

Ric Dolphin's

Insight into Government

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PIPELINE POLITICS

PAYING THE PIPER: FEDS PLAN A DEAL WITH KINDER MORGAN

A week of pipeline theatrics ends with a meeting between Trudeau, Horgan, & Notley, and a federal plan to negotiate some sort of a cash deal with Kinder Morgan. But despite the PM's fine words, the provincial impasse remains in place & the saga continues.

It was a noisy week on the Trans-Mountain front, with large pro-pipeline demonstrations in Edmonton and Calgary, stepped up anti-pipeline demonstrations and arrests in Vancouver and Burnaby, and lots and lots of heated verbiage from proponents and opponents all over the country. The term "constitutional crisis" was now being bandied around with abandon.

So fraught had things become that Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** interrupted an international trip to fly back to Ottawa on Sunday to meet with Premiers **John Horgan** and **Rachel Notley** in an attempt to cool things down.

But when the parties emerged from the 100-minute confab, it was unclear as to what, if anything, had been resolved. Trudeau was still declaring that "this pipeline will be built," Horgan was still determined to block it, and Notley was proceeding with her plan to turn down the oil taps to BC (legislation to be introduced Monday).

The only thing new was Justin's announcement that Finance Minister **Bill Morneau** will meet with pipeline company Kinder Morgan in the coming weeks to work out some kind of a deal wherein the federal and Alberta gov'ts may pony up some cash or collateral to ensure the continuance of the project.

Trudeau gave no hint as to whether this assistance would take the form of a loan, or a grant, or equity ownership—the negotiations will not be public—but he blamed Horgan for creating the situation that made such action necessary.

"I have instructed the minister of finance to initiate formal financial discussions with Kinder Morgan, the result of which will be to remove the uncertainty overhanging the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project," he said. "...Ideally, the rhetoric and actions by the BC gov't would not have led to the concerns of the company, that got approval to move forward on a project that is in the national interest."

Notley, who emerged from the meeting looking tired and not

Continued on next page...

POLITICAL PULSE

BILL 9

ABSTINENCE SAVES UNICONS FROM NDP ABORTION TRAP

During the fall sitting, the NDP's introduction of Bill 24, *An Act to Support Gay-Straight Alliances*, was a trap for the United Conservatives—and they fell into it head first.

That legislation, which prohibited teachers from "outing" gay kids by informing their parents of their membership in GSAs, addressed a situation that was hardly a pressing problem. But that wasn't the point.

The point was that the UCP Leader **Jason Kenney**—who had yet to win a seat in the House—led a party whose base and much of its caucus were champions of parental rights—and those rights included the right to know if their kid was joining a teacher-supervised gay club on school property.

The Dippers, draping themselves in the familiar vestments of caring compassion for the sexually challenged, dragged out the debate for days on end, with virtually every one of their members presenting a heart-rending anecdote about the damage that could be inflicted on these "most vulnerable" children if they were "outed" to their parents by teachers. Depression and suicide were commonly evoked.

Overwhelmed by this onslaught of progressivist proselytizing, the UCP's argument for parental rights fell flat, was portrayed as hard-hearted, and enabled the NDP to "prove" that Kenney and his party were the "extreme" social conservative regressors the gov't always knew they were.

So satisfyingly did this trap snap shut, that the Dippers figured they'd try it again in the current spring session. Hence: Bill 9: *Protecting Choice for Women Accessing Health Care*.

Bill 9 proposes the establishment of a "bubble zone" around Alberta's two abortion clinics and the hospitals and pharmacies that perform abortions or provide support services. The legislation will prohibit pro-life demonstrators from being within 50 metres of the facilities.

Again, the bill purports to address a situation—the "harassment" and "intimidation" of "vulnerable" abortion seekers and clinic staff—that hasn't been a real problem in recent years. Typically, a few proliferators station themselves across the street from Calgary's Kensington Clinic or Woman's Health Options in Edmonton, holding signs with pictures of fetuses and slogans such as "Abortion kills babies. Choose life" or phone numbers for adoption services.

Of course Health Minister **Sarah Hoffman**, in presenting the bill for second reading in the House on Tuesday, painted a much direr picture in her pitch.

"Last week I met with staff from both clinics," she told the House. "They talked about patients being physically blocked as they tried to enter the clinic. They talked about yelling so loud that it could be heard throughout the concrete building. They talked about protestors banging on car windows or blocking their doors so that patients couldn't exit their vehicles. They talked about patients so agitated that staff had to calm them down when they entered the building. They talked about patients who do not show up because they're too scared for their safety."

Such sensationalism recalls the talk about teenage suicides, etc, that accompanied debate on Bill 24 last fall. But UCP MLA **Mike Ellis** (Calgary-West), formerly a Calgary police sergeant, says that the protests near the Kensington Clinic are typically orderly, with between two to four people holding

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particularly happy, also refused to speculate on what a deal might look like—despite having earlier suggested that Alberta was willing to take an ownership position in the pipeline.

“The federal government, along with the government of Alberta, has commenced discussions with Kinder Morgan to establish a financial relationship that will eliminate investor risk,” Notley said, reading a prepared statement. “I’m quite confident that should these discussions end successfully, that the pipeline will be built — and that is good, because the pipeline is in the national interest.”

Trudeau, who spoke at more length to reporters, said he was determined that construction begin this year so that Kinder Morgan’s 2020 operational target can be met.

“I have also informed premiers Notley and Horgan today that we are actively pursuing legislative options that will assert and reinforce the government of Canada’s jurisdiction in this matter which we know we clearly have,” he added.

The speculation in Ottawa, where Parliament returns Monday after a two-week break, is that Liberal gov’t will introduce legislation that both reasserts federal jurisdictional primacy and allows for federal financing to indemnify the pipeline.

Horgan came out of Sunday’s meeting unmoved from his oppositional position.

“We had a discussion about options; the federal government laid out their plans over the next number of days,” he said, “. . . and we had a discussion about what role British Columbia could continue to play in protecting and defending our coast.”

But he remained resolutely defiant: “Despite all of the commonality between the three of us, we continue to disagree on the question of moving diluted bitumen from Alberta to the port of Vancouver.”

The week’s events had been triggered on previous Sunday by Kinder Morgan Ltd’s threat to abandon the project on May 31 if the federal gov’t failed to step in and end the impasse. The Houston-based company also said it would immediately cease all non-essential work on the pipeline—which was costing \$30M a month.

Whether Kinder Morgan CEO **Steve Kean** is serious about abandoning the pipeline was questioned by some of the players on the wet side of the Rockies. The company has federal approval, has most of the route secured (it parallels the existing pipeline), has already spent more than US\$1B on preparatory construction, and has struck access deals with the majority of the Aboriginal groups along the way.

With things having progressed this far, wondered the sceptics, could Kean’s threat of abandonment have been but a Trump-like, art-of-the deal bluff to clear the log jam and expedite a project the company had no intention of quitting? Certainly if Trudeau’s assurances of imminent resolution come to pass, the bluff would seem to have worked.

Resolution, however, may be neither imminent nor assured.

The Federal Court of Appeal, which in October heard challenges to the feds’ pipeline approval from environmentalists, Indigenous groups, and the cities of Vancouver and Burnaby, is due to release its decision any day now.

If the court rules in favour of the appellants—as happened with the doomed Northern Gateway pipeline in 2015—development of the Trans Mountain could be stopped or delayed indefinitely. The feds would likely appeal to the Supreme Court, but that would drag things out beyond the next federal election.

Call us cynical, but this might be just the scenario that

Trudeau wants. For the so-called “constitutional crisis,” is in actuality a political crisis—and it’s one that affects all three parties.

It might help Trudeau’s chances of reëlection in 2019 if the courts kick the can down the road. For much of the opposition to the pipeline is found in the Liberal-rich BC Lower Mainland (16 MPs) and in Québec (40 MPs). The BC MPs have been missing in action on the TMX file. And although Québec’s MPs have been similarly silent, the province’s Liberal MNAs tend to side with BC.

“The recent assertions of federal representatives regarding the Trans Mountain pipeline, which refer to an exclusive application of federal rules, are detrimental to a proper resolution of this issue and raise concerns for the future,” wrote **Jean-Marc Fournier**, the Québec minister responsible for Canadian relations.

Premier **Phillippe Couillard** said that Trudeau’s assertion of primacy on the TMX “is not a good sign for federalism.”

Similarly many Aboriginal leaders—a group that Trudeau has taken great pains to cozy up to—have been critical of the federal approach and what they claim to be their exclusion from the process. Why, for example, were they not represented in Sunday’s meeting?

Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, wrote in the *Globe and Mail* this week that Trudeau’s pledge to build the TMX ignores the inherent right of Indians to free, prior, and informed consent for resource projects.

“If the federal gov’t tries to ram through the pipeline,” wrote Phillip, “it could mean going back to one of the darkest times in modern Canadian history: the Oka standoff with the Mohawk Nation.”

Thus Trudeau finds himself in the unenviable position of having to juggle the interests of these groups with those of Alberta and the business community. The latter views the uncertainty and delays around the TMX as detrimental to investment in a country that has already seen a significant drop in investment since the Liberals formed gov’t.

Calming Kinder Morgan investors by backstopping the pipeline and preventing its abandonment, while the courts drag things out beyond the next election, could keep both sides at bay while Trudeau, declaring “my hands are tied,” squeezes out a second term.

As for Notley, her only hope for reëlection depends on the \$7.4B pipeline being built. Her “don’t mess with Alberta,” chest-beating statement last Sunday (see “Verbatim,” p. 4), reflects her desperate political predicament—as does her planned legislation to drive BC to its knees by turning down the taps on the crude oil, gasoline, and jet fuel that flows through the existing Kinder Morgan line and supplies 90% of BC’s transportation needs.

BC is already paying \$1.50/litre for gasoline due to a recent maintenance shutdown at Chevron’s Burnaby refinery. If Alberta slows the flow of refined gasoline, they could be paying twice that amount.

Horgan, meanwhile, would face immediate political consequences were he to back down. The BC NDP—with two fewer MLAs than the opposition Liberals—only holds power with the support of the three Green members, led by **Andrew Weaver**. That support depends on Horgan’s continued opposition to the TMX.

In other words, his political life depends on his continued rejection of the pipeline. And so the saga continues.

POLITICAL PULSE ... from Page 1

signs and “praying.”

He says the behavior described by Hoffman—such as striking a person or confining them to their cars—are indictable offenses under the more stringent Criminal Code. Ellis has not doubt that the proposed NDP legislation—which prescribes lesser, summary convictions—is a political trap and a distraction from bigger issues like the budget and the stalled Trans Mountain pipeline.

“I’m not interested in playing the political games that the NDP are playing,” says Ellis, who hasn’t yet decided whether he’ll abstain from voting on Bill 9, as many of his UCP colleagues will.

Unicon Leader Jason Kenney, a Catholic pro-lifer who, like his mentor Stephen Harper, has promised to keep his personal religious beliefs separate from his politics, was the first to announce he would be abstaining from debate and would not be voting on the bill. This decision brought the predictable accusations of “cowardice” from liberal abortion supporters like *Edmonton Journal* columnists Paula Simons and Graham Thomson. And it provided Hoffman with a chance to take a few shots at her favourite target.

“We heard yesterday that the Leader of the Opposition does not agree,” said Hoffman, in the rapid-fire, hectoring tone that characterizes her screeds. “He does not believe the women who say that this is a problem. He doesn’t believe those women. He does not believe that they are subjected to bullying and that the current injunctions that are in place are ineffective... I am disappointed but not surprised given the opposition leader’s track record on women’s choice. But let’s be clear. By failing to say yes, he is saying no, saying no to these women who are asking for some dignity, some respect, and some space to access their doctors’ offices...” And so forth.

In Kenney’s absence from the debate, MLA Angela Pitt (Airdrie), the UCP’s Status of Women critic, has been designated his surrogate. And, in Tuesday’s debate, Pitt, in supporting her own decision to abstain from the vote, delivered a speech—likely penned by Jason—with impressive verve.

“I must admit that I’m rather saddened to be standing here today debating this piece of legislation,” she began. “I’m disappointed to see my hon. colleagues on the gov’t side of this House play such an obviously cynical political game with such a sensitive issue. I am disappointed to see this NDP gov’t politicize and reignite a deeply divisive debate...”

“Why have they done this, Madam Speaker? A desperate, floundering gov’t in the final years of its mandate is trying to score a few cheap political points by painting the opposition and its supporters as fundamentally incompatible with women and women’s rights. They have deliberately created a situation where personal views on deeply personal issues are publicly adjudicated, and those who fall on one side of the line are shamed by their own gov’t. We have seen this time and time again from the NDP.

“You don’t agree with the carbon tax or the climate leadership plan? Well, you must be a climate denier. You think the government should be doing more to control costs? You must want to blow up hospitals and fire all the teachers. You want to protect school choice and parental rights in education? Well, you must not care about vulnerable kids.”

Pitt cited the *Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms’* defence of freedom of conscience and religion, of freedom of thought, belief, and expression, and of freedom of peaceful assembly. And while agreeing that these rights did not extend to the freedom to harass, “there are long-standing court injunctions in place to keep protestors at a distance. We expect the police to properly enforce the law. These court orders, combined with existing laws that prohibit harassment, have worked to keep this behaviour to a minimum for almost two decades.

“Yes, women entering and exiting abortion clinics absolutely have a right to do so free of intimidation and harassment, but citizens also have a right to express peacefully their opinion as it relates to abortion, even if some don’t want to hear it. Bill 9 impacts one’s ability to do so. What’s more, it offers no more protection than the existing court injunctions do today

“But like I said earlier, Madam Speaker, that wasn’t really the intent of this bill. The intent all along has been to draw this side of the House into a debate on an incredibly contentious social issue and claim any opposition to their flawed legislation as sinister. The NDP is trying to pit Albertan against Albertan. Well, I will not take this bait. I will be abstaining from voting on Bill 9.”

Pitt’s speech was met with much noisy heckling and name-calling from the gov’t benches, which prompted the UCP members present to leave the House. Pitt later said her caucus would return for the further stages of debate on the bill, but would not participate. Thus while we can expect some grandstanding from the Dippers, the bill should slide through with minimal damage to the UCP. The trap, in short, will have been avoided.

DATA Bank ...

ABORTIONS IN CANADA

Area	2007	2014	2015	Bubble zone?
Canada	98,762	100,194**	100,104	
Alberta	12,590	13,815	13,358	Pending
British Columbia	15,770	9,196*	13,166	Yes
Saskatchewan	1,806	1,960	1,855	No
Manitoba	3,978	4,015	3,759	No
Ontario	32,331	42,043**	39,679**	Yes
Québec	27,697	25,083	24,193	Yes
New Brunswick	1,082	528*	676*	No
Nova Scotia	2,119	2,061	1,924	No
PEI	0	0	0	No
Newfoundland	850	1,051	1,019	No
Yukon	116	102	116	No
Northwest Terr.	328	255	266	No
Nunavut	95	85	93	Yes

* 2015/2014: Fredericton NB clinic did not report. 2014: At least one BC clinic did not report. ** Ontario started reporting unfunded clinic abortions for 2015, and new totals also became available for 2011 to 2014. The apparent increase represents a change in reporting, not an actual increase. PEI has no abortion facilities and women travel to Nova Scotia or New Brunswick for the procedure.

OTHER NUMBERS (CANADA)

	2007	2014	2015
Hospital abortions	47,281	33,931	23,561
Clinic abortions	51,481	66,263**	76,543
Gestational age (hospitals only)			
8 weeks or less	9,976	7,214	7,330
9-12 weeks	13,399	9,652	8,701
13-16 weeks	2,442	1,705	1,585
17 – 20 weeks	1,023	853	836
21+ weeks	549	605	587

Abortion rate in women aged 15-44: 14 per 1,000

Data compiled from Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) annual statistics.

BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

(Details: http://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=bills_statusreport&legl=29&session=4)

BILL 6: GAMING & LIQUOR STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2018 (Ganley)/passed 1st reading

Building on earlier cannabis legislation passed in the fall, Bill 6 modernizes the *Gaming and Liquor Act* to better prepare the Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission for its expanded role as the regulator of legalized marijuana. The legislation includes similar regulations to those regarding liquor and/or tobacco, such as the prohibition of sales to a minor, consumption in a vehicle, or smoking or vaping in a public place. Retailers of recreational weed are prohibited from using names such as “pharmacy” or “medi” or any symbol that has a medical connection. The maximum fines for contravention of the Act—applying to cannabis, liquor, and gaming—will rise from \$200K to \$1M.

The liquor regulations have also been relaxed to allow retailers to provide customers with the ingredients and equipment to make homemade beer or wine on site. The bill would also allow retailers to blend and infuse liquor products. This is a growing trend that involves infusing liquor with flavouring agents to create specialty drinks, infusing food with liquor, and creating house-aged liquor. The AGLC board is also to be expanded from seven to nine members and the maximum term from nine to ten years.

BILL 10: AN ACT TO ENABLE CLEAN ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS (S. Anderson)/passed 1st reading

Modelled on the PACE program pioneered in Berkeley, CA, in 2008, and since implemented in 31 states and three provinces, this legislation would allow home or business owners to borrow money to pay for energy efficiency upgrades to their property—solar panels, improved insulation, high efficiency furnaces, heat pumps, etc.—with the debt being added onto their municipal assessment and paid back with their municipal taxes over a period of 5 to 25 years. Alberta’s PACE program (the initials stand for Property Assessed Clean Energy). Efficiency Alberta, the provincial agency set up by the Environment ministry to promote climate change initiatives at the consumer level, will administer the program, in conjunction with as-yet-to-be-chosen private lenders, and work with those municipalities wishing to pass PACE improvement bylaws. Both Calgary and Edmonton are interested. Reports from other jurisdictions are generally favourable, with most people who avail themselves of the program reporting that their next savings on electricity are greater than payback costs on the loan. The loan, by the way, is attached to the property and not the owner, so if the house is sold before the loan is paid off, the new owner inherits it as a lien on the property.

BILL 10: LOBBYISTS AMENDMENT ACT, 2018 (GRAY)/ passed 1st reading

Despite Tory amendments to the lobbyist act four years ago, it seems they were not enough for the Dippers who claim to be “lifting the veil on more lobbying activity” with this latest piece of legislation, which looks like make-work for a bored minister. Although the Ethics Commissioner maintains a lobbyist registry in which lobbyists must provide a fair bit of information about their firm, the designated lobbyist, and the client, Labour Minister Christine Gray claims “Alberta allows significant amounts of lobbying activities to go unreported.” Accordingly the NDP are going to do what they do best: impose more rules. These include the following:

- Restrict lobbyists from giving money, gifts or other benefits to public office holders that would place a public office holder in a conflict of interest.
- Require lobbying activity be reported regardless of who asked for the meeting or made the first call.
- Require individuals or groups who lobby government on behalf of their employer or business to register this activity after 50 hours of lobbying in a year, including preparation time.
- Prohibit contingency fee payment arrangements to ensure lobbying is done objectively.

Verbatim ...

DON'T BE MESSIN' WITH MISSY RACHEL

The intergovernmental theatrics and public demonstrations that played out this week in Alberta, Ottawa, and BC (see p.1) were kicked off last Sunday when Kinder Morgan announced it would abandon plans to build the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) if the roadblocks erected by the gov't of BC Premier John Horgan were not cleared by May 31. For Premier Rachel Notley, completion of the TMX—whose federal approval she attributes to her Climate Leadership Plan—gives her some hope of winning the 2019 election. Hence the pugnacious tone of this speech which she delivered following Kinder Morgan's ultimatum:

“Albertans have been clear – get this pipeline built. And Albertans are right – this pipeline must be built. Tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to the economy are at stake. Better public schools. Better public hospitals. That's what this pipeline means for us and for our country.

Kinder Morgan has put a deadline of May 31 in place. I regret that the company is frustrated by not knowing on how many more legal fronts it will need to fight. If I was a resident of BC, I would be very worried about what this says about the investment climate in British Columbia.

How can the economy of British Columbia be built when every private investor considering a project must weigh the risk that the provincial gov't will conduct itself in the way that it has on this matter?

That should actually not only worry British Columbians, it – in fact – should worry all Canadians.

Now, to be clear – to this point – we have won a series of important and decisive legal victories. The courts threw out B.C.'s last case without even hearing it. And I am confident we will continue to win.

Today, Minister Carr has called on the Gov't of British Columbia to suspend all threats of delay to the Trans Mountain expansion. Those are strong words, but we need more. We are also calling on the federal gov't to act in the defence of Alberta and working people in Western Canada in the way that they have in the past for other parts of the country.

During the auto crisis, Ottawa intervened to help workers in Ontario with concrete action. When aerospace needed a bailout, Ottawa stepped up for workers in Quebec with concrete action.

And now the energy industry and Western Canada and Western Canadian workers need Ottawa to step up – and we call on them to act with concrete action. A federal approval of a project must be worth more than the paper that it is written on.

As well, I have two things to say to British Columbia. First, Premier Horgan believes he can harass this project without economic consequences for British Columbia. There, he is wrong. We will be bringing forward legislation in coming days giving our gov't the powers it needs to impose serious economic consequences on British Columbia if its gov't continues on its present course.

Second, Premier Horgan believes he can harass the investors and the managers of Kinder Morgan, hoping that they will just give up, and that this will kill this project. There, he is wrong as well.

Investors in Houston may or may not ultimately have the stomach for this fight. And maybe the Gov't of BC feels they can mess with Texas. And, who knows, maybe they can. But, let me be absolutely clear, they cannot mess with Alberta.

If we have to, Alberta is prepared to do whatever it takes to get this pipeline built – including taking a public position in the pipeline. Put another way, Alberta is prepared to be an investor in the pipeline. If we take that step, we will be a significantly more determined investor than BC has dealt with up to this point.

Never count Alberta out. This pipeline will be built. ”

SALARY REDUCTION

TRIMMING THE SAILS OF THE HIGHEST FLYERS

The levelling inclinations of the Dippers

have been a leitmotif from the very beginning of their mandate. It started with their first bill, which banished corporate and union donors from contributing to political campaigns. Since then, the NDP has taken its hammer and sickle to the better compensated heads of agencies, boards, and commissions (and when will Finance Minister **Joe Ceci** ever shut up about eliminating those golf club memberships?)

The gov't has frozen the salaries of non-unionized bureaucrats (i.e. managers). Last year it limited political contributions to \$4K per donor per year. In 2016 it amalgamated the previous four Alberta Innovates crowns into a single entity, thus trimming a number of fat compensation packages, the highest being the \$450K a year that was being vacuumed up by **Stephen Lougheed** (Peter's lad) as head of Alberta Innovates: Technology Futures (Steve's golden boot IN the butt amounted to \$348K).

While this trimming of isolated globules of Tory fat makes barely a dent in the vast credit card debt amassed by the Dips (ABC weeding and salary lopping resulted in \$16M in annual savings), it gives the gov't anecdotal material with which to impress their friends in the public sector unions whose wages comprise the bulk of gov't spending and will never be cut.

And of course the Alberta Federation of Labour (motto: *It's Not Fair; Dammit!*), along with public sector unions like AUPE and ATA have always griped about those over-paid public plutocrats. Finally they have a gov't who is listening.

With the ABCs and gov't management having been more or less taken care of—ATB and AIMCo executive salaries remain in the million-plus range, but one loathe to ruffle one's golden geese—the gov't is now casting its net wider to take in those other targets of union envy and resentment: school superintendents and post-secondary executives.

Back in February, Education Minister **Dave Eggen** declared he would curb the pay for Alberta's school superintendents, which, according to a report by the Alberta School Boards' Association, had risen 10% in three years while teachers' wages stagnated, and were, on average, \$51K higher than in Ontario. Edmonton Catholic Schools superintendent **Joan Carr** topped the list with \$427K in compensation in 2016-17.

Eggen is currently reviewing the contracts for the superintendents in all 61 school districts and won't be approving any renewed contracts until the review is complete. He says the new "matrix" will be based on the Ontario system where supers are paid according to the sized of their district, and there are no bonuses, cash housing allowances, or other "unnecessary" perks. A decision is expected in early May.

Advanced Education Minister **Marlin Schmidt**, who has been railing against the high salaries paid to university presidents and top brass for some time. Last month he got into a spat with University of Alberta President **David Turpin** when he suggested Turpin cut his \$800K+ compensation before raising student tuition and other fees for foreign students.

"I've worked at three of the country's finest universities in three different provinces and this is the first time I have been personally and publicly attacked by a minister of the Crown." griped Turpin, hired from the University of Victoria in 2014 to replace the even more lavishly compensated **Indira Samarasekera** (\$1M+). Following Schmidt's criticism, Turpin was booed at a student event.

Schmidt, one of the cockier members of cabinet, was unapologetic, and this week he rolled out a pay grid system for or the 20 presidents of post secondaries. The new rates will take effect immediately for new hires, but won't kick in until Apr. 1, 2020 for existing contracts. Thus Turpin won't immediately be affected, although whomever the U of C finds to replace the retiring **Elizabeth Cannon** (\$631K in total compensation) will.

The five pay grids are as follows:

- University of Alberta, University of Calgary: \$349,800 (minimum) to \$447,000 (maximum).
- University of Lethbridge, NAIT, SAIT: \$279,300 to \$356,800.
- Athabasca University, MacEwan University, Mount Royal University: \$238,700 to \$305,000.
- Bow Valley College, Lethbridge College, NorQuest College, Red Deer College: \$209,300 to \$267,500.
- Alberta College of Art and Design, Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Lakeland College, Medicine Hat College, Northern Lakes College, Olds College, Portage College: \$184,000 to \$235,100.

Bonuses will be limited to 20% of salary; gym and club memberships will no longer be paid; and cars provided cannot cost more than \$39K.

University boards have long argued that they need to pay bigger bucks than schools in other cities to attract quality presidents to the tundra—but the results have tended to debunk this contention.

Samarasekera, for example, arrived at the U of A in 2004 and was paid 40% more than the next highest paid president in Canada (University of Toronto). She pledged to raise the world ranking of the university to 20th by the year 2020.

But in the ten years she was president, the UofA languished between 100th and 127th on the *Times Higher Education Rankings*, and never placed better than 6th in Canada. Nonetheless, when she retired and returned to her home in Victoria (where she'd spend half her time when she was UofA prez anyway), she was feted by the board in heroic style, paid two years salary for a sabbatical, and will receive a \$260K-p.a. salary for life. Those were the days.

Insight

into Government

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Talk in the Corridors

Alberta Party excluded from committee ...

● Back in the fall when NDP MLA **Karen McPherson** (Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill) crossed the floor to the Alberta Party, doubling its caucus to two, Speaker **Bob Wanner** granted the AP official party status.

Although a minimum of four members is the standard requirement, a precedent had been set in years past when two-member NDP parties were granted third-party status, affording them the privileges of an office in the Legislative building, more questions in Question Period, and a slightly larger research budget. Symbolically, the party's promotion came as a reward for then leader **Greg Clark** (Calgary-Elbow) who, since his election as the sole AP MLA in 2015, had been hitting well above his weight in the Legislature and in committee.

But the NDP giveth and the NDP taketh away and on Thursday in the Legislature, when gov't House Leader **Brian Mason** introduced a motion reassigning members to standing committees, Clark—who remains AP leader in the House until new party leader **Stephen Mandel** (Insight Mar. 3) wins a seat—had cause for dismay. The Alberta Party—which has since acquired a third member, former UCP MLA **Rick Fraser** [Calgary South East])—had not been given a seat on the Standing Committee on Members' Services. Only NDP and UCP members were assigned.

This committee, among other things, approves the budget of the Legislative Assembly Office, determines the allowances, expenses, and other compensation for MLAs, and sets the rules governing caucus offices and constituency offices.

"It does very important work," said Clark. "As a party with standing in this Assembly, it feels very odd to me that we've not been included." It should be noted that Greg was wearing an away Team Canada jersey, as his part in the day's tribute to the 16 members of the Humboldt Broncos minor hockey team killed in the recent bus crash in Saskatchewan. Most MLAs were wearing hockey jerseys, which lent an incongruously sporting air to the proceedings.

Clark added: "I also should say that committee membership is not something that is granted out of the benevolence of gov't as a favour. It should follow some rules and some history and some precedent. So I would very much encourage the government to remember the time when they were a two-member caucus and were in fact included."

Accordingly Clark introduced an amendment that would have seen him replace UCP member **Ric McIver** (Calgary-Hays).

Mason, wearing a home Team Canada jersey, refused to support the amendment. The committee allotments, he said, reflect the overall makeup of the House and accommodated the increased size of the official UCP opposition—a quite different situation from the days when the official Liberal opposition consisted of less than two members to the NDP's two.

Mason said that Clark should be happy he was being appointed to the Public Accounts Committee, "which is a very important committee that deals with the financial accounts of the government as a whole. I'm sure that he's going to bring very valuable insight and make a great contribution to that committee."

The amendment was defeated with all members of the NDP and the UCP voting against it.

Afterwards, Clark said he would continue to attend Members Services committee meetings and raise matters of importance as he has in the past (any MLA's prerogative, though they can't vote on motions). He did this a couple of years ago and was successful in having out-of-town MLA's

Edmonton living allowances trimmed.

Says Greg: "I'll still continue to be a pain in the ass."

Trouble in the Green wood...

● **Romy Tittel**, who beat four candidates to become leader of the Green Party of Alberta in November, submitted a letter of resignation this week. Contacted by phone, Tittel wouldn't reveal the specific contents of her letter, but said she was resigning because of "unethical financial behavior" by the party executive and "harassment" by members of that executive.

Tittel, 58, runs a software development company with her husband in horsey, upmarket Springbank.. In last December's Calgary-Lougheed byelection, she placed fifth in a field of seven with all of 60 votes.

Asked about the "unethical financial behavior" and "harassment" accusations, Party President **Marco Reid**, 23, one of the losing leadership candidates, said this probably referred to the \$500 fine he incurred from Elections Alberta for a late filing of his leadership financial statements, which was paid with the help of donations from other members.

As for the "harassment," Reid believes this probably stems from some heated disagreements between Tittel and executive members over policy issues and her dismissal of one member of the party's "shadow cabinet." Tittel was to meet with the executive on Sunday to further discuss matters.

Her resignation means another leadership contest must be held by November. Meanwhile **Coral Bliss Taylor**, 31, a planning consultant who placed a respectable second place in Ward 1 in the Calgary municipal election, will serve as interim leader.

The Green Party, which has fewer than 500 members, will hold a policy meeting on May 5 to discuss its strategy going into the 2019 election. Reid says the party hopes to field candidates in "key ridings."

The party, which has gone through several name changes since first gaining official status in 1990, has yet to win a seat. It's best showing was in the 2008 election when it ran 79 candidates in 83 ridings and won 4.6% of the vote province wide. In 2015, with 28 candidates in 87 ridings, the party managed just 0.49%.

At the end of 2017, the party had a grand total of \$44,340.77 in its war chest. Good luck to them.

The week ahead ...

Apr. 17—Happy Birthday to Premier **Rachel Notley**, born 54 years ago in Edmonton.

Apr. 17—A meet and greet with Alberta Party leader **Stephen Mandel** and deputy leader MLA **Greg Clark** at the Holiday Inn in Canmore, 1 Silvertip Trail, 6-8 pm; RSVP at: <https://leadership.albertaparty.ca/canmore-meet-greet-stephen-mandel>.

Apr. 19—The Alberta Party is having a mass founding meeting for 15 Edmonton transitional constituency associations, to set up boards and appoint committee chairs in readiness for the re-drawn ridings in the 2019 election. The event takes place at the Inglewood Community Centre, 125 116 Ave, between 6:30 and 8:30 pm. (A similar mass founding takes place in Calgary the following week.) Registration at: <https://leadership.albertaparty.ca/edmonton-region-tca-formation-meeting>

Apr. 20—NDP Calgary Women's Caucus Olga Blondheim Fundraiser in support of female candidates, featuring Deputy Premier & Health Minister **Sarah Hoffman**, 7-9 pm at the Executive Royal Hotel, 2828 23 St NE. Tickets \$75 at: <https://act.albertandp.ca/yyc-olgablonnheim2018>

Apr. 20—The United Conservatives hold a \$125-a-head "surf and turf" fundraiser in St. Albert, with leader **Jason Kenney** (Calgary-Lougheed) speaking. 5:30-9:30 pm, St. Albert Inn, 156 St. Albert Trail. Tickets at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/surf-and-turf-fundraiser-tickets-43853552155?aff=eac2>