

Hill Climbers p. 4

HOMSA hosts a spread
p. 15

Labour
minister
puts his
staff to
work



Tim
Powers
p.9

Saving the social
safety net

Les Whittington p. 7



Is the CAF too
top heavy?

Scott Taylor p. 5

Diplomatic
Circles p. 15



THE HILL TIMES

THIRTY-THIRD YEAR, NO. 1885

CANADA'S POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021 \$5.00

NEWS

'We're still here': MP Idlout on bringing Inuktitut to the House

Governor General Mary Simon's use of Inuktitut during last month's Throne Speech was a historic first, and new Nunavut MP Lori Idlout is making efforts of her own to incorporate her mother tongue into her work.

BY LAURA RYCKEWAERT

This year's Throne Speech marked the first time a Governor General has substantially addressed Parliament in a language other than French or English, and for Nunavut NDP MP Lori Idlout, hearing Governor General Mary

Continued on page 12



NDP MP Lori Idlout, pictured outside the House of Commons Chamber in the West Block building on Nov. 25. Along with speaking Inuktitut in her riding and in the House, Ms. Idlout requested that the sign for her MP office in the Justice Building in Ottawa include English, French, and Inuktitut, and has asked that her name also be shown in syllabics, both on ParlVu and in Hansard, when she rises to speak in the House. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Canada's
measured
response to
Ethiopian crisis
leaves some
wanting more
forceful action

BY NEIL MOSS

With other nations more forcefully denouncing the actions of the Ethiopian government, Canada's measured response to the crisis unfolding in Ethiopia has drawn a mixed reaction.

In the last month, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau,

Continued on page 11

NEWS

'In this fight we
shouldn't be left
alone': Kosovo
urges Canada to
combat influence
of Russia, China in
Western Balkans

BY NEIL MOSS

Kosovo is calling on Canada to not ignore its position in the Western Balkans as its president visited Ottawa to tell the federal government that it is the nation that is representing Canadian values in the region.

Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani was in Ottawa last week where she held meetings with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), Governor General Mary Simon, cabinet ministers, and Liberals MPs.

Continued on page 6

NEWS

New Fisheries Minister Murray has list of 'urgent' priorities to grapple with

BY ALICE CHEN

New Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray has

a difficult file ahead of her with competing priorities, many of which fall under the umbrella of climate change and the environ-

ment, experts say, but observers say she appears up to the job.

Crystallizing into focus one of the major issues facing fisheries

in Canada, Oceana's Nov. 16 audit of the sector found that fewer than one-third, or just 30.4 per cent, of the country's fisheries are healthy.

"It's urgent," said Robert Rangeley, Oceana Canada science director, of rebuilding fish stocks.

Continued on page 14

News

New Fisheries Minister Murray has list of ‘urgent’ priorities to grapple with

In a big portfolio with major decisions ranging from Indigenous rights, to environmental concerns, to shipbuilding, observers say ‘hard-working’ Joyce Murray has a lot of pressure on her shoulders.

Continued from page 1

“Let’s get on with the job.”

While the Fisheries Act was modernized in 2019, Mr. Rangeley said it lacks teeth and needs solid regulations around rebuilding, ones that set strong timelines and targets for a healthy zone of fish, with a focus on targeting fish mortality, through actions such as the reduction of targeted fisheries.

He also said that Indigenous understanding should be brought into the equation, so that the decision-making process based on “the best available science and Indigenous knowledge ... [and] systems,” with a focus on the “long-term benefit” instead of the politics of fishing stock allocation.



Oceana Canada’s Robert Rangeley is pushing for strong fish rebuilding targets and regulations. *Photograph courtesy of Lesley Wilmot*

Ms. Murray (Vancouver Quadra, B.C.) comes into this environmentally charged framework with a long history of political and business work. She started out in B.C. with one of the first tree-planting contracts in the province, setting forward a domino effect that would eventually lead her corporation, Brinkman and Associates Reforestation, into planting its one billionth tree in 2011. As a politician, she began provincially, elected as a B.C. Liberal in 2001, serving as B.C.’s first water, air, and land protection

minister, before moving on the federal level, where she’s served as an MP since 2008.

Re-elected with 43.6 per cent of the vote in September, Ms. Murray was shuffled from the now-defunct digital government portfolio to Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard in October, taking over from former minister Bernadette Jordan, who lost her bid for re-election in South Shore–St. Margarets, N.S.

Guy-Pascal Weiner, director of commercial fisheries for the Wolastoqiyik Wampanoag First Nation, said that the only thing he’s heard about Ms. Murray is that “she is very conservative, [as in] she is very eco-friendly,” which he said is a good thing given “there’s no business if the resource is in bad shape, but sometimes decisions are not always well taken.”

“I’ve always been impressed by how smart she is, how well she thinks through problems,” said Andrew Trites, professor at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries at the University of British Columbia. “It’s a big portfolio and there’s a lot of pressure being put on her to make decisions.”

Prof. Trites emphasized, that as his Member of Parliament, he’s seen that Ms. Murray “understands the need to conserve, she also understands the needs of those who need their livelihood.”

Liberal MP Ken Hardie (Fleetwood-Port Kells, B.C.) said she is warm, intelligent, and collaborative.

Liberal MP Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Ont.) echoed this sentiment, calling Ms. Murray “hard working,” and ready to take on the file with “vigour.”

He said he was particularly interested in working with her on developing a Canada water strategy and the blue economy. As the founder of the Great Lakes Taskforce, Mr. Badawey emphasized the “economic, environmental, and social impacts of the Great Lakes, and that’s important to the fisheries file.” He said that her ability to collaborate will be appreciated here, since this topic requires work across borders with many stakeholders.

Her long political career was of particular note to Jennifer Silver, associate professor of geography, environment, and geomatics at University of Guelph.

“What the position really needs is somebody with a familiarity for coastal provinces and people, and familiarity for the way in which political machinations [may play out], but also the way in which different stakeholders will want to talk about these things and the different positions they take,” she said, noting that Ms. Murray has the nimbleness in the political sphere and the regional background to do well in the role.

For Keith Watts, general manager of Torngat Fish Produc-

ers Co-operative, the key for Ms. Murray is to negotiate, particularly in regards to Indigenous rights and fisheries.

“It’s high time that the federal government respected Indigenous rights based fisheries, not just trying to deflect and smooth over with nice talk and no substance.”

The fisheries and oceans minister position has jumped from coast to coast to coast since the Liberals under Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Que.) took power. Prior to Ms. Jordan holding the position, Jonathan Wilkinson (North Vancouver, B.C.) was fisheries minister, preceded by Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) and former Liberal MP Hunter Tootoo, who represented Nunavut.

“I think a western perspective on marine resources is actually a good thing,” Mr. Weiner said. “It’s a different mindset than East Coast folks. I think a change of scenery, a different outlook on things, could be welcomed.”

Mr. Hardie noted that Ms. Murray will be working with the House Fisheries and Oceans Committee, which typically has eastern MPs, thus allowing for a combination of her knowledge of the West with the insight of other Members.

There may also be more room for political manoeuvring for the new minister, Prof. Silver said. She noted that the former minister was largely pulled into the Mi’kmaq lobster dispute and that hard feelings around how she handled it may have been why she didn’t get re-elected.



Prof. Jennifer Silver says Joyce Murray was a reasonable choice for fisheries minister. *Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Silver*

Having the minister now in the west “offers more leeway from a political standpoint to dive into those issues on the east coast,” she said.

There’s also a chance to tackle western-specific issues, like those that Daniel Pauly, professor of fisheries at the University of British Columbia, raises of the over concentration of fisheries.

Pointing towards expensive licences that lock out small operators, and quotas often given disproportionately to larger fleets



Fisheries and Oceans Minister Joyce Murray ‘understands the need to conserve, [but] she also understands the needs of those who need their livelihood,’ says UBC professor Andrew Trites. *The Hill Times photograph by Andrew Meade*

on the West Coast, he noted that the Department of Fisheries and Ocean’s policies result in “fewer actors [that make] it really wildly unfair to small-scale fishers.”

For instance, billionaire business magnate Jim Pattison controls 80 per cent of the supply of salmon and herring from B.C. waters, *The Tyee* reported.

While Prof. Pauly said he expects Ms. Murray to have an ear to these issues, “what she can do is a bigger problem. Ministers come and go very rapidly, the DFO is very entrenched and it’s a sprawling bureaucracy.”

“[The DFO] always wins.”

On the East Coast, it’s been more than a year since violence surged from the calm of the waters over lobster fishing access between Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishers. Since then, not much has changed though some Indigenous communities like the Bear River and Annapolis Valley First Nations “have reached interim ‘understandings’ with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans,” reported the *Halifax Examiner*.

Mr. Weiner noted that agreements are still being negotiated with many of the Mi’kmaq communities, but didn’t say whether the government is taking the right approach here.

Aside from the Indigenous fisheries file, Prof. Silver pointed to a long-term need to accommodate climate change and ocean acidification and the impacts that will have on fish stocks.

For Prof. Trites, the name of the game is coming to a consensus on how marine mammals will be dealt with, with some fisheries pushing for a culling of seals and whales over the concern that “there’s not enough fish to go around.”

“It’s about defining the relationship we want with marine resources and deciding whether or not marine mammals belong in our ecosystem, yes or no, and if so how do we accommodate them and their needs.”

There’s also the classic questions of capitalism and investment, Prof. Silver said. With increasing interest from large Canadian and transnational firms in looking at “fish and seafood as a place to invest,” she said, “the minister might want to give some thought to the role of large and transnational firms in fisheries and the fish processing sector.” For instance, she asked, do we need a balance between larger and smaller firms or do there need to be limits on foreign investments in these fisheries?

“We can’t afford another five years of the status quo,” Mr. Rangeley said in a press release. “The steps needed to [create change] may sometimes be difficult but they are clear. Rebuilding wild fish populations, providing lasting support for coastal communities and helping feed future generations, can be a part of this government’s legacy.”

achen@hilltimes.com
The Hill Times