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“Speaker, I got into politics because I love my country, Canada. The opposition member got into politics because he had tendinitis.”

HERITAGE MINISTER MARC MILLER, IN A JAB AT CONSERVATIVE LEADER PIERRE POILIEVRE. A7

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# ‘A relationship of mutual respect,’ Poilievre says



BLAIR GABLE / POSTMEDIA NEWS

The spirit of co-operation between Mark Carney and Pierre Poilievre — speaking in the House in early February — shows that they recognize “that the mood of the country is to be more cooperative and united,” says one strategist.

## This is about respect for the dead

Francophones right to be angry at English-only condolences



JAMIE SARKONAK  
 Comment

Captain Antoine Forest and First Officer Mackenzie Gunther appear to have spent their last moments decelerating their Air Canada Jazz plane as it barrelled toward a fire truck on the LaGuardia Airport runway last week. Passengers reported feeling the brakes hit hard right before the collision, and one even hit his head on the seat in front of him. That may be why everyone who was on board is still alive except for the pilots, who took an unsurvivable impact.

Both men made the same sacrifice, but only one of their families heard Air Canada's subsequent condolence message — delivered in English by CEO Michael Rousseau in a four-minute video — in their language. Forest was a francophone, but Rousseau couldn't muster anything beyond “bonjour” and “merci” to honour the pilot's loved ones, a slight so grave that he announced his retirement on Monday.

Francophones are furious, and they have every right to be.

The English side of Canada largely hasn't seen it that way for the last week, distracted by the larger conversation about the onerous, alienating state of official bilingualism. It's a reasonable grievance.

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**Air Canada flight attendant conscious while being ejected, daughter says. A5**  
**Air Canada CEO to retire after controversy. FP16**

## WHEN YOU WEREN'T LOOKING, CANADA'S TOP LEADERS FORGED A WORKING RELATIONSHIP

CATHERINE LÉVESQUE  
 in Ottawa

Speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa last week, Prime Minister Mark Carney ended his remarks by making a tongue-in-cheek comment to Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre, who was sitting at the head table with him.

“I know there are some stoics in the room,” said Carney, glancing at Poilievre. “So, I will close by channeling Marcus Aurelius,” added the prime minister in reference to the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher that Poilievre cited in a recent Economic Club of Canada address.

When it was Poilievre's turn to speak, he couldn't help but chirp back at Carney's comment.

“Mr. Prime Minister, I think it is very appropriate that you quoted Marcus Aurelius, although he wasn't much of a practising Christian,” Poilievre said in front of the crowd of faith leaders.

That interaction between Carney and Poilievre is just one snapshot of how both men are navigating a new political dynamic — one that is still confrontational in the House of Commons but is based on “mutual respect” behind the scenes, according to Poilievre.

“I think what you've really seen with Pierre Poilievre in recent months is a maturation and measured approach to how he communicates and presents himself,” said Jamie Ellerton, founder and principal at Conaptus and a former Conservative political staffer.

“I think this relationship with the prime minister is an example of that.”

On March 11, the National Post witnessed Carney and Poilievre having a private discussion in a hallway behind the chair of the Speaker of the House of Commons just before Poilievre was set to travel to the United States to make the case for tariff-free trade.

Carney was seemingly giving Poilievre some recommendations of people whom he should meet with in the U.S., while Poilievre joked that he would be enjoying eating ribs in Texas.

Speaking to U.S. podcaster Joe Rogan, Poilievre said he was keeping Carney apprised of his visit with text messages “to tell him what's going on, to try and support his work.”

See RELATIONSHIP on A6

## China cheers Ma's questioning of expert's testimony on forced labour

TOM BLACKWELL

A Liberal MP's comments questioning the existence of forced labour in China have been quickly picked up by state-controlled media there, with a print article reporting positively on Michael Ma's remarks and calling accusations of labour abuse a Western fabrication.

Meanwhile, the former Conservative MP, who crossed the floor to the government in December, was co-hosting a fundraising dinner with Prime Minister Mark Carney Monday evening.

Protesters planned to rally outside

the venue and call for him to be ejected from the Liberal caucus.

Ma aggressively quizzed China expert Margaret McCuaig-Johnston on her testimony at the House of Commons industry committee last week, demanding to know if she had actually witnessed forced labour herself.

He later apologized, saying he thought McCuaig-Johnston was talking about Shenzhen in southern China, not the Xinjiang region where forced labour involving the Uyghur minority has been well documented.

See TESTIMONY on A4

## Toronto sinks to Mamdani's worst idea

ANTHONY FUREY  
 Comment

It's hard to say what's the worst part about Toronto City Council voting in favour of government-run grocery stores. Perhaps it's just that, shockingly, it's a real thing that actually happened, taking valuable time and resour-

ces away from serious governance that could improve the livability of Toronto.

Last week, Councillor Anthony Perruzza put forward a motion that “City Council establish a pilot project to open four municipally operated grocery stores within the City of Toronto.” The locations would be chosen with “priority given to neigh-

bourhoods with limited access to full-service grocery stores and where residents have lower average household incomes.”

The motion had originally called for an implementation report to be issued by staff within a month, but Mayor Olivia Chow amended it to give them a year to work on it. The plan then passed

with 21 for and 3 against. Etobicoke Councillor Stephen Holyday got to the heart of the matter, as he often does: “I don't think the government could possibly run this more efficiently than the private sector does. To suggest that a government-run store is suddenly going to be better is preposterous.”

See FUREY on A10

## Clarity for the NDP's future

No mystery in the Avi Lewis revolution



KELLY MCPARLAND  
 Comment

Perhaps it's a good thing that New Democrats selected Avi Lewis as their new leader on Sunday.

Good for whom I can't say for sure. It's certainly a win for those voters convinced all could be righted if only Canada's greedy one per cent could be skinned of their assets. Perhaps less so for NDP sympathizers who believe a moderate and pragmatic left stands a better chance of achieving influence.

It definitely provides some clarity, though. During the 2025 election, the now-departed Jagmeet Singh kept claiming he was “running to be prime minister” when it was uncomfortably obvious that wasn't going to happen. He had 24 seats at the time, out of 343 in the House, outnumbered even by the separatists. His party was an afterthought in a race between the Liberals and Conservatives. He'd been leaking support since becoming leader eight years earlier.

By nonetheless continuing the claim he mainly created the impression he was one of two things: Either delusional, or kidding no one but himself. After two weeks on the road he finally conceded to reality, allowing that while “I would be honoured to serve as prime minister ... I don't want to presuppose the outcome of the election.”

Maybe Lewis should start straight off with that line, since choosing him as leader saves the party from pretending it expects to find itself in power.

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The leftist firebrand who is the NDP's new leader. A5

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## SPACE

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