



From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

Innovation

Welcome to our special issue on innovation in Canada, which we have produced in partnership with the Rideau Hall Foundation, a non-political charity established by Governor General David Johnston in 2012. Now nearing the end of his tenure at Rideau Hall, the Governor General shares his thoughts in a guest column on innovation. One of his legacies is the creation of the Governor General's Innovation Awards, established in 2016.

We begin with a Q&A with Innovation Minister Navdeep Bains, the Trudeau government's lead minister on the innovation file. He was both thoughtful and thought-provoking about the opportunities and imperatives for Canadian leadership on innovation.

Dominic Barton, Global Managing Partner of McKinsey & Company, is serving as Chair of the government's Advisory Council on Economic Growth, which released its first report and recommendations in February. Barton writes that Canada needs to invest heavily in skills training for workers, attract the world's top talent, and create innovation marketplaces in key sectors and technologies. He also notes: "Half of all billion-dollar start-ups in the US were founded by immigrants. Canada's reputation for openness and diversity give it a comparative advantage in the global competition for talent, and one we should capitalize on."

BMO Vice-Chair Kevin Lynch, a former clerk of the Privy Council, writes about innovation policy in an era of global disruption. Lynch says that Canada needs to raise its game in business R&D and innovation—from "reasonably good" to "globally

great"—and rapidly, to build Canadian competitiveness.

Innovation isn't just about high-tech start-ups, but equally an imperative for the survival and prosperity of established companies. Linamar CEO Linda Hasenfratz provides the example of her company, Canada's second-largest auto parts manufacturer, whose products seamlessly cross the Canada-US border several times in North American auto assembly. Hasenfratz, also Chair of the Business Council of Canada, writes that: "Customers come to you if you have the products that solve their problems, problems they want and innovation is how you achieve."

Sean Finn, Executive VP of CN, writes of a culture of innovation and safety at one of the most mature industries going—railroads. CN is the largest railway in North America.

Nathalie Pilon, CEO of ABB Canada, writes about innovation and sustainable energy in the electricity space. Geoffrey Holmes and Jean-François Béland write of capturing carbon directly from the atmosphere and turning it into fuel using technology. President and CEO of Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Mary Ackehusen provides an excellent window on innovation in healthcare.

Mike Katchen, CEO of Wealthsimple, asks how we build an innovative economy, and says it's not by picking winners, but by supporting them.

From business to social innovation, Paul Klein of HireUp and Tim Draisin of Social Innovation Generation propose a 10-point plan for unleashing Canada's capacity for good. Despite Canada's comparatively secure social safety net, they write that there are gaps that can be addressed by so-

cial innovators harnessing our capacity for positive change. Ian Klugman, CEO of Communitech, writes of building innovation-based ecosystems.

Sarah Prevette, founder of Future Design School, writes that innovation begins in the classroom by introducing the qualities of entrepreneurship in school. At the degree-granting end of the education system, McGill Principal Suzanne Fortier shares her thoughts on the crucial role of universities in innovation.

Breanne Everett, a winner of the Governor General's Innovation Award in 2016, writes of a personal journey from her medical residency to co-founding Orpyx, a business built on her invention of a foot sensor that provides information to diabetics. She writes of the GG's Award: "It is impossible to overstate the importance of programs that recognize innovators for their role in growing the innovation environment."

Finally, columnist Don Newman reflects on the innovation revolution in the news media over the last quarter century and more. On a personal note, I know of which he speaks.

When I began in the newspaper business in the early 1970s, I went on the road with a 35-pound portable typewriter and a 25-pound Fax machine that transmitted copy at six minutes a page, provided you could find a phone to connect the jacks. That was before laptops, cell phones, the internet, smart phones and social media that drive the news media today in a world with no deadlines.

Today, I can write this note on my laptop and push the send button from Montreal to our designer, Monica Thomas, in Calgary, thinking nothing more about it. **P**