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A new Governor General

by BRIAN LOCKHART

The Prime Minister has announced that Mary Simon will be the new Governor General of Canada.

I certainly hope he has done his homework this time.

After the disastrous tenure of former GG, Julie Payette, we need someone in that office who can act in an official capacity with dignity and represent the nation in an honourable fashion.

Payette resigned in January of 2021. She is only the second person to resign the office ? the first being Romeo LeBlanc, who resigned for health reasons.

The difference is LeBlanc voluntarily resigned when he realized his failing health would not allow him to continue in the post while doing the job to his best ability.

Payette resigned in disgrace. She should have never been appointed to the role in the first place.

When someone is appointed to this type of position, part of the deal is the vetting process which determines if they are suitable for the role. This was clearly not done in the case of Payette.

She had to resign after it was revealed she had created a toxic work place at Rideau Hall including verbally abusing employees including ?yelling, screaming, aggressive conduct, and making demeaning comments and public humiliation.', She spent ridiculous amounts of money on frivolous projects and others that never came to fruition.

It was so bad that several long-term employees in the GG's office had to quit their job rather than face daily abuse.

On top of all that, she just didn't step up to do the job.

It wouldn't have taken a lot of investigation to determine she wasn't the right person for the position. Payette has a history of being an absolute jerk and not being able to get along with people.

That's not a good start for someone who is expected to be a public figure.

She had already been forced to leave the Canadian Olympic Committee in 2017 after internal investigations determined mistreatment of her staff including verbal harassment. The same behaviour occurred when she was chief operating officer at the Montreal Science Centre.

Apparently, it also got physical when she was arrested and charged with second degree assault in Maryland, in 2011 ? her husband was reportedly the one who got on her wrong side in that case.

A proper vetting process would have revealed that none of her previous employers would have either recommended her or given a positive reference.

That would be rather important when appointing someone to a high office.

After all this and failing at the job, Payette will receive a full pension, and an annual expense account that is worth around six times more than the average person makes in a year.

And we all pay for it.

I'm sure the P.M. took a different approach when selecting this new Governor General. No doubt his inner council of advisors strongly recommended he follow proper protocol and not a ?shoot from the hip' approach by pulling a name from a hat.

Mary Simon will be the first Indigenous person to serve in the role as GG.

A quick look at her resume indicates she is more suitable than her predecessor in a prominent public position.

She is the former Canadian ambassador to Denmark, and the Canadian ambassador for circumpolar affairs.

As a diplomat, she has the experience of dealing with people in various levels of society. You won't last long in a diplomatic role if you don't know how to deal with people.

As an Indigenous person, the posting may offer some reconciliation across the nation.

A lot of people think the position of Governor General should just be eliminated.

It is really just a ceremonial job with no real power. Most people aren't really sure what the job entails other than seeing the occasional medal ceremony at Rideau Hall on some obscure TV channel and none of us have a say in who will be appointed to the position.

I've met many politicians in my life including two prime ministers, but never once have I been at an event where it was announced the GG was going to be there.

If we are going to maintain this ceremonial role, which costs a lot of taxpayer money, we deserve to have someone in the position who will fulfill the obligations of the post and behave with the dignity and responsibility that should be inherent with the role of Governor General.