

Senator Grant Mitchell

Proud to represent Alberta

Experts Summit on Challenges Facing the RCMP

In January, Senator Mitchell and Hon. Judy Sgro, M.P. hosted an ***Experts Summit on Challenges facing the RCMP*** on Parliament Hill.

The meeting served as the culmination of four roundtables that have taken place over the past year. In Ottawa, Vancouver, St. John's and Edmonton, Ms. Sgro and Senator Mitchell heard testimony from a range of stakeholders, including current and past Members of the RCMP.

The purpose of the summit was to address the concerns and general themes that were raised in the roundtables and provide concrete solutions for change. Senator Mitchell

and Ms. Sgro will be incorporating suggestions from the summit into a White Paper. The White Paper will be an action plan which will be advocated in the House of Commons and in the Senate.

Senator Mitchell and Ms. Sgro greatly appreciate the insights of the participants of the summit who shared their expertise in policing, military service, post-traumatic stress disorder, workplace conflict and harassment, organizational behaviour and police governance policy.

Pictured (L-R): Senator Grant Mitchell, Hon. Judy Sgro, M.P., Jane Hall, Hon. Wayne Easter, M.P.

The Experts

Dr. Jennifer Berdahl—Professor of Organizational Behaviour, Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto

Jane Hall—Author and Co-Chair of the RCMP Veterans Women's Council

Chief Rick Hanson—Chief of Police for the City of Calgary

Associate Professor Michael Kempa—Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Ottawa

Ron Lewis—National Advocate, RCMP Veterans Association

Margaret Michaels—Human Resources Consultant

Dr. Jeff Morley, R. Psych—Director, Canadian Center for Police & Emergency Services Resilience

Brigadier-General Gordon (Joe) Sharpe, (Ret'd)—Has over 30 years of experience in the RCAF, in a range of operational and management positions



Protecting Transgender Rights

In February, Senator Mitchell made the following speech at the second reading of Bill C-279, An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity):

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, it is a unique situation and circumstance that I get to speak about this bill for a second time at second reading.

Of course, I'm speaking of Bill C-279, which is a bill to amend the Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code to protect the rights and the physical and psychological well-being, to elevate and recognize the importance of the issue of discrimination against transgendered people in our society.

...This bill was developed and sponsored by Member of Parliament Randall Garrison, a member of the New Democratic Party. I congratulate him on the work he did.

I also should point out that this bill was passed with all-party support in

the House of Commons. It was across the sides. Eighteen Conservative members of Parliament voted in support of this bill. Four of them were cabinet ministers and at least one of them was a former cabinet minister. It says something about the context of what has been happening in this place about the importance and the significance of a non-partisan approach to bills and issues of the day.

...I want to say that I'm inspired to have the chance to speak yet again about this issue, because I think it is so important, so deeply significant within the fabric of Canadian society. It addresses rights in a way that reflects generally what Canada is and what Canada is acknowledged to be around the world: a great, wonderful, accepting, warm society that understands human rights and that each of us, as individuals, are profoundly important. This bill captures that.

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo by Denis Armstong/Metro

On November 19, Senator Mitchell attended the 4th Annual Trans Day of Remembrance at the Ottawa Police Headquarters.

Above, he is pictured with Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau and trans spokespersons Alex Wayne Thompson and Amanda Ryan as the Trans Day of Remembrance Flag is raised.

The Senate Liberal Caucus: Bringing Canadians into Parliament

February 26, 2014—The Senate Liberal Caucus announced five initiatives, arising from its new independence, to do politics differently in the Senate.

“It has now been one month since the announcement by Mr. Trudeau that each of the 32 Liberal Senators would become independent of the elected Liberal Caucus,” said Senator James Cowan, Leader of the Senate Liberal Caucus. “We have an historic opportunity to use our new independence to try, insofar as it is within our power as a minority in the Senate, to make Parliament work better for Canadians – to make it respond to the needs of Canadians,

rather than the needs of political parties and their leaders.”

Senator Cowan, Deputy Opposition Leader Joan Fraser, Caucus Whip Jim Munson, and Caucus Chair Grant Mitchell announced five initiatives:

- 1. Open Caucus**
- 2. Your Question Period**
- 3. Proactive Disclosure**
- 4. Free Votes**
- 5. Equalization**

[Click here for more details](#)

Liberal Senators and the Caucus Decision

Mr. Trudeau's decision was to exclude Liberal Senators from his national caucus which will now include only his elected Liberal MPs.

It is the right decision and I support and applaud it. Mr. Trudeau has unleashed “in one fell swoop” a reform process that will make very significant and improved differences in how the Senate operates.

I believe that Mr. Trudeau was motivated by a desire to catalyze the restoration of Senate credibility, acknowledging that the greatest erosion of credibility has been related to increasing partisanship.

The changes will not occur precipitously or many of them even immediately. But already, we Senate Liberals are starting to act and think differently.

[Click here to read more of this blog by Senator Mitchell](#)

Lessons from the Forestry Industry

Throughout the 1990s, the forestry industry received pressure from organizations concerned about the industry's impact on the environment. The industry realized that if it were to continue to gain the social license to operate, it would need to adapt and create sustainable logging practices. In a speech in the Senate, Senator Mitchell described the lessons learned by the forestry industry and how they can be applied to the oil industry:

December 2013: I am pleased to rise to speak to this issue, one that is very important to the oil industry in Canada and Alberta...

I'm going to draw on the comments of the former Executive Director and CEO of the Forest Products Association of Canada, Avrim Lazar. Avrim Lazar is a remarkable person who did remarkable work on behalf of his industry and his association. He appeared many times before the Energy and Environment Committee and probably several times before the Finance Committee. He was exceptionally good. I had the opportunity — and I recommend this to all of our colleagues — to see his speech on YouTube. It was his retirement speech of this time last year, or 2012, to the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto where he outlined the challenges faced by the forestry industry in the 1980s and 1990s that culminated in their grasp, understanding and ultimately action of the need for transformational change in their industry in the early 2000s....

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Address to the Canadian Common Ground Alliance

November 2013 — Senator Mitchell attended a conference hosted by the **Canadian Common Ground Alliance**. He spoke about safe excavation practices for federally-regulated infrastructure projects, as well as the role of the federal government in addressing the regulatory gap that exists between various jurisdictions. Beginning this month, the Senate Energy and Environment Committee will begin a study on the current state of “One Call” programs that identify critical underground infrastructure in Canada.

[Click here to read his remarks at the conference](#)

Focus on Geothermal Energy in Canada

Over the past six months, Senator Mitchell has met with representatives from the geothermal energy sector. He has learned about the challenges they face regarding market access to the energy sector in Canada. In the Senate, he highlighted the importance of alternative forms of energy production and the role of the federal government in supporting emerging energy industries.

November 2013 - Honourable senators, I put this inquiry on the Order Paper to draw the attention of colleagues and Canadians to a very important form of renewable energy, of alternative energy, that has gotten tremendous traction, if I could put it that way, elsewhere in the world but has literally zero application to this point in Canada. It is geothermal energy, and it's represented in Canada by the Canadian Geothermal Energy Association, which they refer to themselves as CanGEA.

CanGEA is an association with a very important membership. They include, for example, Geoscience BC. They have had some support from Natural

Resources Canada; CanmetENERGY; NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program; Suncor Energy, a huge energy company; Nexen; Alberta Innovates. There is Borealis GeoPower — I could go on — Pembina Institute and BC Hydro.

...Geothermal is much more industrial. It involves drilling kilometres beneath the surface of the earth and finding heat sources. These heat sources aren't the same everywhere, of course. Some areas of the country and some areas of the world are better than others.

B.C. is particularly endowed with this energy source, and you can find water several kilometres below the surface of British Columbia in a number of places that can be as hot as 200 degrees centigrade, in that range. Alberta has relatively good sources, but generally, they are not quite that hot. They still have great application for geothermal heating.

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Celebrating Persons Day and the Famous Five



Senator Mitchell is pictured above with the following members of the Ottawa Council of Women: Monica Cullum—Chair, Status of Women; Susan Murphy—National President, Canadian Federation of University Women; Denise Mattok—National President, National Council of Women of Canada; and Petra Friedrichson—President, Ottawa Council of Women.

Senator Mitchell attended the annual Persons Day reception with members of the Ottawa Council of Women. Persons Day celebrates the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of “persons” handed down by Canada’s highest court of appeal – the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain – on October 18, 1929. This gave women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women’s increased participation in public and political life.

This case was taken up by Alberta’s Famous Five: Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby. These exceptional women were determined to change the legal definition of “persons” which then excluded women.

The Ottawa Council of Women carries on the Famous Five’s commitment to gender equity. It advocates for issues that impact women and their families; and strengthens women’s participation as voters and citizens and facilitates women’s participation at all levels of political activity.

After the event, Senator Mitchell took the guests on a tour of the Senate Chamber and other historic rooms of the Senate. In this photo, they are pictured in front of a portrait of Cairine Wilson, Canada’s first female senator.

Recognition for Janet Merlo

In November, Senator Mitchell joined parliamentarians and staff to welcome Janet Merlo, a former RCMP member to Parliament Hill. Ms. Merlo is the author of *No One To Tell: Breaking My Silence on Life in the RCMP*. In her memoir, she details her 20-year career with the force and her fight against harassment and discrimination. Senator Mitchell joined his colleagues in recognizing Ms. Merlo for her courage and leadership in raising awareness about harassment in the RCMP.



Pictured above: Senator Roméo Dallaire, Janet Merlo, Judy Foote, M.P., Senator Mitchell



Rails to Relevance Journey

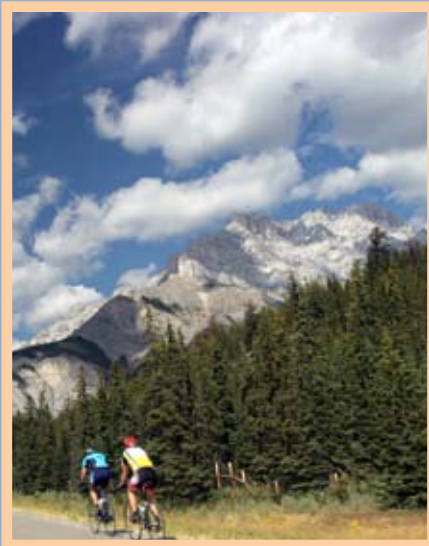
In November, Senator Mitchell had the opportunity to host 37 high school students from Claremont Secondary School in Victoria, BC, as well as their teachers and chaperones. Starting in Victoria, the group rode the train from Victoria to Ottawa to answer two guiding questions: What does it mean to be a Canadian citizen, and what is Canada's responsibility to the world?

The students met with Senator Mitchell as well as Members of Parliament. They created documentaries based on their experiences from the trip and the top 8 documentaries were featured to parents and the community at a local film fest.

Tour of Alberta

November, 2013—I would like to just talk a bit today about the recent Tour of Alberta. The Tour of Alberta is a Pro-Cycling Festival. It is a six-day bicycle stage race that took place in Alberta for the first time from September 2 to 8 of this year.

This is a very important, significant, big-time international cycling sporting event. This race is sanctioned by Union Cycliste Internationale, UCI. It's cycling's governing body and this race is part of the UCI American tour.



the international pro-cycling tour. This is a race that, of course, isn't as big in its presence in the world as the Tour de France or the Giro d'Italia, but it is of that nature and it involves athletes of that stature.

The annual event — and this was the first year, beginning in September 2013 — featured 15 professional, international cycling teams comprised of 8 riders per team. Doing the math, it is clear that this year there were 120, literally the elite of the elite of professional cyclists

Get this: it is classified as a 2.1 race. That doesn't mean very much to most of us North Americans, but it means a great deal to people in those nations, those parts of the world where cycling is of particular prominence. It means that this race is one of the highest rated races on

who participated in this event.

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Questions or comments?

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