

Abuse of power in Ottawa

For the Stephen Harper Conservatives, nothing is quite as entrenched as their fundamental contempt for the traditions of governing in this country.

A blatant example occurred recently.

Nearly two months ago, Canada's information commissioner, Suzanne Legault, recommended charges be filed against the RCMP for allegedly withholding and destroying gun registry data.

Despite a government promise that data would not be destroyed pending an active investigation, the RCMP erased the records in October 2012.

Instead of following up on Legault's recommendation, the Harper Tories opted to instead rewrite the law so the Access to Information or Privacy acts would not apply with regard to the gun-registry data.

The change was backdated to retroactively erase any notion the RCMP could be held accountable for its actions.

The amendment was then buried in an omnibus budget bill.

Talk about opening a door.

Harper has essentially set the precedent that any indiscretion involving the government and police can simply disappear with the wave of a legislative wand. It is beyond disturbing.

MPs should "look themselves in the mirror and decide whether they can, in their own integrity, actually vote in favour of those proposed amendments," Legault told the Canadian Press, calling it a "perilous precedent."

"We could do the same thing after investigating potential electoral fraud. We could erase these things retroactively," she warned.

Liberal MP Wayne Easter, a former solicitor general, told CP that the RCMP would not have withheld the requested records without political support.

"If they're complicit with the government in terms of destroying information against the law, what next will they be complicit with their political masters in? That's a huge, huge question."

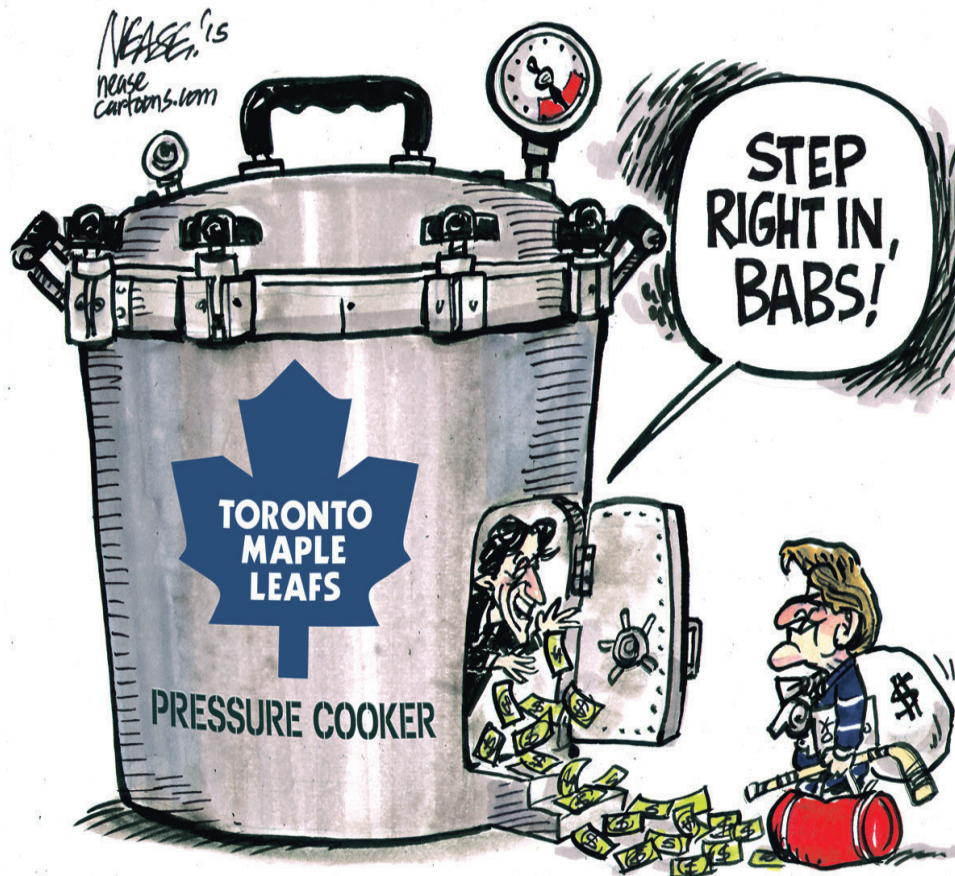
This dispute is not about the gun registry, a hugely divisive Liberal government program.

It's about the notion that our government can retroactively change the law to suit its agenda.

Even Conservative supporters should be concerned by this abuse of power.

The Independent & Free Press

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Letters to the editor

Keep ATVs off the trails

My partner and I frequent the Hungry Hollow trail systems and appreciate the city workers who developed boardwalks and bridges and who perform monthly maintenance to keep the area clean and safe.

Recently we have noticed numerous motorized bikes and ATV vehicles on the paths. One ATV vehicle in particular has become a frequent and unsafe nuisance. The ATV enters off the Regan Crescent access and is driven by a 10 to 12 year old young man with blonde hair. The ATV does not have plates. It is blue/purple in colour.

Parents, if this is your son, or if your child has a motorized vehicle, please ensure they keep their machines out of the ravine and its paths.

There are posted signs at each entrance that it is illegal for these types of vehicles to be on the ravine trails and it is unsafe for the numerous walkers, bikers and animals who frequent these trails.

I don't want my tax dollars going to

wards putting in gates on ravine access points because of a few irresponsible community members.

Keep your motorized vehicles out of the ravine for the safety and enjoyment of all who use it.

L. McKenna,
Georgetown

Roofers should think about kids

As a resident of south Georgetown it is becoming commonplace to see roofs being re-shingled due to the age of our neighbourhood.

Several times last year I found myself infuriated and speaking to the workers about the timing of their work and the full blocking of sidewalks with their vehicles between 8 and 9 a.m. when children are walking to school.

This morning yet another company proceeded to do this at 8:25 a.m. at Eaton Street and Huffman.

A child was struck here not long ago—yet the workers are oblivious to the fact children are sent out onto the road at a

busy time to get past their vehicle.

Nobody is supervising the kids or concerned for their safety.

Numerous complaints to one company directly seem to have helped, but today it was another and their vehicle put kids out into the centre of the road.

Assinine and only a matter of time before a child is hurt, or worse.

Leanne Adam,
Georgetown

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