

THE EASTERN EGGPLANT

The real facts.

The Hypocrisy of Summit News: Part II

Oscar Judelson-Kelly

The Federal-Provincial Government Conference is a time for healthy discussion, stories and political development. It is an opportunity to debate and to make substantial steps towards resolving these monumental and divisive issues that affect all Canadians. As the Editor-in-Chief of the Eastern Eggplant, it is our role, our duty, and our mantra to report the facts of Fed-Prov and to convey this information in the most accessible and the easiest way. Have we been critical of the other provinces? Of course we have. Have they been critical of us? Of course. This is how politics is designed to work: polarising and extreme perspectives and points of view meet and compromise to form an agreement, and the press in an invaluable and indispensable aspect to this.

However what the Eggplant did not think that they would have to contend with would be the constant and never-ending slander and libel produced from Summit News over the entirety of the conference this year. Them as much as any premier or minister have been responsible for trying to chain and stop the voice of the Eggplant, and the real and genuine facts coming out of the conference. The Eggplant is proud to provide simplified and easy to understand articles and information that brings our opinions across in a concise and simplified manner, but the Summit has tried to stop us from achieving this during the conference through a constant barrage of Tweets, posts and articles slandering the news produced by the Eggplant. Accusing us of "wasting paper" by simply providing delegates with copies of our newspaper, and slandering our name by saying that we simply chose it "as a joke".

None of this is as important and ironic as the Summit's pathetic and hurtful comments made towards various premiers during the opening statements. The Summit described that "there was one premier though who stood out from others but in a negative way. He seemed ill-prepared and very vague when delivering his opening statement". It is farcical that the organisation so intent on pointing out our own flaws and blowing our own opinionated statements is making their own slanderous and hurtful comments. Simply because they did not put a name to their allegations does not make them innocent.

It is a ridiculous statement to question the validity, courage, compassion and loyalty that premiers and leaders have towards their province, territory, government or country, especially when these leaders were elected by a majority of citizens that they represent.

Controversy over the Kelowna Accord Budget

Paige Sweeney

The Federal Government is committed to implementing all provisions of the 2005 Kelowna Accord. The proposed budget for this accord was \$5.1 billion in 2005, which comes to approximately 6.2 billion in 2018 with inflation. This Accord was designed to "close the gap" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, with specific focuses on education, housing, economic opportunities and healthcare over the next 10 years. The Federal Government has also suggested implementing a Kelowna Accord committee.

Many delegations believe this amount is too low considering circumstances on Indigenous reserves, and are pushing for more funding for the Kelowna Accord.

British Columbia suggested \$10 billion, and other delegations have agreed with this number. British Columbia has stated that they "will not sign anything", if \$10 billion is not the agreed-upon budget.

However, the Federal Government stated their finance ministry has capped the budget at \$8 billion, causing controversy over whether Indigenous communities are a priority for the Canadian government.

UPDATE: The final budget allotted for the Kelowna Accord is \$9.5 billion over 10 years. British Columbia is the only delegation who refused to sign the agreement. In a later interview they stated: "[They] wanted more money to support [their] Indigenous communities, which other delegations, especially the taxpayers, were not willing to give."

Inclusivity Isn't Ontario's Priority?

Nicole Vishkin

When looking at Ontario's position paper for Fed-Prov 2018, it's surprising enough to see two of this years' justice topics left out. On said paper, there was no mention of transgender rights, pertaining to the MSM blood donation ban revocation. Neither was there mention of gender identity and the prospect of adding to the human rights act. Is

Ontario too scared to share their positions on these matters, or was this ignorance on their part?

When questioned on the matter, an Ontario delegate responded that "our premier wasn't exactly comfortable with setting a harsh position, and so I wanted to make sure that I wasn't making any decisions that I would've regretting coming into the meeting." He further made a point that this way, Ontario would come in "a little more neutral" and could "sort of see where the discussion leads instead of agreeing to something too steadfast."

This is surely a different approach to the two heavy topics and we can only wait to see what will go down in the coming committee meetings.

New Deal on Energy

Erik Gorman and Sanjivan Loganathan

After the first session of committee meetings yesterday at the Federal-Provincial Conference, the provinces and territories have come together on an agreement for the future management of energy in Canada. An informal vote at the end of the session confirmed nearly unanimous support for the agreement.

First Minister's conference successfully hit off their first meeting regarding the concerns of pipelines and hydroelectric power. Many provinces were in mutual agreement that this pipeline is crucial into growing the economy of Canada. Not only would this provide the country much-needed job opportunities but could be a critical point in helping improve our gross domestic profit. However, one significant point that was reiterated time and time again by multiple parties was regarding the consent needed by the Ingenious groups. It was quite refreshing to see that almost everyone was on the same page of showing concern in making sure that voices of the first nations were heard on this matter. The First Nations Assembly stated that they were in favour of the pipeline creation as long as any matter regarding them gets consent through them.

However, not everything was smooth sailing. A couple of provinces British Columbia, in particular, voiced their deep concerns with the pressing issue of environmental destruction. They said they were strictly objective to the pipeline creation, and would not sign, but

today it seems that they may have changed their mind.

After an informal vote at the end of the first session, it was clear, the pipeline construction would continue with their initial plans with the addition of a hydroelectric unit. Overall the First Ministers worked very calmly and collaboratively to come together and find a solution to this concern. Once Nova Scotia arrives, all provinces, territories and assemblies will come together to finally sign the agreement formally and seal this issue off.

Water Preservation Conversations Boil Over *Gracen Pitre, Alex Roe and Teddy Brimblecombe*

Quebec has been dominating conversation in the environment ministry for two days. When the topic of fresh water preservation was raised, it was fully expected to be a quick and easy conversation. After all, every province and territory has agreed that fresh water preservation is a priority. Canada has about 7% of the world's renewable fresh water, and we have the responsibility to preserve this valuable and essential resource.

Talks began heated, however, when Quebec's environment minister made it clear that they prioritized their economy over protection of freshwater.

Rather than join in the discussion regarding freshwater protection strategies, Quebec focused on the amount of money they would receive from the federal government. Quebec claimed the funds should be distributed with respect to population size rather than by amount of freshwater. They refused to abandon this point, shifting the focus of the environment ministry to topics better suited for finance. The federal government made no attempt to intervene, completely ready to make legislation on the opinion of one province.

All other delegations took an issue with Quebec's stance, resulting in half of the discussion consisting of Quebec yelling its position, while the other half of the conversation consisted of various provinces and territories yelling attacks at Quebec. The debate was summed up when a delegate representing Newfoundland and Labrador shouted across the room "We are all trying to preserve our freshwater, you are trying to get money". After the conference, the First Nation's Representative approached reporters stating that, "[Quebec's] being greedy."

The discussions continue to rage on, the average thought being, "Can we just sign without Quebec?" summed up by the environmental minister of Northwest Territories.



Big 3 vs. Territories: Emergence of Voting Blocs in Health

Crawford Passy

Unrest grows in the ministry of health as the territories of Nunavut, North West Territories and Yukon butt heads with their new rivals, Canada's most populous provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. The division occurs as the big three provinces declined to sign onto the net health accord due to a variety of budgeting issues. The alliance of territories, spearheaded by Nunavut, recognize the concerns of the big three, however, they don't believe that the issue is that of great importance due to the flexibility of the budget. When asked about the emerging voting bloc of the territories, a delegate from Quebec claimed that the territories were "abusing their voting power" and that voting representation should be based upon the population of a province/territory. The emergence of these voting blocs took place during debates over the net health accord, though all should be wary of this divide spilling over into further debates on the national disabilities act.

Interview with Taxpayers Raises more Questions

Rida Rahmann

After a Tweet was released on Twitter by The Eastern Eggplant voicing the concerns of the Canadian Labour Congress saying "The Canadian Tax Payers Federation does not understand the concept of being an interest group, speaking out about their own views during discussions between ministers," The Eastern Eggplant received a considerable amount of backlash from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, ultimately leading to an interview which raised more questions than answers.

On December 5th, 2018, the Canadian Labour Congress voiced their concerns to The

Eastern Eggplant regarding the actions of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation during committee meetings. As stated in the Federal-Provincial Conference Manual, it is expected that special interest groups find creative ways of voicing their opinions as they do not have a seat at the table during committee meeting. However, there were a number of times when the Canadian Taxpayers Federation spoke out during meetings within the Ministry of Finance. Occasionally they were prompted by the Federal Government, though there were instances in which they inserted themselves into the conversation unnecessarily. Additionally, initial attempts to approach the group by The Eastern Eggplant were unsuccessful as it was found that the Canadian Taxpayers Federation did not have anything significant to say during the first day of conferences, outside of the Press Conference.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation were ultimately very upset about the position taken by the Canadian Labour Congress and the use of The Eastern Eggplant's resources to voice this, approaching Rida Rahman, the Head Editor for the Finance Section of The Eastern Eggplant, angrily. They spoke to the Canadian Labour Congress saying that "Rules don't matter," and were finally referred to Chief Editor Oscar Judelson-Kelly, who spoke to a member of the Canadian Taxpayer Federation, arranging an interview to provide them with a platform to voice their own concerns. This interview, however, only raised more questions.

Within the interview, it was found that the Canadian Taxpayer Federation was quite content with the progress being made within certain ministries. They were able to find provinces they agreed with on many issues within ministries and had concerns met a majority of the time. However, there were occasions on which the Canadian Taxpayer Federation were quite disappointed with the outcome, hoping to achieve better results for Canadian citizens with some more effort and perseverance.

It seemed to be a successful interview, however, upon resuming discussions within the Ministry of Finance, reporters of The Eastern Eggplant were once again approached by members of the Canadian Taxpayer Federation who were looking to raise concerns with Chief Editor Oscar Judelson-Kelly, whom another member of the group had already spoken to. Members seemed quite confused when they were told of the interview that was conducted, having no idea as to the fact that both parties considered the issue as being resolved.