

Review by the Radio-Canada Ombudsman of a complaint concerning the accuracy of various points in the article “Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme” posted on June 3, 2020, to the Radio Canada International site (RCInet.ca).

FOREWORD

This case involves the English-language news article posted to the Radio Canada international website (RCInet.ca) under the title “[Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme](#)”. The complaint, the responses by RCI, and the many supporting documents submitted by each party were also written in English. Complaints concerning RCI, regardless of broadcast language, are the purview of the CBC/Radio-Canada French Services Ombudsman; that is why I have reviewed them. This review was initially written in French before being translated into English. [Both versions are posted](#) on the Ombudsman’s web site.

COMPLAINT

On August 24, 2020, Robert Muir filed a complaint about an article posted on June 3, 2020, to the Radio Canada International site (RCInet.ca) under the title “[Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme](#)”; the reason he gave was that it contained a number of inaccuracies.

The complainant stated that, among other errors, the article by journalist Marc Montgomery, based on a study from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) published in the U.S. scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, drew a conclusion that did not appear in the study, namely that it “notes a marked increase in claims from extreme weather damage in Canada.” According to Mr. Muir, the study does not refer to insurance claims in Canada, nor does it mention a “marked increase” in trends and does not contain the words “extreme weather.”

Lastly, Mr. Muir noted that the article indicated that climate change has made rainfall events more frequent and more severe, which is a conclusion that is not supported by the cited study. For that reason, he believes that the article should be corrected in order “to refer to actual official extreme weather data as opposed to confusing that with predictions of 1–5 day rain in the simulation models in the cited report.”

To fully understand this complaint, it is important to specify that Mr. Muir first contacted Radio Canada International (RCI) directly on June 3, 2020, which is the day that the article was originally published, to report that it contained multiple inaccuracies. He did so by using the form allowing online users to point out typos or factual errors. Then, on June 7, 2020, Mr. Muir wrote directly to journalist Marc Montgomery and RCI Chief Editor Soleiman Mellali to give them additional explanations of a technical nature about hydrology and engineering for municipal surface water drainage infrastructures in support of some of his requests for corrections. That same day, he also wrote directly to RCI, once again using the form for typos and errors to report another inaccuracy in the article, which specified that

Canada's Changing Climate Report (2019) was produced by the National Research Council Canada rather than Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Following those comments, the article was modified for the first time on June 9, 2020, but Mr. Muir found another reason to be dissatisfied.

The main change made to the article was in the title. In the first version, the title was "Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain and weather extremes." The corrected version read as follows: "Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme." The correction was accompanied by this explanatory note:

The title has been very slightly modified to specify "rain" at the suggestion of ECCC scientist Xuebin Zhang who also suggested noting human activity as fossil fuel burning and development onto green spaces.

Mr. Muir asserted that it was in fact he who had suggested correcting the title. He said that he had contacted Dr. Zhang to ask if he had made the same recommendation, and he summarized their discussion as follows:

He has informed me directly in writing that he did not contact you to make that suggestion but was in fact only contacted to confirm my suggestion to identify "rain" instead of "weather" (...). [Complainant's underlining]

According to the complainant, given that it was not Dr. Zhang who suggested the correction, the text should be modified for the sake of accuracy to give credit to Mr. Muir for having made the suggestion.

As required under the [procedure](#), I began by asking RCI management to respond to the complainant.

RADIO-CANADA'S RESPONSE

In his response to Mr. Muir on September 21, 2020, Pierre Champoux, Director, Digital Operations and Community Relations, Radio-Canada News and Current Affairs, mentioned that the article specified in the complaint was not a scientific article per se. He wrote:

We respect your curiosity as a scientist, but this article by Marc Montgomery is intended for a wide audience and not only for experts.

Having said that, Mr. Champoux acknowledged that the original article contained "some inaccuracies or errors, which we have now corrected." Indeed, that same day (September 21), a new change was made, and the following explanatory note was added:

A sentence regarding damage claims from extreme weather mistakenly referred to another study than the one cited here and as such has been removed.

That change was made after Mr. Muir remarked that the article seemed to indicate that the ECCC study, published in a U.S. periodical, discussed the increase in (insurance) claims for damage caused by extreme weather in Canada, whereas the study did not actually do so. Mr. Champoux explained in his reply that the information originated instead from [Canada's Changing Climate Report \(2019\)](#). Radio-Canada stated that "this is a bona fide error that our reporter readily acknowledges" and "this passage has been corrected and a note added to the article for the sake of transparency." Lastly, in that regard, Mr. Champoux explained that "a hyperlink at the bottom of the text also provides access to this Natural Resources Canada study." (In fact, the link already appeared in the original version dated June 3, 2020.)

With respect to the term "extreme weather," Radio-Canada indicated that it no longer appeared in the article when referring to the ECCC study, but only in the context of the quotes attributed to Natalia Moudrak, Director of Climate Resilience at the Intact Centre. Mr. Champoux wrote:

Those are her words, not our journalist's. As journalists, it is normal to consult with experts and take their word for it.

Then, in reference to the explanatory note added on June 9, 2020 (which points out that the article's modifications, including those to its title, were based on recommendations from Xuebin Zhang, one of the authors of the ECCC study), Radio-Canada maintained that he had indeed made that suggestion in an email sent to journalist Marc Montgomery.

Mr. Champoux's reply ended with the following statement:

Mr. Muir, we agree that writing a paper on a scientific study requires rigour and precision. But you seem to have expectations that go well beyond the mandate of RCInet.ca as of the level of detail that should be reported. While our reporters are committed to Journalistic and Standard Practices at all times, they are not required to report such a study in as much detail as you may like.

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Dissatisfied with Radio-Canada's response, Mr. Muir appealed it to the Office of the Ombudsman on September 27, 2020, because the article's most critical inaccuracy had not been corrected. According to the complainant, the fundamental difference was not made between simulation models for long-term changes in extreme rainfall and actual observed changes.

Mr. Muir did not agree that he had unrealistic expectations about the level of detail in articles on that subject, as Radio-Canada had stated in its response. He wrote:

I do not wish to have more detail reported at all. My comments identify the article's very basic misrepresentation and reporting of the ECCC study. The article misreports the study's theoretical model simulations and effects on 100-year events as actual changes. That is wrong. Scientific paper rigour and precision is not required to appreciate and report the key difference between theoretical changes and actual ones for the 20- to 100-year events.

The complainant asked for corrections to be made to various excerpts from the article confounding actual weather data and theoretical model forecasts. He also maintained that a quote from Ms. Moudrak of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, which noted that episodes of extreme rainfall were the “main reason” for the increase in insurance claims, had been refuted in the ECCC report. According to Mr. Muir, in this instance journalist Marc Montgomery had failed to check diligently when citing that source’s opinion, given that the Intact Centre’s statements were the foundation of previous reviews by the Radio-Canada and CBC ombudsmen in 2019.

REVIEW

The examination of this complaint draws on three components of [CBC/Radio-Canada's Journalistic Standards and Practices \(JSP\)](#), starting with the principle of accuracy:

Accuracy

We seek out the truth in all matters of public interest. We invest our time and our skills to learn, understand and clearly explain the facts to our audience.

The production techniques we use serve to present the content in a clear and accessible manner.

It is also necessary to refer to the JSP principles concerning journalists’ responsibilities following interviews, and the principles applicable to corrections and clarifications:

Interviews / Responsibility and Accountability Related to Interviews

CBC takes responsibility for the consequences of its decision to publish a person’s statements in the context it chooses. When we present a person’s statements in support of our reporting of facts, we ensure that the statements have been diligently checked. In the case of comments made by a person expressing an honest opinion, we ensure that the opinion is grounded in facts bearing on a matter of public interest.

The interviewee also takes responsibility for his or her statement. As a general rule, we offer the interviewee no immunity or protection from the consequences of publication of the statements we gather.

Corrections and Clarifications / Principles

We make every effort to avoid errors on the air and online. In keeping with principles of accuracy, integrity and fairness, we correct a significant error when we have been able to establish that one has occurred. This is essential for our credibility with Canadians. When a correction is necessary, it is made promptly given the circumstances, with due regard for the reach of the published error.

The fact that a situation has evolved so that information that was accurate at the time of its publication is no longer accurate does not mean that an error was committed, but we must consider the appropriateness of updating it, taking into account its importance and impact.

In some cases, material isn’t inaccurate per se, but risks misleading the audience. In such cases we can consider publishing or airing a clarification.

The form and timing of a correction or clarification will be decided by a senior newsroom or program manager. In the most serious cases, a proposed course of action will be referred to the Director, who will among other factors consider the legal implications.

In many cases the program or platform on which the error was broadcast or published is best placed to broadcast or publish the correction. But the choice of place to broadcast or publish the correction will depend on the importance of the error and the seriousness of its consequences.

When we make corrections and clarifications online, we should include on the story page an explanatory note to the audience.

Examination of the Complaint

Background

This case seems terribly complex and full of technical details. It is a bit like taking an omelette and trying to reconstitute the eggs that went into it. Nevertheless, the eggs themselves – or in this case, the facts – are not so complicated, at least at the stage before they were blended together.

In addition, this case does not exist in a vacuum. It has a history. In January 2019, I conducted a review at the request of the same complainant, Mr. Muir, concerning an article by the same journalist, Marc Montgomery, about the same subject (the impact of climate change on extreme rainfall events) supported in part by information from the same research institute, the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation (ICCA).¹ My [review](#) titled *The dangers of refusing to admit an error, even an unintentional one* (January 28, 2019), had been very harsh towards the article and its author. Moreover, last year, my colleague Jack Nagler, who is the CBC Ombudsman, also reviewed a complaint from Mr. Muir about an article based in part on the same ECCC report and an interview with the same ICCA director cited in the present complaint. The review entitled [Assessing the Damage](#) (September 20, 2019) identified two JSP infractions, one concerning the principle of accuracy and the other concerning error corrections.

It appears that all the ingredients have been blended together again to achieve the same result. To back up my decision, I will need to explain the ins and outs of this case, which is a very painstaking task because the inaccuracies, imprecisions and errors are so numerous and intertwined. To make matters worse, the complainant contacted the journalist directly several times, and the article underwent a few modifications, some of which then became the subject of additional grievances. In keeping with my theme from earlier – this will be a hard egg to crack.

To complicate matters a little more, Marc Montgomery's article (the "RCI article") refers to an ECCC study published in the American scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*² (the "ECCC study").

¹ The ICCA is a ["long-standing partnership"](#) between the Intact insurance company and the University of Waterloo.

² The study [Human influence has intensified extreme precipitation in North America](#) was written by two ECCC experts: Megan C. Kirchmeier-Young and Xuebin Zhang.

Another “study” that is in fact [Canada’s Changing Climate Report](#) (the “ECCC report”) is also mentioned; it is attributed incorrectly to Natural Resources Canada but was actually “led by Environment and Climate Change Canada,” as specified on the report’s cover page.

I will try to be as brief as I can by starting with the allegations about the inaccuracies in the original article and I will then give an overview of the article, followed by a review of the errors that were added in the subsequent versions.

Inaccuracies in the original article

The title of the RCI article was corrected because, as Mr. Muir mentioned, the ECCC study does not confirm that “weather” is more extreme. In fact, it does not contain the word “weather”³ except in the names of a few studies listed in the footnotes. The purpose of the ECCC study was to determine whether human activity may have contributed to the increase in precipitation observed in North America over periods of one to five days. It concludes that this has been the case, as confirmed by its title, “Human influence has intensified extreme precipitation in North America.” RCI acknowledged the facts and that is why the word “weather” was removed from the original title. I believe it was an error, which is quite technical because we know that climate change is contributing to an increase in episodes of extreme heat. We also know, as stated in the ECCC study, that the changes have led to higher rainfall lasting one to five days in North America. For most citizens, that corresponds to the definition of what they understand as “weather,” regardless of whether or not the term appears as such in the document.

Later, in reference to the ECCC study, the RCI article mentions that it “also notes a marked increase in (insurance) claims from extreme weather damage in Canada.” However, nowhere does the ECCC study discuss claims in Canada other than in a footnote about a single climate event. RCI acknowledged this error and removed the problematic sentence on September 21, 2020, in a subsequent corrected version. An explanatory note was added at the end of the article: “A sentence regarding damage claims from extreme weather mistakenly referred to another study than the one cited here and as such has been removed.” In its response to the complainant, Radio-Canada stated that it was a bona fide error by the journalist and that the “other study” was *Canada’s Changing Climate Report (2019)*. But a search done in the English and French versions of that report does not corroborate that statement. In French, the words “assurance” and “réclamations” do not appear at all. In English, the words “claim” and “damage” do not appear in the document while the word “insurance” is used only once when listing the Insurance Bureau of Canada in the References section. It is concerning that in order to justify an inaccurate citation, a second one is provided while claiming that the author was acting in good faith.

I have noted another inaccuracy in the description for the link to Canada’s Changing Climate Report. It refers to Natural Resources Canada, undoubtedly because the proposed version was posted on that department’s site. However, that is not the only way to access the report, which was actually “led by Environment and Climate Change Canada,” as indicated clearly on the report’s cover page.⁴

³ In my French review, I translated the expression “rain and weather extremes” in the title by “*pluies et conditions météorologiques extrêmes*” because I believe “*conditions météorologiques*” renders the meaning of “weather” better than the word “*météo*.”

⁴ [English](#) version and [French](#) version.

I will now move on to the other points criticized by Mr. Muir in the original article, the main one being, in his opinion, that it confounds current observations with theoretical forecasts. One of the paragraphs in question is the following:

The ECCC study “shows that the so-called ‘one-in-20, 50- or 100-year’ events can be expected to occur with far greater frequency with just a 1-degree Celsius temperature increase over pre-industrial averages, an increase that has already occurred. It notes with that increase a so-called ‘100-year’ event might occur every 20 years. With a 3-C increase, such extreme events would occur with even far greater frequency.”

To me, the use of the conditional verb tense and the formulation “can be expected” clearly indicates that the article is talking about forecasts rather than actual observations of the frequency of such events. That being said, the first sentence of the RCI article states that “a new study by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) confirms what many have been saying, that climate change has made rainfall events more frequent and more severe and the changes are dominated by human activity.” This description is in keeping with the contents of the ECCC study, which states the following in its second sentence:

Observations have demonstrated increasing trends in extreme precipitation in North America, and models and theory consistently suggest continued increases with future warming.

In other words, the ECCC study noted that an increase in extreme precipitation had already been observed in North America but that, in terms of modifying their categorization according to 20-, 50- or 100-year intervals, those were only forecasts based on theoretical models for the time being. I therefore cannot agree with the complainant who, in reference to that part of the article, maintained that forecasts and observable reality were being confounded. In my opinion, the issue he is raising is not apparent at that location. It is more fundamental. It encompasses the entire article, including its layout, what is said and what is not said. Readers are left with an erroneous impression of the contents of the study being discussed.

Overview of the article

I will start by examining the layout and appearance of the [article](#) from Radio Canada International. The first thing we notice is the photo of a vehicle lifted by a powerful stream of water. The legend explains that a “sudden intense downpour in Montreal in 2011 overwhelmed the sewers causing some to turn into geysers powerful enough to lift a car.”

Below that photo is the article’s title which, after having been corrected, is: “Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme.”

The opening paragraph states that a new ECCC study “confirms what many have been saying, that climate change has made rainfall events more frequent and more severe.” Then, another photo shows a neighbourhood in Ottawa submerged under flood water. The legend says: “Residents near the Ottawa River in Cumberland, a community in Ottawa, shore up their properties against a flood in 2019. Communities all along the Ottawa River were threatened by record water levels.”

Lower down the page, a third photo shows a threatening sky pierced by a lightning bolt, with the following legend: “A sudden intense storm with a possible tornado swept through southwestern Ontario [sic] in September 2019, with record breaking rainfall and leaving broken trees and damage and many without power.”

As a whole, it creates a very strong impression that the “new study by Environment and Climate Change Canada” confirms that rainfall is increasingly extreme in Canada, especially in the southeast region of the country, because the three photos used as examples were taken in Montreal, Ottawa and southwestern Ontario. But that is not the case. As mentioned earlier, the study cited in the RCI article discusses the influence of human factors on extreme precipitation events. In terms of rainfall frequency, the study is prospective: it expects episodes of extreme rainfall to increase as and when average temperatures rise. When it mentions that observed extreme precipitation has already increased, it references a study on precipitation change in the United States.⁵ It therefore does not confirm that those extreme events have increased in Canada, as the RCI article would lead us to believe. In fact, according to [Canada’s Changing Climate Report](#), which journalist Marc Montgomery should have read because he references it in his article, current data does not show any increase in those extreme events. Here is what the report specifies on page 155:

For Canada as a whole, observational evidence of changes in extreme precipitation amounts, accumulated over periods of a day or less, is lacking.

Later, a chapter is devoted to “extreme precipitation” and the first section covers “observed changes.” The opening sentence of that section on page 168 is:

There do not appear to be detectable trends in short-duration extreme precipitation in Canada for the country as a whole based on available station data.

The ECCC report subsequently specifies that the number of days of heavy rainfall “has increased by only 2 to 3 days since 1948 at a few locations” in the country and that “the number of days with one hour total rainfall greater than 10 mm, with 24-hour total rainfall greater than 25 mm, or with 48-hour total rainfall greater than 50 mm – which could be qualified as extreme precipitation – also did not show any consistent change across the country.”

All in all, I believe the article misleads readers with respect to ECCC’s position on the frequency and severity of rainfall events by implying that the study “confirms what many have been saying,” namely that rain “becomes more extreme,” at least as far as Canada is concerned.

Moving on to the second half of the article. The first 227 words are about the ECCC study while the next 163 discuss statements by representatives of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation, a research institute of the University of Waterloo funded in part, as its name indicates, by the Intact insurance company.

⁵ D. R. Easterling et al., “Precipitation change in the United States” in *Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment*, D. J. Wuebbles et al., Eds. (US Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, 2017), vol. I, pp. 207–230.

That section of the article starts by explaining that in January 2019, Blair Feltmate, Head of the Intact Centre, had stated that the Insurance Bureau of Canada had indicated that payouts for extreme weather claims had doubled every five years since the 1980s.

Given that this article has so far implied that episodes of extreme rainfall are more frequent and more severe in Canada, this addition seems to be a way to indirectly confirm information that is actually incorrect. In and of itself, the method used – a quote from 18 months earlier by an institute head who is reporting an observation from another organization – is incongruous.

Then, the RCI article cites Natalia Moudrak, Director of Climate Resilience at the Intact Centre, who said that the ECCC study underlines the need to adopt measures to better mitigate the risks associated with climate change – for example, zoning law changes for flood plains and changes to building codes. That remark is quite relevant in light of the long-term forecasts in the ECCC study on the increase in extreme precipitation.

That being said, Mr. Muir contests the accuracy of a statement attributed to Ms. Moudrak: “Experts say the extreme weather and flooding is the main factor contributing to higher claims.” That same paragraph includes a series of other factors, such as higher property values, building onto known flood plains and building over green spaces and wetlands that help absorb rain, in order to reduce flooding risks. Since I am not a property damage expert, I cannot determine whether Ms. Moudrak’s statement is accurate and it is not my role to make that determination. However, it seems to me that her expression “extreme weather and flooding” is not limited to episodes of torrential rain as the complainant seems to have interpreted it. Wildfires, windstorms and tornados are other examples of extreme weather, and residential water damage may be caused by factors other than sudden storms. In addition, Ms. Moudrak did not say that “extreme weather and flooding” was the main factor behind insurance claims; she said it was the main contributing factor to higher claims. I do not have any data to conclude that the affirmation is incorrect.

Errors added in subsequent versions of the article

The first change made to the article was in its title. From “Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain and weather extremes,” it was adjusted to “Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme.” As I explained earlier, that is not what ECCC said, either in the study that was the basis for the Radio Canada International article nor in Canada’s Changing Climate Report.

To explain this change in the title, Radio Canada International added a note under the article on June 9. It stated:

The title has been very slightly modified to specify “rain” at the suggestion of ECCC scientist Xuebin Zhang who also suggested noting human activity as fossil fuel burning and development onto green spaces.

This note is inadequate in several respects. First, the formulation is awkward because the last part of the sentence has nothing to do with the title.

It is also inaccurate to say that the title was modified to “specify ‘rain’” because that word already appeared in the first version. When the title was modified, it was to remove the word “weather,” which was not found in the ECCC study being discussed. Second, given that readers do not have access to the original title, it is impossible for them to understand what has changed.

Third, the note seems to be trying to lessen the significance of the initial error by indicating that the title was “very slightly modified.” I searched the [Mises au point](#) (clarifications) section of the Radio-Canada News department site where the corrections made to various published or broadcast content are compiled and I did not find a similar formulation anywhere. When someone makes a mistake, they should not make excuses or minimize it: they should acknowledge it transparently with humility and make the correction without distorting the facts.

That is where the note is particularly problematic to me. It states that the correction was “at the suggestion” of ECCC scientist Xuebin Zhang, one of the two authors of the study covered by the article. It should be noted firstly that it is completely unusual to attribute a correction to anyone at all. When someone notices an error, it is verified and, if founded, it is simply corrected, with a transparent explanation of what was changed and why. In this case, verification could have been limited to rereading the contents of the study authored by Dr. Zhang, but journalist Marc Montgomery decided to contact him to check Mr. Muir’s claims in his insistent messages on June 3 and 7. Why then did the June 9 update present Dr. Zhang as the person behind the “suggestion” about correcting the title? Was that true?

Mr. Muir sent me the various emails between him and Dr. Zhang in that regard. Mr. Muir asked Dr. Zhang if he had contacted RCI or journalist Marc Montgomery to suggest to him that he modify the title of his article. Dr. Zhang’s reply dated July 5 was the following:

No, I didn’t reach out. Yes, they checked with me, upon your suggestion, and made the change.

It would be difficult to qualify all these errors, omissions, imprecisions and inaccuracies as having occurred merely by chance. From that perspective, I am afraid I would have to share the complainant’s view that journalist Marc Montgomery had decided to “not give an inch”⁶ to Mr. Muir, whose insistent and extensive criticisms may have bothered him.

Lastly, with respect to the explanatory note, I consider that it should not mention that Mr. Muir was the person who suggested the correction. As I explained above, it is neither necessary nor usual to credit anyone at all for a correction. That is not the venue for settling scores on either side.

CONCLUSION

The article “[Climate change: Environment Canada confirms rain becomes more extreme](#),” posted on June 3, 2020, to the site of Radio Canada International (RCInet.ca), and its subsequent versions contain multiple violations of [CBC/Radio-Canada’s Journalistic Standards and Practices \(JSP\)](#), primarily the principle of accuracy but also the rules on corrections and clarifications.

⁶ This is a reference to a [review of another complaint](#) from Mr. Muir concerning an article by Marc Montgomery published on January 28, 2019.

When it comes to accuracy, the JSP expects us to “seek out the truth” and “invest our time and our skills to learn, understand and clearly explain the facts.” The article failed at all these levels. The article’s errors, omissions, imprecisions and inaccuracies are so numerous that I believe it is an aggravated case of failure to comply with the JSP. Since this seems to have been a repeat offence on the same subject by journalist Marc Montgomery, I cannot hold him solely responsible. This is also an issue of inadequate editorial oversight.

Given the scope of the observed failures, I doubt it is possible to correct an article that is so flawed through and through. If Radio Canada International decides to amend it, I strongly recommend that the task be assigned to another journalist, preferably someone who has demonstrated their ability to cover environmental topics.

Moreover, I think the problems encountered cannot be attributed to the complainant’s overly high expectations in terms of technical considerations that would be incomprehensible for average readers. News stories must simplify concepts that are sometimes complex, but without distorting the meaning.

Here is a summary of the article’s main shortcomings:

The title is still problematic.

The choice of photos and the selected excerpts from the ECCC study imply that the title confirms an already observed increase in extreme weather events in Canada.

The juxtaposition of the citation from Blair Feltmate of the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation – dating from 18 months earlier – enhances that false perception.

The wording for the link to the ECCC report incorrectly credits Natural Resources Canada.

The June 9 note explaining the first changes to the article falsely and unnecessarily identifies Xuebin Zhang for the “suggestion” concerning changes to the title.

That note lacks transparency about the changes made and it lacks clarity in its formulation.

In addition, that note states that the title was “very slightly modified,” which is superfluous in any explanation for a correction, especially a title.

The September 21 note explaining that a sentence regarding damage claims from extreme weather had been removed also fails to be transparent and frank by attributing it “to another study” rather than dismissing it as did the ECCC report, which is actually cited as a reference at the bottom of the article.

Lastly, various details illustrate the lack of rigour applied to this article even though it was reviewed and corrected multiple times: one sentence ends with a semi-colon and another with a comma, Ontario is misspelled as “Ontarion,” and the legend under the third photo is poorly written (containing an extra *and*).

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