

Canada may reveal next step on Facebook privacy

TORONTO (Reuters)—The privacy commissioner's office may outline new proposals on protecting the privacy of Facebook users on Thursday after the watchdog last month found deficiencies in the social networking website's current practices.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada's July report found that information provided by Facebook about its privacy practices is often confusing or incomplete. It said its policy of indefinitely keeping personal information about people who have closed their accounts was in breach of Canadian privacy law.

Facebook, a website that lets users share pictures, videos, news stories, opinions and private and public messages, has about 12 million users in Canada. It has a total of more than 250 million active users worldwide.

On Thursday, the regulator will discuss the outcome of negotiations with Facebook over the past month. The closely held company will hold its own media conference.

The final outcome of Canada's investigation could influence the company's practices in other countries. Other social networking sites are also likely watching the proceedings closely.

"Facebook and any other provider of online social media will have to prioritize privacy to a much greater degree than they have up until now," said independent technology analyst Carmi Levy.

This could mean greater transparency about how such sites gather private information, who they share it with, and what they do with it once a user leaves the site, he said.

"Governments need to be more involved from a regulatory perspective than they have been in the past to ensure that Canadians' privacy continues to be respected, because of this new territory."

The Canadian report in July recommended that Facebook delete personal information in deactivated accounts "after a reasonable length of time," the commissioner's office said.

The regulator's probe was launched in response to complaints by the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic at the University of Ottawa.

In a statement last month, Facebook said it was pleased that most of the clinic's "inaccurate" complaints were dismissed and also that "we were able to collaboratively resolve other issues raised in the complaint."

A senior Facebook executive also said that the company did not believe there had been any violation of Canadian law.

The probe also found that Facebook lacked "adequate safeguards" to protect users' personal information from being accessed by third-party developers who make applications such as games and quizzes for the website.

Divers identify sunken WWII plane

By CINDY CHAN
Epoch Times Staff

Parks Canada underwater archaeologists have confirmed that a plane they discovered in the deep waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence is the wreckage of an American World War II aircraft accidentally downed in 1942.

The plane, a U.S. Army Air Force PB-5A, was lost in rough weather 67 years ago near the village of Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan in Quebec.

Only four of the nine crew members managed to escape the sinking craft and were rescued by local villagers.

"The presence of the American soldiers in the area was a very positive thing for them. . . They have very good memories of that, so for them, to have that plane found, it was very important."

The dives, which focused on visual inspection from outside the plane, found the fuselage in one piece and the plane in good condition. There is a possibility that human remains may be recovered, and the findings have been shared with U.S. officials.

"We will continue working with the United States to determine the following steps to hopefully be able to repatriate the lost soldiers. In the meantime, we will work closely with all the relevant authorities to ensure the site is protected," said Jim Prentice, federal Environment Minister and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, in a news release.

Known as the "Catalina," the



'FLYING BOAT': An aircraft similar to the sunken U.S. Army Air Force plane found in the St. Lawrence River near the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve in Quebec. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE

PB-5A was an amphibious aircraft—a "flying boat" able to take off from and land on both land and water.

"We were looking for shipwreck stories and the people told us about a ship that went down. This was very important local history. There had been an American base there from 1942 to 1949," said Marc-André Bernier, Parks Canada's chief of underwater archaeology.

Mr. Bernier directed the dives that involved six of the agency's seven underwater archaeologists.

"We especially looked for the plane and found it. We used historical data but also the testimonies of the witnesses," he said.

Although none of the rescuers are still alive, about 10 people who witnessed the accident on November 2, 1942, at about 6 p.m., are still living. They ranged between 11 and 25 years of age at the time.

The U.S. built a series of airfields in eastern Canada in 1941 and 1942 to ferry aircraft to Allied air forces in Europe. The Longue-Pointe-de-Mingan airport was part of this strategic air corridor, serviced by the Catalina until it foundered following two failed take-off attempts amid two-metre-high waves.

A heavy wave hit the plane and opened a large leak in the nose wheel well. Water quickly filled the cockpit as the front of the plane sank. Four crew members escaped through the side windows and were rescued by local villagers in small rowboats, but there was no sign of the other five crewmen.

Everyone in the village gathered on the beach the day the accident occurred, and the story has been passed down through the generations.

The witnesses have a clear memory of the event and the plane, said Mr. Bernier, adding

that the locals are "very, very happy and touched" that the plane was found.

"The presence of the American soldiers in the area was a very positive thing for them. . . They have very good memories of that, so for them, to have that plane found, it was very important."

Looking in the openings of the sunken craft, the archaeologists saw a great deal of sand core. They believe this may have preserved the plane's contents, which could include human remains and possibly personal possessions.

The next step is for the U.S. to assess the findings and decide on subsequent action, with the objective of repatriating the soldiers.

The archaeologists hope to be able to do the excavation under water, rather than raising the plane to the surface, "but we're looking at all possibilities," Mr. Bernier said.

B.C. tourist town rallies to stop toxic waste plant

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Richard White, a spokesman for a group of local property owners, says locals fear that if the plant goes ahead, Christina Lake's currently thriving tourism industry, on which the town depends, could suffer.

"Ninety-five percent of the local industry is based on the service industry, to service the resort and the tourist areas. If something like this comes in it could absolutely devastate what we have in place now, and what we all hold so dear and so close to our hearts. It could ruin the whole area."

Over 400 people—including about 40 from south of the border—attended a meeting on the issue last Thursday, at which experts spoke of the downside of petroleum waste-to-energy plants and their adverse effects on human health and the environment.

White says the proposed site sits on an aquifer that not only supplies water locally but also to the town of Laurier in Washington State. Residents are concerned that a toxic spill could contaminate the aquifer, while the high water usage needed for the hazardous waste recycling process could deplete the water supply.

The waste, consisting of toxic, volatile chemicals, would be transported by rail and road, which poses the risk of accidental spills. In addition, the site is located adjacent to private properties, he says.

"The local people would be impacted by 24 hour-a-day operations, seven days a week."

In a submission to the regional district, Aquilini Renewable Energy said it would build a "world class" facility modelled on European designs that would produce no odours, keep noise to "an acceptable level," and cleanly recycle the wastes into reusable alternative fuel while maintaining "the highest operational and environmental standards."

"Aquilini Renewable Energy is committed to the long term



Christina Lake facing south toward the site of a proposed gasification waste-to-energy plant. STEPHEN ACRES

sustainability of the environment and the health and welfare of its community, province, and country," wrote company president John Negrin.

Aquilini also said the plant would provide local employment and boost the tax base.

David Tambellini, whose father's family settled in Christina Lake almost 100 years ago, says that while he's all for new industry and more jobs, a petroleum recycling plant is simply wrong for the area. He believes the risks involved far outweigh any benefits the plant might bring.

"We'd be sacrificing one economy for a dubious other one, and once we sacrifice that economy that's based on our clean air and water reputation, it's gone forever—it's not something we could get back. It's not worth the price on our environment, health, and economy."

Tambellini notes that the only other gasification plant of this type operating in Canada, the Swan Hills Treatment Centre located 240 km north of Edmonton, has a "horrible track record."

Over the years, the controversial Swan Hills plant has been plagued with spills and leaks, as well as small "fugitive" releases of over ten times the legal

limit. In 1996, the plant's operator was fined for an accident that sprayed PCBs, dioxins, and furans—some of the most toxic chemicals in existence—into the air.

According to a study by the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, gasification plants' air emissions include carbon monoxide, particulate matter, methane, ammonia, dioxins and furans, and the heavy metals cadmium and mercury, among many others.

These contaminants, many of which are emitted in the form of minuscule nano-particles, would pose a problem for Christina Lake, nestled as it is in a valley surrounded by mountains, says Tambellini.

"Given the prevailing wind patterns, these particles will accumulate at the north end of our lake. There's sort of a funnel when the wind blows from the south and it develops a bit of inversion, especially in the winter, and there would be no place for them to go but into the water or into the land around the lake."

The City of Port Moody recently rejected a similar industry, stating that "any waste-to-energy technology must prove itself to be significantly more refined and stable than its prede-

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cessors, and to meet acceptable emission targets, before being implemented on a production scale in our region."

As well as health and environmental concerns, Tambellini says the locals are worried about the plant's impact on property values.

"Who'd want to retire here or buy a place if they knew it had a gasification plant?"

White says a petition in circulation opposing the plant currently has 1,700 signatures and counting. He estimates that 85 percent of the town's residents are against the proposal.

Of the 13 regional directors who will vote on whether to amend the zoning to allow the plant, only one lives in Christina Lake. The vote is expected to take place after a presentation by Aquilini toward the end of the year.

"We're keeping our fingers crossed that politicians will come to their senses and see what a preposterous proposal this whole thing is," says Tambellini.

Nation Briefs

Liberals slip in Quebec but still strong

OTTAWA (Reuters)—The Liberal Party, which is considering toppling the Conservative government, is neck and neck with separatists in the key battleground of Quebec, but has slipped markedly since June.

A CROP poll published on Wednesday showed the federal Liberals tied with the separatist Bloc Quebecois at 30 percent support. That's 6 points more than the Liberals won in last October's federal election, but 5 points less than in June.

The Conservatives have gained 4 points since June in the province, but are 5 points below their October result.

If the poll results were borne out in an election, the Liberals would probably pick up a small number of seats from the Bloc Quebecois.

The Liberals and the other opposition parties are deciding whether to try to force an early election, and opinion polls always weigh heavily in their decisions.

Nationally, most polls show the Liberals neck and neck with the Conservatives, although one survey released on Monday had the Conservatives 11 points ahead.

'Flashpoint' leads Geminis

TORONTO (Hollywood Reporter)—The Canadian police drama "Flashpoint" collared a record 19 nominations on Tuesday at the Geminis, Canada's television awards.

The CTV show, which airs on CBS in the United States, landed best actor nominations for leads Hugh Dillon and Enrico Colantoni, and a best actress nod for Amy Jo Johnson. It also took four of the five best guest actor nods and three of the five nominations for guest actress.

It will compete for best drama alongside the CBC and Showtime's "The Tudors," the CBC and Ion Television's "The Border," the CBC's "Being Erica," and "ZOS: Zone of Separation," an eight-part war drama on pay TV channels the Movie Network and Movie Central.

The best comedy category overlooked the CBC's "Little Mosque on the Prairie" for the third year running and instead nominated perennials like the CBC's "Rick Mercer Report" and "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" in addition to FX's "Trestles."

And the best Canadian reality TV series competition includes local versions of formats, including "Dragons' Den," "Project Runway Canada" and "The Week the Women Went."

The bulk of the 99 awards will be given out by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television during industry dinners in Toronto on October 19 and 20. The main awards will be presented in Calgary on November 14, during a live telecast on Global Television and Showcase networks.

Tropical Storm Danny churns through Atlantic

MIAMI (Reuters)—Tropical Storm Danny formed in the Atlantic Ocean east of the Bahamas on Wednesday and set a course that could take it near the northeastern U.S. states and Canada as a hurricane by the weekend.

The fourth tropical storm of the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season posed no foreseeable threat to the Gulf of Mexico oil patch and on its most likely track was expected to stay well out to sea for the next few days, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center.

Danny's first approach to land was likely to come early Saturday, when it would be off the vulnerable coastal islands of North Carolina.

By early Sunday, Danny was expected to be near the U.S.-Canada border between Maine and New Brunswick.

The Atlantic provinces, drenched over the weekend by Hurricane Bill, looks to be a target again. Danny's expected track would take it farther to the west than Bill, putting New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador all in the danger zone.

4 PUZZLES PEACE

Guess the hidden saying, phrase or word(s) suggested by the graphic below



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