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Wedge Issue

Editorial

The Trudeau Liberals love wedge issues and, with their reputation in tatters and the prime minister no longer flying high, they need wedge issues now more than ever.

They need divisive politics.

Now, Conservative leader Andrew Scheer has stated repeatedly that his government would not resuscitate the polarizing issue of abortion, but this did not stop the prime minister from using U.S. Vice President Mike Pence's visit to Ottawa to use him like a cheap prop.

Trudeau's reason, or excuse, was that a number of states recently adopted strict anti-abortion laws, and he wanted to get his digs in on Scheer and suspect members of the conservative movement, despite knowing the American vice president is proudly pro-life and a devoutly religious man.

It mattered not to Trudeau, as well, that abortion is a state-controlled issue in America and that Pence has absolutely nothing to do with the laws that states pass.

He wanted his wedge issue.

Pence was in Ottawa to talk about the upcoming ratification of the USMCA free-trade agreement, also known as NAFTA 2.0, and not to be ambushed by Trudeau on the re-heated issue of abortion.

Pence, caught off guard at being so undiplomatically used, brought up his pro-life credentials and let it drop there,

Despite Scheer saying time and time again that his party will not resurrect the abortion debate, and will not allow some backbench MP to sneak it onto the agenda, Trudeau is relentless in making abortion a divisive wedge issue.

But it won't work.

Not even Liberal MPs truly believe that Scheer, once respected so widely that he was elected to a long run as Speaker of the Commons, believe there is a Mr. Hyde lurking within Scheer's Dr. Jekyll who will suddenly jump out and bring abortion back into politics.

It's a no-win for anyone.

Pence came to Ottawa in peace. It was essentially a courtesy visit where he honored Trudeau by saying he drove a ?hard bargain? while negotiating the USMCA, and then he talked of his intent to ?reaffirm a successful partnership? between the U.S. and Canada.

He was there to mend political fences, too, because it is no secret that U.S. President Donald Trump had recently said some fairly nasty things about Trudeau, such as last year's assertion that Trudeau is ?weak and dishonest.?

The last thing Pence expected, therefore, was the word ?abortion? to pop out of Trudeau's mouth.

He was there is talk trade.

Nonetheless, Trudeau saw that the embarrassment of his high-profile guest was in his best electoral interests.

The reasons, of course, are innumerable, He is failing miserably in the polls. There is LavScam, the politically-motivated trial of Vice-Admiral Mark Norman. There are all his broken promises, from electoral reform to a balanced budget by the end of this year.

Yes, Trudeau needed a wedge issue, and badly.

So he used an American vice president as a foil.

It was unconscionable.