

## Feature: The Ministerial Revolving Door

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VVi is for you, all veterans, regardless of whether you belong to a veteran organization or not. VVi is a distribution centre, a conduit for making sure that the information you need as a veteran is there for you in a timely fashion. Our aim is to provide a forum for *all* Canadian veterans, serving members and their families to have access to information pertaining to veteran rights.

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### **The Ministerial Revolving Door**

By Perry Grey, Chief Editor VVi

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“A department that's seen seven ministers since 2010 could use some continuity” CBC News 15 January 2019

Prime Minister Trudeau is continuing the tradition of replacing ministers rather quickly much like his predecessor Stephen Harper. This is a comparison that the prime minister would not like. Both picked people who not only angered Veterans, but also embarrassed the government.

The first choice in 2015 was Kent Hehr, who seemed like a good choice in that he was physically disabled. This fit in nicely with the social justice warrior philosophy that the prime minister seemed to embrace. Kent seemed very sociable and liked to have “selfies” with Veterans. How much progress he made in completing his mandate letter is questionable because the most important issue, reinstatement of lifelong pensions was rarely if ever discussed.

Kent committed the greatest sin apparently when it was allegations of sexual harassment surfaced. This led to his swift dismissal and exile to the back bench. He was also accused of a number of other lesser crimes such as insensitive comments about thalidomide survivors, condescending remarks to Veterans and using his position to help his father’s school board campaign using government resources..

The second choice was a personal friend of the prime minister, Seamus O’Regan, who also seemed a good choice as the brother of a Veteran. He spent a lot more time employing his media skills in making countless marketing pitches to sell the pension for life, in an apparent attempt to appear to be achieving the most important objective in the prime minister’s mandate letter, reinstating the lifelong pension, which was also a personal campaign promise made by Trudeau directly to veterans.

He also spent a lot of time also discussing his own issues with the media. This included his “career transition” from television work, a transition he found very traumatic and resulted in depression and aggravated his alcoholism. Unfortunately, he sinned by equating his silver spoon transition to the often life and death struggles of veterans in their own personal battles to find meaning after the leaving the intense demands and sacrifices of military service. This made the inappropriate comments of former Conservative minister, Julian, Fantino seem almost unimportant when he compared his police service to being similar to that of serving in the military.

Seamus compounded his mistakes by then engaging in a war of words with Veterans, specifically Sean Bruyey, with regards to the soon-to-be enacted Pension for Life. . Contrary to the advice of the experts in Veterans Affairs who informed O’Regan’s staff on numerous occasions that Sean Bruyey’s assessment of the Pension for Life was mostly or completely accurate, O’Regan ignored that advice and accused Sean of “stating mistruthd” and writing to suit his “own agenda”. The legal case arising from this conflict has yet to be resolved so will follow Seamus to his next job of “serving” indigenous peoples.

The recent appointment of Jody Wilson-Raybould is a very curious choice as she was the Minister of Justice, who was responsible for “fighting with Veterans in the courts” (including the use of a senior lawyer to represent Seamus against Sean Bruyey in small claims court where lawyers very rarely work). Engaging in legal actions was something that the prime minister said that he would not do during the last election.

So why would he blatantly insult Veterans by appointing Jody?

“She’s smart and competent but she doesn’t exude empathy,” said one colleague. “It’s an

odd pick for veterans affairs.” (National Post 14 January 2019)

Her first speech as MVA suggests that the appointment was disappointing:

“she said she could think of “no world in which I would consider working for our veterans in Canada as a demotion.”

But is it not promotion/demotion based on how cabinet positions are ranked? So now Veterans are getting another “failed social experiment”, who may have already sinned grievously in the mind of the prime minister.

Ms Wilson-Raybould lasted only a few weeks with her only significant contribution being the promotion of Valentines for Veterans, an annual event aimed at thanking Veterans for their service. She will be remembered more for her quick exit and forcing another cabinet shuffle...and of course expanding the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

The newest minister, Lawrence MacAulay, is both a veteran politician and familiar with the Veterans portfolio having served as Secretary of State (Veterans) under Prime Minister Chretien in the 1990's. Of interest, he is from PEI, which is also home to Veterans Affairs head office..

He does share one thing in common with his predecessor. Both Wilson-Raybould and MacAuley denied that Veterans Affairs was a demotion. In his first speech, the new minister stated:

"To have the honour to represent the people who preserve peace and democracy for us worldwide; that is a long place from a demotion."

But why even use that word?

Politicians, particularly veteran politicians such as MacAuley, know that choice of words is very important. Your listeners or readers can misinterpret your ideas and this is more likely if your words accentuate ambiguity.

If one should never shout “fire” in a crowded theatre, then politicians should not mention promotion or demotion with regards to cabinet appointments.

Right now, there are a lot of angry Veterans, who believe that the federal government does not care about them because of ministers and mistakes since the last election. The Pension for Life, and the political and legal crisis over a \$165-million accounting error affecting more than a quarter of a million veterans who collected the pre-2006 Pension Act disability pension, are just two potential hotspots that could ignite veteran ire when they will be inevitably mishandled.

Over 272,000 veterans, most of them elderly, were affected by the indexing mistake and more than half of them — about 170,000 — have died. (CBC News 2 March 2019)

Minister MacAuley will have a lot to do if he wants Veterans to vote in the next election...seven months or less Unless he is moved in the next cabinet shuffle, which

must now follow the resignation of Jane Philpott on 4 March 2019.

All four ministers appeared to be good candidates only as far as the optics of appointing “politically correct” people rather than the best choice to fill a ministerial position. It seems to Canadians that having a balance of gender, ethnicity, regionalism, etc. is far more important than specific personal qualifications. So it is rather ironic when the prime minister talks about the depth of his caucus, he does not mean experience.

This seems like the prime minister wants to hand his opponents more votes in my opinion.

<https://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/in-the-trudeau-government-whats-a-cabinet-shuffle-for/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wilson-raybould-veterans-seamus-oregan-1.4978148>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/macaulay-veterans-payments-1.5039856>

*Perry Gray is a Regular Force veteran, serving as the Chief Editor of VVi. Perry has been with VVi for 18 years.*



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All veterans are encouraged to pass information, opinions, links to self-help sites onto VVi. VeteranVoice.info is a distribution centre and we are dependant on others to pass information. This is your site. Tell other veterans about your site.

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**Equitas Society**

<http://www.equitassociety.ca/>



Marijuana For Trauma Inc.  
VÉTÉRANS HELPING VÉTÉRANS  
**MARIJUANA For Trauma  
(MFT)**

<https://mftgroup.ca/>

**National (US) Gulf War  
Resources Center, Inc.**

<http://www.ngwrc.org/>



**PPCLI  
Association**

<http://vpp.ppcliassoc.ca>

**Volunteer Patricia  
Program (VPP)**



<http://seanbruyea.com>



<https://www.cfpsa.com/Splashpages/SoldierOn/>



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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/853095038155250/>



<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/>

**V.E.T.S  
Veterans Emergency  
Transition Services**

<http://www.vetscanada.org/>



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