, Michael** – of Ottawa, appointed Associate Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, with a salary in the range of \$188,600 to \$221,800. Jan. 14

**Kennedy, Claire** – of Toronto, appointed a director, Bank of Canada. Dec. 18

**King, Matthew** – of Ottawa, appointed Deputy Minister of Fisheries, with a salary in the range of \$216,900 to \$255,100. Jan. 14

**Lacroix, Hubert** – of Westmount, reappointed president, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with a salary in the range of \$363,800 to \$428,000. Jan. 1

**Lecavalier, André** – of Ottawa, reappointed a member, Canada Industrial Relations Board. Dec. 18

**Lineker, William** – of Port Moody, BC, appointed a part-time member, Canada Industrial Relations Board. Jan. 14

**Luftig, Olga** – of Toronto, appointed a member, Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Dec. 13

**Lunn, Gary** – of North Saanich, BC, appointed a director, Canada Foundation for Sustainable Development Technology. Dec. 13

**Lupul, Nita** – of St. Albert, Alta., reappointed chair, El Board of Referees for Alberta Division. Dec. 13

**Macdonald, J. Ed** – of Pictou, NS, appointed a part-time member, Transportation Appeal Tribunal. Dec. 20

**MacPherson, Elizabeth** – of Ottawa, reappointed chair, Canada Industrial Relations Board, with a salary in the range of \$226,100 to \$266,000. Jan. 1

**MacSween, James** – of Red Deer, Alta., reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for Red Deer region. Dec. 13

**McCaw, Maureen** – of Edmonton, appointed a director, CBC. Dec. 13

**McDougall, Daniel** – of Ottawa, appointed chief climate change negotiator. Dec. 3

**McGraw, Louis-Philippe** – of Moncton, NB, appointed a member, Parole Board of Canada, Atlantic Region, effective Feb. 11

**McLaughlin, E. Virginia** – of Richmond Hill, Ont., reappointed a trustee, National Museum of Science & Technology. Dec. 18

**McPhail, Ian** – of Toronto, reappointed part-time vice chair, RCMP Complaints Commission, with a per diem in the range of \$605 to \$710. Jan. 14

**Mallory, Stephen** – of Toronto, appointed a director VIA Rail. Dec. 21

**Martin, Michael** – of Ottawa, appointed Senior Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence. Jan. 28

**Menke, Ursula** – of Gloucester, Ont., reappointed as Commissioner of the Financial Consumer Agency, with a salary in the range of \$226,100 to \$266,000. Dec. 3

**Price, James** – of Ottawa, reappointed vice-chair, Canadian Forces Grievance Board, with a salary in the range of \$105,900 to \$124,500. Dec. 9

**Reeves, Joanne** – of New Ross, NS, reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for Bridgewater region. Dec. 13

**Rivard, Normand** – of Ottawa, appointed a member, Canada Industrial Relations Board. Jan. 15

**Rowe, Derrick** – of St. John's, appointed a director, Canadian Commercial Corporation. Dec. 7

**Sairanen, Sari** – of Toronto, appointed governor, Council of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety. Dec. 13

**Sargent, Timothy** – of Ottawa, appointed Acting Deputy Secretary to Cabinet. Jan. 28

**Sergie, Hind** – of Montréal, appointed a director, VIA Rail. Dec. 21

**Sherwood, Kelley** – of Ottawa, reappointed a member, Canada Pension Plan Review Tribunal for Ottawa region. Dec. 13

**Silberman, Toni** – of Toronto, appointed a director, Canadian Race Relations Foundation. Dec. 18

**Smith, G. Patrick** – of Ottawa, appointed a member, Specific Claims Tribunal. Dec. 13

**Sokolyk, Diane** – of Montréal, reappointed a member, Immigration & Refugee Board, Montreal Region. Jan. 11

**Stewart, Greg** – of Regina, reappointed president, Farm Credit Canada, with a salary in the range of \$290,700 to \$341,900. Jan. 1

**Treusch, Andrew** – of Ottawa, appointed Commissioner of Revenue, with a salary in the range of \$216,900 to \$255,100. Jan. 14

**Vancise, William** – of Regina, appointed part-time chair, Copyright Board, with a per diem in the range of \$940 to \$1,105. Jan. 11

**Whalen, W. Lawrence** – of Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., appointed a member, Specific Claims Tribunal. Dec. 13

**Whitley, Stuart James** – of Whitehorse, appointed vice-chair, National Parole Board Pacific Region. Dec. 13