

Flaherty moves ahead with controversial regulator

By **MATTHEW LITTLE**
Epoch Times Staff

PARLIAMENT HILL, Ottawa—Finance Minister Jim Flaherty released his proposed Canadian Securities Act for review on Wednesday, taking a step forward on a plan for a national securities regulator—a move embraced by some provinces, denounced by others.

Flaherty's act calls for a national regulator to replace the 13 provincial and territorial regulators currently in place. Under the new plan, a company seeking investment would only need approval from the national regulator to pursue investment across the country, rather than gaining approval from each provincial regulator as is the case now.

Pundits are describing the act as Flaherty's legacy legislation, and it has gained tacit approval from Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff. While Ontario and most other provinces have embraced it, both Alberta and Quebec object, saying the new regulator usurps provincial jurisdiction.

To address that, Flaherty has referred his proposed legislation to the Supreme Court of Canada, which could take up to two years to rule whether it is constitutional. In the meantime, the government has already been working to bring provincial regulators together in preparation for a national regime.

"The idea of a national securities regulator is not new, it goes back at least as far as 1935," Flaherty told reporters in announcing the legislation.

"Over the years, it seems that almost every generation has taken up the idea," he said, adding that experts, international organizations, and others have supported it as an



Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced legislation for a new national securities regulator in Ottawa on May 26, 2010. PMO

improvement over the "Balkanized system" currently in place.

"However, in each case, jurisdictional concerns have prevented progress and maintained the status quo."

Flaherty said a new system will save fees and better protect investors. It will also make it easier for police to investigate fraudsters.

"In today's world of interconnected capital markets, where investors can move billions of dollars at the click of a mouse, we need to lower barriers, not multiply them."

Opposition in Quebec has been particularly intense where a coal-

ition of business and government has spoken out against the plan, calling it a power grab that could lead to an exodus of business from the province.

Flaherty says it is an important step in protecting ordinary Canadians from investment fraudsters like Earl Jones.

Jones, a Montreal financial adviser sentenced to 11 years in prison last February, cost many of his victims their life savings with a \$50 million Ponzi scheme that returned none of its investments.

"Those who commit securities fraud will face a tougher, more comprehensive regime. No more

falling through the cracks," Flaherty said.

He noted that Canada remains the only industrialized country without a national regulator.

"International organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have identified this key weakness," he said.

While he maintains that provinces will have the option to join or remain independent of the new regulator, critics argue that business will flock to the new regime for its cost savings and simplicity.

Big buzz around urban beekeeping

Cities across North America becoming hives of activity

By **JOAN DELANEY**
Epoch Times Staff

By installing two bee hives on the roof of its opera house in Toronto last week, the Canadian Opera Company has become the latest to join the growing trend of urban beekeeping.

"The planet is losing honeybees at an alarming rate and we are happy to provide a place for them atop our opera house," says COC's general director Alexander Neef.

"More than anything, we wanted to take one small step towards helping the bee population recover its numbers. It's completely vital to the future of the planet."

Once the colony becomes established, each hive will have about 60,000 bees producing a bounty of 25 to 30 kg of honey annually.

Toronto's luxury Fairmont Royal York Hotel has six bee hives on its 13th floor rooftop terrace, supplementing the hotel's herb garden and providing fresh, unpasteurised honey for its nine restaurants. The hotel, which has won awards for its honey, is one of eight Fairmont inns around the world that keep rooftops apiaries.

The Toronto Beekeepers Co-operative manages the Royal York hives as well as several others throughout the city. Catherine Henderson, the co-op's communications coordinator, says beekeeping is becoming increasingly popular in urban areas across Canada and the United States.

"It's catching on in a very big way. We actually have requests every day from people who would like to join our co-op. There's a huge amount of interest currently in urban agriculture."

One of the reasons for the growing beekeeping phenomenon is concern over Colony Collapse Disorder, a mysterious disease that has caused the disappearance of large numbers of honeybees in many countries.

"There's much more awareness now of the importance of pollinators and how many of our food crops are dependent on honeybees specifically," says Henderson, adding that native pollinators are under threat as well. Honeybees originated in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Another factor is the rise of movements like the 100-Mile Diet and a growing interest in urban farming in general.

Ontario's Bees Act makes it illegal to keep bees within 30 metres of a residential property line. However, that's not the case in Metro Vancouver where most municipalities allow residents to keep honeybees on their property.

Some of Vancouver's most famous hives are located at Science World, the VanDusen Botanical Gardens, the University of British Columbia, and Vancouver City Hall and Convention

Centre.

Beekeeping became legal in New York City in March, much to the delight of the hundreds of residents who had been keeping bees in violation of the city's health code. San Francisco has an abundance of apiaries, mostly on condo and apartment rooftops. The South Lawn of the White House boasts an apiary, as do Chicago's City Hall, the Paris Opera House, and London's upscale food emporium Fortnum & Mason.

"They've had bees on the Paris Opera House for many, many years," says Henderson. "Beekeeping in Europe has always been very popular. In fact, a lot of the people in some of the beekeeping associations here come from families there that have kept bees for generations."

Honeybees in the downtown area help proliferate thousands of flowers, trees, and rooftop and balcony gardens in the surrounding urban area. They help diversify the types of species of bees and plants that currently exist, which in turn strengthens the growth of urban bee populations.

Because of the higher temperatures in cities, bees remain more active for longer periods. Another boon for the health of urban honeybees is the fact that fewer pesticides are used in cities now, notes Henderson.

"A lot of major centres, such as Toronto, have banned the use of lawn chemicals and pesticide spraying for domestic purposes, and a lot of them have also stopped using pesticides in their parks and things like that, so there is a much better forage in the city, in some ways, than in rural areas, because there aren't any pesticides."

It costs about \$600 per hive, including all the necessary equipment, to get set up in beekeeping. Medications, such as that needed for mites, are extra. The all-important queen bees, which have a lifespan of approximately two years, cost around \$30 each.

"It is not unusual to get 100 pounds of honey from a single hive," says Henderson. "One family could do very well with that and supply lots of their friends as well."



Beekeeper Fred Davis holds a frame from one of the hives that were recently installed on the roof of the Canadian Opera Company's home at Toronto's Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts. CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY

Government and Parliament again stand off over who has the power

PARLIAMENT CONTINUED FROM P1
In explaining the decision, Mr. Hill said these staffers acted on behalf of ministers and that it should be the ministers themselves who appear.

"They bring to us many talents, and I expect for many of them, when they accepted their jobs, they never imagined that one of the skills required was to stand up to the interrogation of a bitterly partisan parliamentary committee," said Mr. Hill.

But in the current matter before the committee, that responsible minister would be the prime minister who, according to tradition, is not called to testify before committees.

This left many of the opposition MPs, particularly Liberal MP and former solicitor general Wayne Easter, visibly upset.

In one of the most charged exchanges, Mr. Easter said Mr. Baird's appearance before the committee represented the kind of "systematic political interference" the committee was investigating.

Mr. Baird countered that it was ministers who must be held accountable and that it was unfair for committees, which can often run roughshod over witnesses, to call political staffers to testify.

"We accept ministerial account-

ability. The days where you call in 25-year-old young people before this committee and beat up staff who can't defend themselves are over, Mr. Easter. ... If you have any questions about the matter that's before the committee, I'm here and prepared to respond."

Mr. Easter countered that Soudas is an experienced political hand, able to handle himself.

"He's more of a spokesman than our ministers of the Crown. We see more of the PMO through Dimitri Soudas than we do of ministers that have ministerial responsibility in this government. If he can be the spokesman, don't try to say he's a 25-year-old being intimidated by this committee."

"You're affronting parliamentary democracy by your appearance here today when the committee has invited Dimitri Soudas," accused Mr. Easter.

"I understand you're making a mockery of Parliament," countered Mr. Baird.

Mr. Baird never finished reading the one-page statement he had brought to committee after being interrupted by Liberal MP and committee chair Paul Szabo. Mr. Szabo objected to the content of Mr. Baird's statement which focused on the issue of ministerial

responsibility rather than access to information.

The committee spent the majority of its time debating two motions over whether to suspend Mr. Baird's testimony, which it ultimately did. Speaking during the debate of the second motion, NDP MP Bill Siksay said there was no point continuing because Baird had none of the answers they were looking for from Mr. Soudas.

"It is very clear that the Minister of Transport has no direct supervisory responsibility for Mr. Soudas. I can't imagine that he has knowledge of his day-to-day activities. I can't even imagine that he's been briefed about Mr. Soudas' activities in any detail that would be helpful to this committee, and certainly he hasn't provided any evidence that he is willing to do that or has been briefed on that," Mr. Siksay said.

Mr. Siksay dismissed Mr. Baird's suggestion that as a senior minister in the government, he shared a collective responsibility for all the government's actions.

"I don't know what the notion of collective responsibility is that the minister has mentioned this morning. It seems to me that ministers have specific responsibility for their departments, and I can't believe we're going to get into a situation

where we can ask any minister any question about the conduct of any department. It seems we are going down a very strange path."

After suspending Mr. Baird's testimony, the committee granted Mr. Szabo the authority to issue a summons for any of the other listed witnesses if they refused an invitation before committee. Parliamentary committees have a level of authority not unlike a court of law, including the ability to issue subpoenas to compel reluctant witnesses to testify.

Mr. Siksay said he would introduce a motion in the next meeting of the committee to have a summons issued for Mr. Soudas.

Speaking to reporters later that day, Liberal MP Bob Rae said the tussle in committee was going to put the government back at odds with parliament over the rights of MPs.

"The government has created its own problem. The committee is supposed to be master of its own affairs. The speaker told us in his ruling at the end of April that the House could determine what documents it would see. The House can also determine which witnesses it will see. So once again, the government is setting us on a collision course."

Anti-anxiety drugs used long term in B.C. despite warnings, says study

By **PAULA MASON**
Epoch Times Staff

Despite warnings of health risks involved with long-term use, drugs to treat anxiety and sleep disorders continue to be prescribed for extended periods to British Columbia patients, according to a new study.

Conducted by researchers at the University of British Columbia's Centre for Health Services and Policy Research (CHSPR), the study is the first of its kind to examine the use of benzodiazepines such as Xanax and Ativan for an entire population over time.

It's also the first to pinpoint the socio-economic characteristics associated with long-term users of such drugs.

Results show that seniors and low-

income earners are more likely to be long-term users of benzodiazepines, with rates remaining steady over a 10-year period. Meanwhile, use among the middle-aged population—baby boomers—has increased.

Problems associated with long-term use (more than 100 days in a year) can include dependence and tolerance, cognitive impairment, and an increased risk of falls in the elderly.

"Given the potential for dependence and harms associated with these drugs, they are recommended to be used sparingly for short periods," Colleen Cunningham, CHSPR researcher and lead author of the study said in a press release.

"However, our study suggests that a significant number of British Columbians—especially the elderly who suffer greater health risks

from falls—are using them for long periods."

Benzodiazepines are one of the most commonly prescribed types of neurological drugs in developed countries.

The researchers compared health records of B.C. residents from 1996 and 2006. Of the 4.9 percent of the overall B.C. population who were given short-term benzodiazepine prescriptions in 2006 and the 3.5 percent who were given long-term prescriptions, the study found:

- Nearly half of long-term users were over 65, and more than a quarter were 75 or older.
- Two out of three were women, both for short- and long-term use
- Long-term users were more likely to be in the lowest income bracket than short-term or non-users.

The study found that long-term use in 2006 was associated with early use—half of all 2006 long-term users had been prescribed benzodiazepines in 1996.

The researchers are calling for prescribing practices and policies that target populations younger than those conventionally studied (i.e. under age 65) to reduce rates of long-term use.

CORRECTION: In the article, "Question period antics push MP to call for reform" published in the May 20-26 edition, Conservative MP Michael Chong was mistakenly referred to as an NDP MP in one instance. The Epoch Times regrets the error.

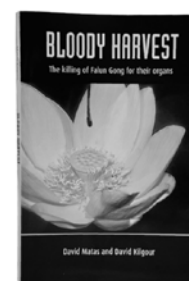
At Vancouver Public Library



Nobel Peace Prize Nominee

David Matas

signing the book **Bloody Harvest:**
The killing of Falun Gong for their organs



Thursday
June 3

7:30pm - 9:00pm
Peter Kaye Room,
350 West Georgia St
Vancouver, BC

"It's important for more attention to be paid to this issue so that every person is aware that the communist regime in China is engaged in this type of ghoulish crime."

- U.S. Representative Dana Rohrabacher

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