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NDP Complaint Against Elections Canada

The Problem Lies with Cartel Party System Which Disempowers Canadians

- Anna Di Carlo -

The Canadian Press (CP) reports the NDP has filed a complaint with the Commissioner of Canada Elections about “numerous and systemic failures of election officials” in the 2021 Election. In a statement to CP, NDP National Director Anne McGrath states: “Elections Canada failed their responsibility to ensure the enfranchisement of all voters, even and especially those in low-income communities, those living in Indigenous and rural/remote communities, and those living with disabilities.” She says, “these systemic failures by Elections Canada to make sure every person in Canada can participate in our process contravenes the *Elections Act* and must be addressed.” She added, the mistakes have “done serious damage to the confidence of Canadians in our electoral system.”

With or without the filing of a complaint, the *Canada Elections Act* requires the Chief Electoral Officer to “engage an auditor that he or she considers to have technical or specialized knowledge — other than a member of his or her staff or an election officer — to perform an audit and report on whether election officers have properly exercised any of the powers conferred on them under this Act, or properly performed any of the duties imposed on them under this Act, that are specified by the Chief Electoral Officer.” What is to be accomplished by engaging the Commissioner of Canada Elections is questionable.

According to CP, “The party says it ‘understood the pressure Elections Canada’ was under to run an election ‘during a public health crisis.’ But McGrath says the agency’s job was to ‘make it easier for people to vote, not harder.’”

For the 2021 Federal Election, Elections Canada set up 7,300 advance polling stations, and 61,400 “voting desks” on polling day. It processed slightly more than one million mail-in ballots. It opened 501 offices and hired approximately 215,000 election workers.

To compare, for the 2019 Federal Election, called according to the fixed-date in the election law, Elections Canada set up 6,166 advance polls and a total of 64,671 polling stations. No doubt, “voting desks” versus “polling stations” (i.e. locations with several voting desks) resulted in longer line-ups and inconvenience for voters.

Nevertheless, any objective observer would have to respect Elections Canada having pulled off the election, given the Liberal Party calling a snap-election with the shortest possible campaign and arrogantly dismissing the Chief Electoral Officer’s request for the longest, 50 days versus 36. This is besides the collective irresponsibility of the cartel parties which refused to adopt electoral law amendments requested by Elections Canada in the event of a pandemic election.

The list of difficulties is multi-fold. The election law, for instance, does not allow Returning Officers to rent offices and polling locations based on election speculation. Seniors who commonly fill the election jobs were not willing to work during the fourth wave of the pandemic. Traditionally used school and church locations were not available. Facilities needed to allow for physical-distancing. Locations such as condominium lobbies, for example, were out of the picture. Special kiosks on the campuses were foregone by Elections Canada in light of the fact that it was not even certain that students would be physically returning to the campuses.

Who is responsible for the resulting problems faced by the electorate?

In another report — a CBC item about the NDP reviewing its campaign and failure to increase its seats — McGrath suggests the party’s performance was affected by a calculated voter-suppression tactic by the Liberal Party. She told CBC “Part of the reason for having the election at this time was to keep the turnout numbers low in order to re-elect the incumbent government. I do believe that young voters and Indigenous voters, in particular, were disenfranchised.”

Who then should be investigated? A party that the NDP suggests called an election with voter suppression as a factor in its campaign strategy? Or the agency that had to shoulder the burden of administering the allegedly horrendously-motivated election?

The MLPC concludes the problem lies with the cartel party system which disempowers all Canadians as well as with the cartel parties which only snivel when the arrangements based on power and privilege do not specifically favour them. There is no doubt in anyone’s mind that the Liberal Party of Canada takes decisions on the basis of self-serving calculations. If conflict of interest and irresponsibility mean anything, an inquiry could be called to determine why this wasteful snap election was called in the first place and make them pay \$610 million in reparations. But the cartel parties have no interest in any inquiry which reaches the warranted conclusion that the entire electoral law is not in accord with the requirements of the times.



The MLPC carries out ongoing investigation into the electoral and political process dominated by a self-serving, corrupt cartel of parties which run campaigns intended to manipulate the vote so that they can win seats. Having an electorate has become an obstacle to their power-seeking schemes. Only those whose interest is to solve problems facing the country by empowering the people to take the decisions which affect their lives should be trusted.

*Empower the People and Oppose Party Government!
All Out for Democratic Renewal!*

Quebec Coroner's Report on Death of Joyce Echaquan

Need to Settle Scores with Racist Concepts Underlying Today's Political Institutions

- Pierre Soublière -

On October 1, the Quebec Coroner's Office issued a communiqué on the death of Joyce Echaquan in September 2020, entitled "Coroner Jehane Kamel tables her Investigation report." It confirms that Joyce had been ostracized during her final stay in hospital and that her death was avoidable.

The coroner points out that when she entered the Centre hospitalier De Lanaudière on the evening of September 26 of last year for her ailments, Joyce was labelled as a patient in withdrawal, which led to her calls for help not being taken seriously.

There was no actual indication of her being in withdrawal and in later hearings it was proven beyond a doubt that Joyce was using strictly prescribed medication for her health problems. Moreover, when she became agitated, she was physically restrained. It is stated that Joyce's death was due to pulmonary edema and that other

relevant factors contributing to her death could be "hypotension due to an administered injection of Haldol as well as to the restraints which held Mrs. Echaquan nailed to her stretcher without the possibility of sitting up, which is a natural thing to do when there is an accumulation of water on the lungs."

A lack of proper supervision was raised as another contributing factor. The communiqué also points out that the Viens Commission which, one year before Joyce's death, inquired into "the relations between Indigenous communities and certain public services," had been alerted as to concerns the Atikamekw community of Manawan had regarding the services provided to them at the Centre hospitalier De Lanaudière.

In the recommendations, it is stated that the Quebec government must "acknowledge the existence of systemic racism within our institutions and commit to working towards its elimination." At her press conference on October 5, the coroner pointed out that though the National Assembly and the media had made quite an issue surrounding this statement about systemic racism, it was important to consider other extremely relevant recommendations such as working closely with the Atikamekw community and addressing hospital staffing shortages.





The rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Quebec at this time are coming to the fore as an issue facing the entire polity. Endless discussions on whether to acknowledge systemic racism or not seem as futile as they are diversionary, as once governing bodies do acknowledge it, the response is to “do better.” This in itself is a reaction which considers the horrific crimes committed against Indigenous communities, such as in the Residential Schools — and as are now being reported, in the Indian Day Schools — as “mistakes.” These divert from the fact that governments render no accounts regarding recommendations and calls to action put forward to guarantee the needs and rights of Indigenous peoples, even those made by the very commissions they themselves set up.

One of the 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is that “all governments repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*.” This is getting to the heart of the matter, as it touches upon the very foundations on which the Canadian constitution and today’s political institutions are based. In our struggles for the rights of all, it is becoming inevitable to discuss the changes that need to be made to these constitutional and institutional foundations.

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