



## Canadian minister in Washington: We need to decouple from China

Canada's industry minister was in Washington making a pitch for projects north of the border to steer U.S. federal funding for critical minerals.

François-Philippe Champagne's trip came after the U.S. passed several bills offering large sums of money for green energy and other high-tech projects.

They include hundreds of millions for President Joe Biden to steer to certain projects under the U.S. Defense Production Act.

As a legal member of the U.S. industrial base, and hence to several of the critical minerals that power electric batteries, Canada is hoping some cross-border projects might qualify.

"Yes there are sums in these acts which Canadian companies can tap into," Champagne, the innovation, science and industry minister, told reporters Friday at the Canadian embassy in Washington.

"That's what we're going to be working (on) with Canadian industry. To be embedded in these very important initiatives."

He was speaking at the tail end of a

trip where he met his U.S. counterpart, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, the head of NASA, Bill Nelson, and spoke to a business audience.

What's the context?

The context is the rivalry with China and Russia. Washington is increasingly unnerved about being dependent on its greatest geopolitical foe, China, for minerals that power the economy—phones, computers, clean technology and electric vehicles.

China dominates the market and once out of Japan's access to those vital industrial inputs. Just as Russia has now cut off Europe from exports of oil and gas.

The U.S. is now working to decouple its high-tech economy from China and the just restricted exports of advanced computer chips to that country, the U.S. has set out broad strategies for breaking its dependence on Chinese goods.

Champagne said countries that share similar values should be leaning on each other more and leaning less on rivals including China.

"What we want is certainly a

decoupling, certainly from China, and I would say other regimes in the world which don't share the same values," he told a panel hosted by the Canadian American Business Council.

"People want to trade with people who, really, share the same values."

Canadian Deputy Minister Chyetta Freeland this month gave a speech in Washington on a similar theme, arguing for so-called friend-shoring; she said democracies should tighten their economic, and military, bonds and rely on each other more for trade.

Champagne called this a once-in-a-generation chance to rewrite supply chains, as the world shifts toward electric vehicles and toward trading more with reliable allies.

He cited examples of how Canada fits in. For example, he said he envisions a future where New York State and Quebec form a semiconductor corridor, similar to the auto-production corridor in Windsor and Detroit—as Detroit's Big Three move parts between their plants on either side, he said, an IBM could move computer components to plants

back and forth.

He also noted Canadian spending on a critical mineral plant in Quebec: Champagne said the titanium produced there will benefit the U.S. military.

During his trip, Champagne also received blowback for two bills currently in Parliament, his government's bills C-18 and C-11.

They would require big Internet platforms to compensate Canadian news organizations for content they run, and give the CRTC new power over online content.

A director at a large U.S. business lobby group, Abel Torres at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, told Champagne the bills discriminate against U.S. websites, violate trade commitments, contradict the principles of an open internet, and give companies little guidance about how Canadian regulators intend to use their new powers.

"We feel these measures are a step in the wrong direction," he said during Champagne's press conference Friday.

What's next?

Canada has increasingly secured a spot in the new supply chains for zero-emission vehicles; companies have announced new plant and the just-passed U.S. omnibus bill defines cars in Canada as eligible for a domestic tax credit for electric vehicles.

## Protests against Iranian government gain momentum across Canada

As uprisings continue in Iran, Canadians across the country are showing support by organizing and marching in protests, showcasing solidarity for the thousands risking their lives to demand change.

Protests organized by local human rights groups and Iranian-Canadian organizations were held on Saturday in Toronto, Winnipeg, Halifax, Montreal and other communities across Canada. Thousands marched for the Iranian people who are protesting for human rights.

"It's a serious challenge to the Islamic Republic and definitely a legitimacy crisis that they're dealing with," Negar Mortazavi, host of The Iran Podcast, said on CTV News Channel Saturday. "The government, or the regime, has been willing and capable to suppress these types of protests with very brutal violence, by security forces shooting directly at protesters."

The uproar was sparked late September when 22-year-old, Mahsa Amini, died while in custody of the so-called "morality police," a unit that enforces mandatory headscarves for women and girls in Iran. She was taken to a "re-education centre" for not wearing her hijab correctly and later died, her family says she was beaten to death while officials say it was a heart attack.

Amini's death has become a symbol of oppression Iranian women have faced for decades.

In Iran, thousands march in the streets and many women and girls continue to remove their headscarves in support of Amini. The government in turn has used violent tactics to silence the protesters. Over 200 people have been killed and thousands have been arrested, the Associated Press has reported.

One woman who spoke with CTVNews on Saturday said looking overseas from Canada at the ongoing "human rights violations" is terrifying.

"I'm not just scared and worried for my brothers and sisters and my nieces and nephews (who) live there," she said over the phone on Saturday. "I'm



more worried about what's happening for all those little kids and those young people in the streets."

More than a decade ago she and her husband moved Canada, with the goal of giving their daughter a better life. Today, she lives in the Greater Toronto Area says she is proud of the people protesting in Iran.

"This is so brave, and high school girls, other young girls in the street and how the other men and young boys support them, I'm so proud of them," she said. "But at the same time, I'm so scared for them."

Last week Iranian climber, Elnaz Rezaei, competed in South Korea without her headscarf. BBC reported she was removed shortly after, only for her to resurface in Tehran, Iran's capital, making what some are calling a forced apology for the "unintentional" act.

Instead, protesters have taken Rezaei as another symbol for the continued uprising.

The Iranian woman from the GTA was present during the previous 2009 protests, after the Iranian presidential election was plagued by irregularities and allegations of vote-rigging. She says the movement in 2022 is much bigger.

"I know the regime, I know the people and I know the situation and I totally believe that this time, this is not just a protest... this is the beginning of the revolution," she said.

More recent widespread protests like this took hold of Iran in 2019 when Iranians displayed anger towards soaring food and gas prices. Mortazavi said the use of vicious tactics will have a mixed effect on this

## Canada's competition watchdog to probe rising grocery prices

Canada's competition watchdog is launching a study of the grocery industry to examine whether the highly concentrated sector is contributing to rising food costs.

"With inflation on the rise, Canadian consumers have seen their purchasing power decline," the Competition Bureau said in a news release Monday.

"This is especially true when buying groceries. In fact, grocery prices in Canada are increasing at the fastest rate seen in 40 years."

Grocery prices in September rose at the fastest pace since 1981, with prices up 11.4 per cent compared with a year ago. That compared with an overall inflation rate of 6.9 per cent.

Although the overall inflation rate has begun to drop from its peak of 8.1 per cent in June, food prices have not only outstripped that but continue to rise.

The Competition Bureau said Monday its study will examine to what extent higher grocery prices are related to changing competitive dynamics in the sector.

It expects to explore how the government could act to combat grocery price increases by way of greater competition in the industry.

It noted that the grocery sector is concentrated, with many Canadians buying from one of three companies: Loblaw, Metro and Sobeys' parent company Empire Co. Ltd.

The level of competition varies across the country, it said.

The Competition Bureau will provide a set of recommendations for the government in its final report, which it plans to publish in June.

Earlier this month, the House of Commons Agriculture Committee voted to investigate food prices.

The House of Commons also voted unanimously in favour of an NDP motion calling on the government to tackle "corporate greed" in the grocery sector.

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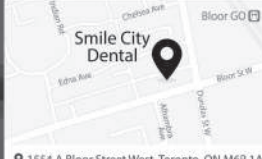
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## Sask. gov't discourages use of federally funded Canadian Anti-Hate Network toolkit in classrooms

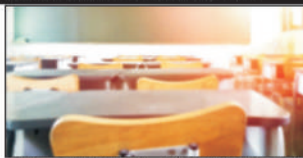
The Government of Saskatchewan is discouraging teachers from using an anti-hate toolkit developed by the Canadian Anti-Hate Network.

The toolkit is a resource to identify and address hate in schools, according to the network, which monitors and reports on groups or individuals promoting hate toward "identifiable groups" outlined in Canadian law, according to its website.

All the content is Canadian, and it makes reference to Saskatchewan three times. But the province says it doesn't meet their criteria.

"The toolkit does not meet criteria such as being high quality, free from bias as reasonably possible, and having appropriate and significant Saskatchewan content," a spokesperson for Saskatchewan's Ministry of Education said in a statement on Oct. 13.

The federal government says on its website that the toolkit will provide "a comprehensive anti-racism education program to help equip



educators, parents and communities better identify, confront and prevent hate in schools across Canada."

The project is funded through the Government of Canada's Anti-Racism Action Program, which aims to address barriers to employment, justice and social participation among Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities and religious minorities, as well as address online hate and promote digital literacy.

The toolkit, titled Confronting Hate in Canadian Schools, launched in June and received \$268,400 in

federal funding for development. But the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education informed the education sector on Sept. 20 that the Canadian anti-hate toolkit is not recommended.

The ministry says that instead of using the toolkit, a selection of resources can be done by schools and school systems using the Learning Resource Selection Guidelines 2022 and lists of resources found on the curriculum website.

Toolkit curriculum director Ivan Balgord, executive director of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network,

says he's disappointed the province is discouraging the education sector from using the toolkit.

"It's already putting it on a recommended list, before we even reached out to them. We have some meetings lined up with other provinces. So everywhere else, the response has been neutral to positive. So Saskatchewan has been an outlier," Balgord said.

Balgord says the toolkit is not necessarily meant as an in-class resource, but as a professional development resource, primarily for parents and teachers. It is not curriculum, Balgord notes.

"It's to prevent kids having their heads so full of hate, being groomed and radicalized and being propagandized by, you know, manifests and staff and going out and carrying out some kind of like mass attack," Balgord said.

He says the toolkit also addresses less extreme situations. He denies that it is biased, like the province suggests. He says hate groups often target children for recruitment.

"It's not partisan and it's not meant to be seen as partisan. It does have to talk about politics a bit because white supremacist groups, all the time, they're talking about how to influence or infiltrate mainstream politics to achieve their ends," he said.

describe as a slow and ineffective response to inflation.

"Unfortunately, the prime minister is proposing to do exactly nothing for the vast majority of struggling families, which will get nothing, and even the small minority that do get something will find it gobblet up by increased inflation," said Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre earlier this week.

The NDP have blamed some inflation on corporate greed, and passed a motion with unanimous all-party support to look into rising food prices.

"That's why remaining fiscally responsible and measured in our response is essential, because we have to prepare for whatever might come in the coming weeks and months," he said.

Food prices outpace headline inflation.

Central banks around the world have responded to rising inflation by ratcheting up interest rates. That's part of the mission of keeping prices under control, Gourinchas said, but it would sting economies.

"In the context in which the economy is already slowing down because of the uncertainty and the shocks that are hitting the global economy, it is going to make it that much more painful," he said.

He warned that as the economy slows, unemployment will rise, though job losses would "hopefully remain fairly modest."

The cost of living has been a major focus for the government's political opposition, attacking what they

## Ottawa's pandemic hiring boom adds billions to federal payroll

A pandemic-fueled hiring spree has grown the federal civil service by more than 130,000 people since April 2020, according to a CBC News analysis, helping add billions to Ottawa's coffers.

Figures supplied by the Treasury Board and other ministries and departments show the federal government added 19,151 jobs in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, and another 16,356 positions in fiscal 2022. All told, the feds now employ 335,957 people across the country: a 12 per cent increase from pre-COVID times, and the greatest number of public servants in Canadian history.

An additional 28,176 bureaucrats were on long-term leave in 2022, not receiving their full salaries, but many of whom remain eligible for taxpayer-funded top-ups, benefits, insurance and pension contributions.

In fiscal 2021, Ottawa spent \$59.623 billion on personnel costs, including salaries, pensions, benefits and overtime, an increase of \$4.438 billion from the prior financial year. Payroll costs for 2022 likely increased by a similar amount, although the final figure won't be available until the Public Accounts are published in December.

The super-charged rate of growth during the pandemic surprised even the former Parliamentary Budget Officer.

"That's a substantial increase," said Kevin Page, an economist who now heads the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy at the University of Ottawa. "It's growing well in excess of five per cent a year, which is much, much faster than the private sector and faster than the rate of growth in the real economy."

The bulk of the pandemic-exhiring occurred across just four government departments.

"The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) - charged with administering the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and other COVID-19 supports - grew by 9,900 employees over the two fiscal years."

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), which is responsible for passport processing and Service Canada offices, added 8,500 positions.

"Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, which has been dealing with the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine - along with a huge backlog of visa applications - hired 1,790 people."

Back in 2012, when Page was still working for Parliament, he prepared a report that found the average public servant cost taxpayers more than \$114,000 a year in total compensation. The growth of federal wages and benefits had outpaced both inflation, and other private and public employers, for 13 years running.

The most recent figure available from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, for the 2019 fiscal year, puts the average cost at \$121,000.

Page believes the public deserves more transparency.

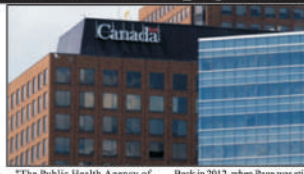
"There is no strategic human resource plan you know for the Government of Canada," he said. "There's no evidence whether or not we've made really good hiring decisions with the significant increase in the complement of the public service."

The growth of the public service in both size and cost is also a concern to private-sector lobby groups like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Dan Kelly, the organization's president and CEO, says a temporary uptick to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and the resulting global economy made sense, but now he worries about long-term sustainability.

"We're potentially heading into a recession. A giant civil service is not going to help us in terms of remaining lean enough to be able to respond to challenges and prevent further tax increases to pay for it all," said Kelly.

He wonders why Ottawa's answer to every problem seems to be increasing headcounts.

"The federal government likes to talk about, you know, changing business models and is lecturing businesses about going online and digitizing their services," said Kelly. "Meanwhile, there is precious little that is happening within government itself."



"The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), which coordinated the national pandemic response, filled 1,900 jobs."

In emailed statements, PHAC and ESDC both said that more than half of the new hires were in permanent positions, while the CRA noted that its workforce rises and falls with the tax season.

Overall, 82.2 per cent of federal employees were in permanent positions, while 12.4 per cent filled temporary jobs, and 5.4 per cent were termed "casual workers," per a 2021 government-produced "snapshot" of the public service.

Increased by almost a third since 2015

The CBC News analysis shows the size of the public service has been growing steadily since 2015, when the Liberal Party took power. Over eight fiscal years, Ottawa has hired an additional 179,000 employees, expanding the federal workforce by almost 31 per cent. And head counts have increased in 79 of the 84 government departments and agencies that have been in continuous operation over that period.

The public service data doesn't include members of the Canadian military, or civilian or uniformed employees of the RCMP. According to the latest available figures, the Department of National Defence had 93,252 employees in fiscal 2019, while the RCMP employed 31,119.

Nor does it reflect workers at Crown corporations such as Canada Post, VIA Rail, or CBC/Radio-Canada.

The workings of government have made the rapid expansion of the federal bureaucracy difficult to track, says Page.

"The overall picture of what is happening in the public service - how many employees? What's the wage bill? It's pretty much buried," said Page. "No one is really monitoring this."

Mona Fortier, the federal cabinet minister who serves as president of the Treasury Board, declined a CBC News interview request, but in a statement defended the government's hiring record, saying Ottawa is keeping a close eye on costs during ongoing negotiations with public service unions.

"Our government is focused on delivering support for Canadians who need it most while responsibly managing public funds," said the statement. "The government is committed to negotiating in good faith and to reaching agreements that are fair to employees and reasonable for Canadian taxpayers."

What would you cut instead, infra economist

The Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest public service union, has been seeking a 13.5 per cent wage hike over three years. The latest government offer is eight per cent over four years.

The public service has struck at various times - most recently during the final five years of the Stephen Harper government when the federal bureaucracy was reduced by almost 26,000 positions between 2010 and 2015.

But as economist Armine Yalinizyan notes, its size is proportionate to Canada's growing population and overall workforce has remained relatively small and stable - 0.87 per cent and two points, respectively, in 2022.

"I guess you could complain about the growth in cost as more people were added. But then I would ask you to question what would you cut if you didn't want to add that cost? What kind of services would you not want? Maybe less emergency pandemic response income supports, maybe fewer wage subsidies, maybe fewer temporary foreign workers, maybe less training or EIP," asked Yalinizyan, an Adjunct Fellow for the Future of Workers.

"You know, all of these things come with pricing."

Yalinizyan says bureaucrats are always a soft target, and a useful distraction from bigger, systemic issues of inequality in the economy.

"We are very much into a war of worker against worker, public sector against private sector, unionized worker against un-unionized worker like it's now the workers' fault. It's the government's fault. Everybody's got a straw dog to kick," she said.

"But it isn't workers that are to blame. It's a whole series of factors that are actually hard to address because they didn't come from anybody doing the wrong thing."

## Canada not immune from faltering global growth, says IMF chief economist

The chief economist of the International Monetary Fund says Canada is facing many of the same challenges - high inflation, lagging growth and anxious financial markets - that are dragging down the global economic outlook.

"The Canadian economy has been doing well in the rebound, but it's buffeted by the same winds that are affecting the global economy," said Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas in an interview on Rosemary Barton Live airing Sunday.

The IMF says the world is experiencing "a broad-based and sharper-than-expected slowdown" with growth expected to slow to 2.7 per cent next year, down from 3.2 per cent this year. The UN financial agency projects the Canadian economy will grow by just 1.5 per cent.

"There is a slowdown in the US that is coming. Commodity prices, energy prices are coming down. There are all the uncertainties, financial tightening and financial markets are very nervous. All of these factors are

going to weigh down on the Canadian economy next year," Gourinchas told CBC chief political correspondent Rosemary Barton.

The IMF's projections are just the latest in a series of gloomy assessments from economic experts recently. Former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney told the Senate finance committee Tuesday Canada would likely fall into a recession next year - though he noted this country should fare comparatively well.

Deputy prime minister and finance minister Chrystia Freeland has also warned of dark clouds on the horizon.

"There are still some difficult days ahead for Canada's economy. To say otherwise would be misleading," she said Wednesday.

And on Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also indicated the economy is already slowing down because of the uncertainty and the shocks that are hitting the global economy. It is going to make it that much more painful," he said.

He warned that as the economy slows, unemployment will rise, though job losses would "hopefully remain fairly modest."

The cost of living has been a major focus for the government's political opposition, attacking what they

acknowledged many were facing a challenge.

"That's why remaining fiscally responsible and measured in our response is essential, because we have to prepare for whatever might come in the coming weeks and months," he said.

Food prices outpace headline inflation.

Central banks around the world have responded to rising inflation by ratcheting up interest rates. That's part of the mission of keeping prices under control, Gourinchas said, but it would sting economies.

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