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Senator Don Plett “had a great discussion...with Feisal Somji, Carla Devlin, Paityn Devlin, from Sio Silica, and Micheal Kowalson.” Oct 23, 2024

Plett is a long time conservative from Landmark, MB. He managed Vic Toews Canadian Alliance campaign in 2000, aided in the merger of the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Party of Canada to form the Conservative Party of Canada and in 2003, became its president. 2009, former PM Stephen Harper appointed him to the Senate. As Senate leader of the opposition, Plett is an ex officio member on all Senate Committees except Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Senators and the Audit and Oversight committees. At 75, Plett’s Senate term ends May 14, 2025.

Some examples of Plett’s Senate career - engaged in stall tactics and other troubling acts to kill Bill S-203 that would end whale/dolphin captivity despite overwhelming public support and abundant scientific research; objected to suspending 3 fellow senators over inappropriately claimed expenses; defended fellow Conservative senator Lynn Beyak’s support of residential schools; questioned whether Sen. McCallum’s eagle fan was a forbidden prop; co-signed an order barring international travel during the pandemic and then vacationed in Mexico; berated three female senators in a threatening manner, later apologized, “I lost my cool”.

Micheal Kowalson ran unsuccessfully in the 2010 Wpg general election, Queen Diamond Jubilee Medal recipient(2012), Municipal Board member(2018), appointed to the Pallister government’s Manager Stakeholder Relations April 2019 and promoted to Director Jan 2020. His wife was reappointed in 2020 to the Board of the College of Physiotherapists of Manitoba. Kowalson was required to remit his salary when the MB Liberal Party exposed he ran former Wpg city councillor, and good friend, Marty Morantz’s 2019 federal campaign on the public dime. Morantz, a member of the Standing Committee on Finance, was lobbied by Sio Silica in 2023. Kowalson, was also present at his friend Charles Adler’s first sitting as a Senator. Adler’s appointment “offended and disappointed” The Assembly of MB Chiefs. As of April 2024, Kowalson was promoted to Senior Advisor at Health Canada from Regional Program Development Advisor for Indigenous Services Canada.

According to Paityn Devlin’s LinkedIn account, she started working as “marketing manager” for Sio Silica in Sept 2024 and is a Board Member of the Conservative Party of Canada and Director of Youth Services. In June 2024, same month her mother, East St Paul Mayor, Carla Devlin, started working for Sio, she started as a “client relationship specialist” with Wellington-Altus, an investment firm connected to Conservative Party faithful. (See OLS posts Aug 4, 2024, Sept 13, 2023)

Feisal Somji is President and Chief Executive Officer of Sio Silica Corp. Sometime after April 16, 2024, Mayor Carla Devlin decided not to run for the MB Conservative Party leadership and instead became Somji's Vice President. Somji, explained that Devlin is "our person in Manitoba now. She's helping us with all aspects and all fronts of communication and planning and hopefully in the future, into operations."(CBC Aug 8, 2024). Somji added "We truly believe in our extraction process. We don't believe it's harmful. I just don't think we explained it well."

Sio Silica's extraction process is novel, high risk, causes irreparable geological damage and arguably unlawful per MB Regulations. Minister of Environment Climate Change, Tracy Schmidt, ruled that "the worst-case scenarios would be absolutely devastating, as more than 100,000 Manitobans source their drinking water from these aquifers." Sio Silica cannot explain this away.

Hiring a politician, her daughter and making the rounds is just a public relations exercise and does not address the fundamental flaws in its project that make it unsafe and irredeemable.

Image: Senator Don Plett instagram account

"Brian Pallister's Deputy Premier, his Finance Minister, a City Councillor, a Conservative candidate for MP and countless PC staffers all knew what Kowalson was doing. Every single one of them should have known he was not supposed to be there in that role," said Lamont. "This is an outrageous abuse of public trust and public funds. An apology isn't enough. We need an investigation." <https://www.manitobaliberals.ca/post/video-and-email-list-show-who-s-who-of-pcs-cpc-knew-of-senior-bureaucrat-s-political-involvement>

Senator Mary Jane McCallum was provided with an eagle fan by elders and knowledge keepers when she spoke on Bill C-15, an Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Senator McCallum stated "Colleagues, to be clear, the underlying conflict has always been about land and resources, including the interpretation of the state regarding UNDRIP...Silence — discouraging Canadians from advocating for amendments that would strengthen this bill and then vilifying those who would bring them forward. Behaviours like these are colonizing and not those of allies...I believe there is much work to be done on this bill and I am willing to sit into July to study this responsibly." When McCallum tried to introduce amendments that would improve the Bill, Plett rose on a point of order that the eagle fan was a prop and not allowed in the Red Chamber.
(p.1792) https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/sen/Y3-432-48-eng.pdf