

Canadian Politics and Public Policy

» featured section

The
Conservative
Race

Policy

A Different
Normal

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(2020)



Policy

Canadian Politics and
Public Policy

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Cover Photo: A lone pedestrian crosses the street at the corner of King and Bay in Toronto, the heart of the country's financial district and normally teeming with people. Not so since the pandemic closed it down. *Juan Rojas Unsplash photo*

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From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

A Different Normal and the Tory Leadership

Welcome back to the fall 2020 semester of politics and policy in a world transformed from the one we used to know. With a post-pandemic reality not settled yet, this is not a new normal we're living in now, but it certainly is a different one. We're looking at the economic and social aspects of that in our extensive cover package.

We're also looking, in that very context, at the outcome and outlook for the Conservative Party of Canada and its new leader, Erin O'Toole, as he becomes leader of the Opposition in a minority House.

And we're just weeks away from a momentous US presidential election in which Donald Trump—the most divisive and disreputable figure of the modern era—will either win a second term or be sent packing by American voters.

Looking at that different normal, Kevin Lynch and Paul Deegan ask how the global economic narrative will evolve, and in what geopolitical context. And as they note: “The nature of work has changed more in the last six months than in the previous 20 years.”

Looking at the Canadian fiscal framework, former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page has never seen anything like the stimulative deficits of Ottawa's pandemic response. Even with a deficit of \$343 billion in the summer update, he notes that Canada's low debt-to-GDP ratio gives Ottawa a margin of manoeuvre. As he writes: “The economics of deficits have changed. With next-to-zero interest rates and no inflation in near sight, there are virtually no bottom-line balance sheet impacts of running larger deficits.”

How are Canadians feeling about life in the pandemic, and the prospects of moving beyond it? The Angus Reid Institute's Shachi Kurl has some attitudinal data to provide us with a look at the mood of Canada going into the fall.

How has daily life changed in the pandemic? Just look at the clothes we're wearing, and not. As Bob Kirke and Elliot Lifson of the Canadian Apparel Federation note: “Canadians haven't been going to work, and they don't need to dress up to work from home.” That's a big problem for Canada's \$30 billion clothing industry.

Memorial University's new President, Vianne Timmons, took a month-long summer tour of its campuses across her home province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and was struck by the resilience of the people.

One of the consequences of the pandemic has been money flying out of Ottawa, with little due diligence or attention to how it's spent and who manages it. The WE Charity scandal has provided some damaging answers. When the PM's mother is paid \$250,000 plus expenses for speeches, everybody gets that. Dalhousie University's Lori Turnbull considers the broader political ramifications, now including prorogation.

Looking at the outcome of the Conservative leadership race, strategist Yaroslav Baran offers a 9-point check list of priorities for the new leader. He'll have everything on his plate, including the challenge of bringing moderate and social Conservatives together. Geoff Norquay looks at exactly that, with a keen eye on history, and the im-

perative of uniting the party as Brian Mulroney and Joe Clark did by becoming close partners following the divisive 1983 leadership convention, enabling the Tories to sweep the country the next year. And Jaime Watt observes: “O'Toole has earned his win.” But with serious economic and social post-pandemic challenges “well beyond the usual uphill battle facing a new leader.”

And former Conservative MP Lee Richardson writes of the passing of a beloved member of the Conservative family. Jock Osler advised both Clark and Mulroney. His life itself was a lesson in collegial unity.

On the race for the White House, we offer important insights shared by experienced Washington hand Sarah Goldfeder, a State Department alumna. Our columnist, Don Newman, himself a former Washington correspondent, joins the conversation with *Beyond the Election, the China Card*.

Finally, in *Canada and the World*, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde shares his informed perspective on why Indigenous self-policing is so successful, in contrast to the troubles of racial minorities with conventional law enforcement.

On the 25th anniversary of the 1995 Quebec referendum, author and journalist Graham Fraser looks back at how it changed both Quebec and Canada. And Jean Charest, keynote speaker at the historic rally of 100,000 people that may have saved the No campaign, offers his memories of that day marked by an overriding question of country. **P**



The corner of the Sparks Street Mall and O'Connor in Ottawa. Normally the busiest pedestrian corridor in the capital, with the CBC building (left) and the back of the National Press Building (right), the street was shut down and utterly deserted during the pandemic lockdown. *Nabil Salah Unsplash photo*

Preparing for Canada's Next Normal

After an unprecedented summer of physical distancing and damage assessment, individuals, governments and global stakeholders are moving forward from crisis mode to planning for a post-pandemic reality. What might that inter-woven economic and geopolitical narrative look like? Former BMO Vice Chair Kevin Lynch and former CN and BMO executive Paul Deegan offer some insights.

**Kevin Lynch
and Paul Deegan**

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only rocked society today, it is reshaping our tomorrow—rapidly accelerating trends that will define the “next normal” for Canada and the world.

Unless there is another wave of the virus, we are through the shutdown phase, where governments locked down economic and social activity to plank the curve and preserve the health care system. Government fiscal policies during the shutdown have been geared to three things—liquidity, liquidity, and liquidity. The shutdown, while necessary, caused the first-ever recession driven by the services sector, not the goods sector of the economy. Unlike the 2007-

2009 period, which affected men particularly hard, especially in construction and manufacturing, the 2020 pandemic recession has disproportionately hit women and visible minority workers in service sector jobs. This, combined with the higher incidence of coronavirus in senior care facilities and among marginalized communities, makes COVID-19 inequality a pressing issue.

Having successfully convinced societies of the imperative to physically distance and shut down normal day-to-day activities, we are now moving into the restart phase—the unlocking of the economy and society. This has been complex and confusing, with contradictory signals from governments and public health experts. Truly, this is the intersection of demand and supply, where firms need to rehire and spend; individuals need to return to work and consume; and trade needs to flow. And all of this is happening with lingering economic and epidemiological uncertainty and very real and very personal health and safety concerns.

While the economic implications of all this are easy to see but difficult to quantify, three things are only too clear. First, the starting point is a global economy in the sharpest recession since the 1930s. Second, the timing and vigour of the recovery will depend on the duration of the pandemic, the state of business and consumer confidence, and the nature of government support and stimulus measures yet to come. Third, the recovery will be uneven and the economy will be scarred with record bankruptcies and lost jobs for some time to come.

And perhaps the most challenging phase is yet to come, the “next normal”, with the complex rebooting of the economies and societies post-pandemic. Few crises change either everything or nothing, and the COVID-19 pandemic will be no different. So, what might the “known unknowns” of lasting change in the next normal include?

“The 2020 pandemic recession has disproportionately hit women and visible minority workers in service sector jobs. This, combined with the higher incidence of coronavirus in senior care facilities and among marginalized communities, makes COVID-19 inequality a pressing issue.”

A return to the old normal is not in the cards—there will be fundamental and lasting impacts from the pandemic. These aftershocks include: a disruption of global trade and investment patterns; a debt hangover of historic proportions; a fundamental redesign of work and the workplace (including education and the classroom) with highly-intensified digitization; a recognition that a resilient health care system is both a social asset and an economic imperative; and geopolitics on steroids, with impacts touching all countries.

We are witnessing a de-integration of the global economy after decades of increasing globalization. This pivot has been stoked by a rising tide of nationalism and protectionism exemplified by the Trump administration’s tariff wars with China and others, including Canada. It has been fed by strategic competition between the United States and China in key technologies, such as AI and 5G, as well as in geopolitical spheres of influence in Asia and elsewhere. And it was the choked global supply chains during the pandemic that spurred the growing consensus that the world is overly reliant on China—not just for personal protective equipment, but also for pharmaceuticals and their constituent compounds, telecommunications hardware, semiconductors, smart phones, solar panels, wind turbines, lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles and other, non-commoditized, manufactured goods.

In the next normal, diversification of supply chains will be the imperative. They will move elsewhere in

Asia, with less reliance on China, and there will be a push to re-localize supply chains for critical goods. Digital services trade will be constrained by geopolitical battles over technology standards, taxes, internet rules and cybersecurity protocols.

More rigorous screening of foreign direct investment will emerge from the global recession to protect battered domestic firms, and will be amplified by geopolitical tensions. Lingering coronavirus fears will see declines in people movements, particularly international air travel, international tourism, and international education—a major source of funding for Canadian universities. One consequence of this deglobalization will be a decline in trade flows and foreign direct investment flows, particularly between China and the West.

We are in the midst of a debt explosion for governments, as well as corporations and households, and it’s on a scale that Canada has not experienced since the Second World War. In May, we wrote in the *Ottawa Citizen* that the Canadian federal deficit this year could be—combining automatic stabilizers, supports announced so far, and additional restart stimulus—as high as \$300 billion (or than 40 percent of all the net debt accumulated since Confederation). Our estimate turned out to be shy of the \$343 billion, forecast by former finance minister Bill Morneau in the July fiscal “snapshot”. To put this year’s deficit in context, it is about the same size as total federal spending in a normal year and represents about 16 percent of GDP. Next year, the deficit could easily ex-

ceed another \$100 billion, depending on the strength of the recovery and the political willingness of the government to ramp down its massive new spending support programs.

All this will push the federal net debt-to-GDP ratio from 30 percent to 49 percent this year, and our gross debt-to-GDP ratio to over 100 percent, putting at risk Canada's vaunted debt advantage. Near-zero interest rates make this fiscally affordable as long as they stay near zero. Rising debt-to-GDP ratios make this fiscally stable as long as markets have confidence in the government's ability to manage the deficit post-pandemic and flatten the debt curve. The next normal's prospect of low long-term economic growth makes managing this mountain of debt very challenging.

This now trillion dollar plus mountain of public debt, combined with high household debt and nonfinancial corporate sector debt leverage, will require a clear and credible fiscal plan and growth plan to address it. How do we justify interprovincial trade barriers in an era of low growth? What are we going to do to raise Canada's abysmally low productivity performance? How can we grow the national economy without a regulatory

framework that supports both growth in the natural resource sector and improved environmental outcomes? When are we going to upgrade skills training for a digital economy? Where are we going to find new markets for our exports in a world of decoupling trade? Without such a credible growth plan, global markets will place upward pressure on Canadian risk spreads and downward pressure on Canada's credit rating (Fitch has already taken away our enviable Triple A status) while foreign direct investment will seek opportunities elsewhere. Without a credible fiscal plan, these pressures will only intensify.

The nature of work has changed more in the last six months than it had in the previous 20 years. Employees are working from home *en masse* and effectively, doctors are doing tele-medicine as a matter of practice, not exception. Consumers are buying online as never before, and stores, by necessity, are finding ways to deliver. Educators have moved out of the classroom and onto Zoom. The workplace has become more virtual, more mobile, less physical, and perhaps less routinized. For work and education, things may never be as they were before.

In the next normal, working from home will become a regular part of the norm, but only part. Businesses will design new hybrid home-and-office work arrangements, create lower density office settings, substitute virtual meetings for travel, platoon employees at the office rather than all-hands-on-deck all the time, and shift to staggered work hours to respond to health concerns around mass public transit and crowded elevators.

“*The workplace has become more virtual, more mobile, less physical, and perhaps less routinized. For work and education, things may never be as they were before.*”

Employers will worry about productivity in a work-from-home world, and as a consequence will focus investment and resourcing decisions on digitizing and adapting to a much more digital workforce and a much more digital customer—in both in the B2C

Fiscal Outlook			
Canada (C\$ blns, except where noted)			
	19/20e	20/21f	
Revenues	341.0	268.8	
Expenditures	375.3	612.1	
Program Spending	350.8	592.6	
Public Debt Charges	24.5	19.5	
Adjustment for Risk	--	--	
Budget Balance	(34.4)	(343.2)	
Federal Debt	717	1060	
As a percent of GDP: Budget Balance	(1.5)	(15.9)	
Federal Debt	31.1	49.1	

Economic Assumptions				BMO Capital Markets				
(percent)		Ottawa			2020		2021	
		2019	2020	2021	2020	2021		
GDP Growth	Real	1.7	-6.8	5.5	-6.0	6.0		
	Nominal	3.6	-6.3	7.9	-6.1	7.5		
Yields	3-month T-Bill	1.7	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.2		
	10-year GoC	1.6	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.0		

Source: Fiscal Snapshot Note: GDP figures are for calendar year (FY19/20 = CY19) () = deficit; e = estimate; f = forecast

Direct COVID Support Measures	
Program or measure (FY20/21)	\$ blns
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) ¹	82.3
Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) ²	73.1
Funding for health personal protective equipment	14.0
Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)	13.8
Temporary GST credit enhancement	5.5
Canada Emergency Student Benefit	5.3
Top-up of essential worker wages	3.0
One-time payment to OAS and GIS recipients	2.5
Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance	2.4
Temporary child benefit enhancement	2.0
Various other measures	24.1
Total direct support³	228.0

¹ Assumes extension and program modification to incent hiring. Details pending.

² Includes extension from 16 weeks to 24 weeks

³ Direct support only. Tax deferral, liquidity and lending programs not included

Sources: BMO Capital Markets, Fiscal Update

(business-to-consumer) and B2B (business-to-business) spaces. They will invest heavily in cloud-based human capital management and sales software to engage employees, customers and prospects. Digital commerce will continue to soar, and traditional brick and mortar retailers will either adapt and innovate, or they will die. Logistics to support online commerce will be a business priority. Merger and acquisition activity will increase as high-quality assets shift from the battered to the strong. Corporate concentration will continue to increase, particularly in the info-tech space.

And, without a vaccine, it is hard to see universities and colleges either attracting large numbers of international students or cramming hundreds upon hundreds of students into lecture halls—both key elements of today's higher education business model. A shift to more online education, which attempts to address both these risks, puts a very high premium on quality and innovation because, in the absence of physical proximity and exclusivity, a student can attend a university or college anywhere.

This is the third pandemic in just 17 years, and something the public will not soon forget. Indeed, public confidence that we are relatively safe from catching COVID-19 when returning to work and re-engaging in social activities, and that the health care system has the resiliency and surge capacity to deal with another wave of COVID-19 or another virus, will be crucial elements in the vigor and speed of the recovery.

Social cohesion during the shutdown phase has been high in many countries, and federalism has worked very well in Canada during the shutdown phase. What is clear is that a strong and resilient health care system is both a social asset and an economic imperative in a world threatened by pandemics. And, despite missteps and mixed signals early in the pandemic response, Canada has found its footing and has a structural

competitive advantage compared to other countries such as the US with our universal Medicare system and well-connected health care institutions coast-to-coast.

Going forward, we should expect a strong public consensus that Canada needs a best-in-class pandemic response capacity, including early warning systems, stockpiles of critical equipment, skilled pandemic care capacity, facilities to develop and produce antiviral treatments and vaccines, adequate testing and tracking capacity, and surge capacity in ICU beds. Social cohesion and federal-provincial cooperation will be tested in the next normal as difficult policy choices and tough financial constraints apply in government decision making. But pandemics are sadly not a once-off, and neither can be investments in health care response capacity and infrastructure.

Prior to the pandemic, the US, China, and Russia were engaging in the sort of “Big Power” behaviours not seen in decades. The pandemic has vastly reinforced these tensions, particularly between China and the US. It has reinvigorated nationalism, in those countries and elsewhere, where blaming “others” is a substitute for taking own accountability. Attacks on the WHO, the failure of the G20 and G7 to coordinate and lead, resistance to new IMF resources to help in the crisis, ignoring international analysis—these all point to the weakness of international cooperation and stand in sharp contrast to how major countries came together to act in the collective interest during the 2008-09 financial meltdown.

In the next normal, we should expect a “back to the future” moment for geopolitics. Rising nationalism, protectionism, de-globalization, and an increasing antipathy to multilateral institutions pose significant risks for mid-sized, open countries like Canada which rely on trade, enforceable rules-of-the-game and a global marketplace. Canada will be caught in the middle

of a world where superpowers take an a la carte approach to a rules-based system and the rest of us scramble.

What the failure to secure a seat on the United Nations Security Council demonstrated is not that the world doesn't like us anymore, but they don't think they need us as much as they did. They don't see a Canadian foreign policy to align to, partner with, or support in this new normal of dangerous geopolitics. We are not leading on the Arctic, which is becoming a focal point for US, China and Russia. We are not leading on peacekeeping or peacemaking or development in a world where local tensions have global consequences. We are underinvesting in defence despite it being a collective NATO obligation. We are no longer viewed as having unique relationships with the two superpowers but have not developed new alliances to offset this. In short, we need a clear and compelling foreign policy for the new normal, one that blends national interest with multilateralism and a rules-based system.

COVID-19 has attacked our lives and livelihoods, and it has shaken our economies and the world order. We need to up our leadership game in the world, we need to make difficult domestic economic decisions for the long-term, and we need to move on quickly to shape the next normal for Canada. Prorogation may have been politically motivated, but the upcoming Speech from the Throne provides an opportunity to sketch out a bold plan to build a more prosperous and inclusive Canada. As former prime minister Brian Mulroney stated recently, “Incrementalism builds increments. Bold initiatives build nations.” **P**

Contributing Writer Kevin Lynch was formerly Clerk of the Privy Council and Vice Chair of BMO Financial Group.

Contributing Writer Paul Deegan, CEO of Deegan Public Strategies, was a public affairs executive at BMO Financial Group and CN, and served in the Clinton White House.

A Fall Budget 2020 Strategy: Drive Toward the Future

If the 2008 financial cataclysm gave economists a bad name, the health and economic implications of the COVID-19 lockdown have generated demand for all the expertise and ingenuity they can muster. As former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page writes, Canada urgently needs policies to address long-term issues such as climate change, income disparity, economic and health resiliency and competitiveness.

Kevin Page

It is a safe assumption that government of Canada cabinet ministers and Finance Department officials have spent much of their summer thinking about an economic recovery plan for Canada and a fall budget.

The political and economic stakes are high. With the prorogation of Parliament, triggered in part by the resignation of a finance minister, the government will table a Speech from the Throne in late September.

This will be a vote of confidence. If the government fails, we are headed to a fall election. If the government succeeds, Parliament and Canadians will push for a fall budget to ensure words turn into deeds.

While I've been reading spy novels, they are looking over the shoulders of colleagues in the European Union and possibly US presidential candidate Joe Biden to see what they are planning for recovery. They are assessing recently announced provincial (e.g., Ontario and Alberta) and municipal recovery plans. They are reading geeky disquisitions on possible economic scenarios for the world economy—with and without a vac-

cine—and trying to find a governing philosophy for fiscal policy in a world awash in debt.

If our political leaders and my former public service colleagues get a chance to read one spy novel before the frost hits the ground, I recommend *The Paladin*, by David Ignatius. In a period of great difficulty, the principal character tells himself to 'move'.

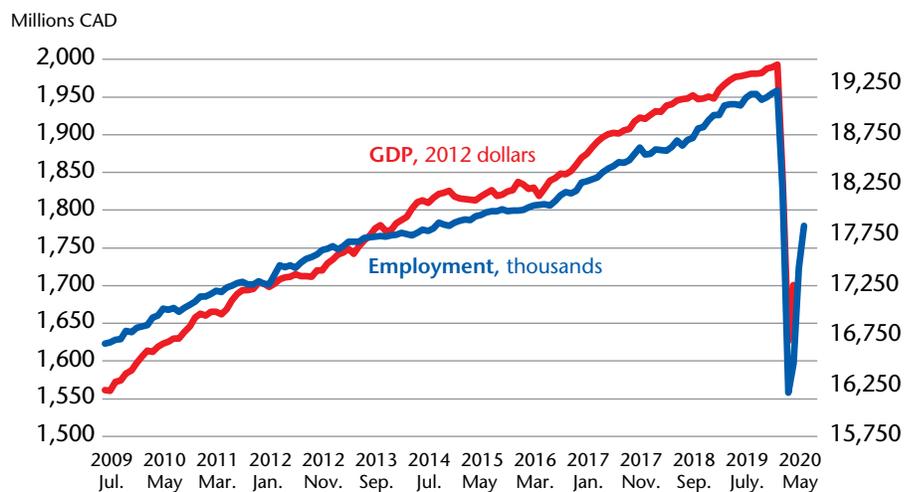
When the present collapses into the past, the only path of escape is to drive toward the future. When you don't understand a problem,

that means you haven't gathered enough information.

To state the obvious, the current public health crisis and the scale of economic fallout from containment measures is unprecedented. We have not experienced declines in output and employment of similar magnitude since the Depression in the 1930s (Chart1). If we rely on past (stimulus-type) policies to guide economic recovery plans they will likely be misguided and fall dangerously short. We cannot collapse present policy thinking into the past.

Economic planning scenarios in the future will center on a range of epidemiological outcomes for COVID-19 (i.e., vaccine, no vaccine; number and size of waves of infection) and individual country and global health and economic policy responses. Gone is the focus on one baseline scenario. Gone is the assumption that individual countries can pretend to isolate themselves from what is happening elsewhere.

Chart 1: COVID19 Impacts on GDP and Employment



Source: Statistics Canada

Plans are required for multiple scenarios. Uncertainty cannot be an excuse for no plans. As the saying goes, “No plan, no action leads to no results”.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggests that countries should think of at least four phases of policy responses: 1) immediate (Canada is beyond this stage); 2) cushioning impacts and preserving capacity (ongoing); 3) recovery; and 4) resilience and debt management. The transition from phase 2 to 3 will not be “linear and smooth”. Different industrial sectors and people will not get to the recovery phase at the same time.

As somebody who worked in an auto garage during high school and learned to drive in an old tow truck (1950s Ford) with a standard transmission—can you ride the clutch without causing harm to the transmission? Do you have a choice, when you’re starting on a hill? In economic speak, there are costs to living with more debt. Debt finance is the economic transmission fluid.

Fiscal and monetary policy are (have been) headed into uncharted waters. Since the 2008 financial crisis, terms like “quantitative easing” are becoming commonplace in the speeches of central bankers. Central banks are working with governments (put-

ting government debt on bank balance sheets) around the world to ease the burdens of governments going to markets to raise money. While some will argue correctly this is not new, the amounts are setting records.

“ Targeted policies are essential. The process has started with the evolution of programs like the wage subsidy and employment insurance. With high but declining unemployment rates and no vaccine in sight, expect this to continue. ”

The economics of deficits have changed. With next-to-zero interest rates and no inflation in near sight, there are virtually no bottom-line balance sheet impacts of running larger deficits. All the risks are punted to the future. Debt creates instability risks. If years down the road, inflation makes a comeback, interest rates will rise. The carrying cost of debt will skyrocket. Higher debt interest costs will crowd out spending on key policy priorities.

The pressure is on finance ministers to

explain the trade-offs and risks of deficit finance to Parliament and Canadians and the evolving role of our independent central bank. The pressure is on macroeconomists to give us a new governing philosophy for fiscal and monetary stabilization policy.

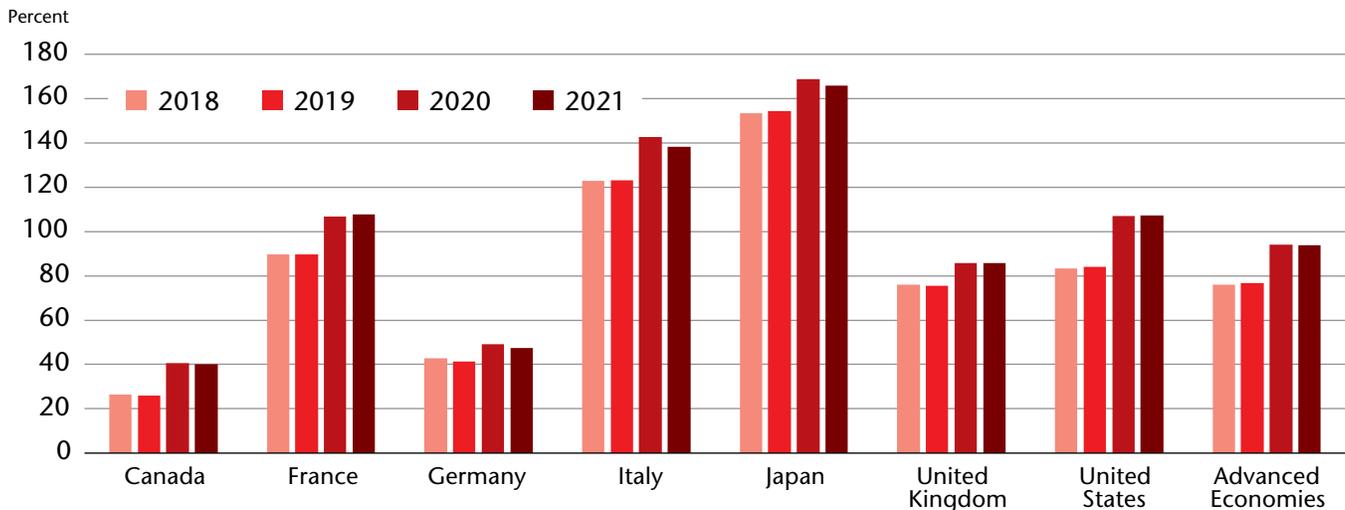
How do policy makers transition from fiscal supports essential to help households and businesses during containment and re-opening phases to a post-COVID world, given the prospects for a weak, drawn-out and uneven recovery?

Targeted policies are essential. The process has started with the evolution of programs like the wage subsidy and employment insurance. With high but declining unemployment rates and no vaccine in sight, expect this to continue but with increased focus on people and businesses locked out of the recovery.

As McKibben and Fernando (CEPR, 2020) point out in a recent paper assessing prospects for different COVID-19 economic scenarios, “Withdrawing macroeconomic support and creating ‘fiscal cliffs’ through setting expiration dates on critical fiscal support policies in economies is likely to worsen the uncertainty and increase economic costs.”

Should policymakers focus on long-term goals as they develop COVID-19 economic recovery policies? Yes.

Chart 2: IMF Projections of Net Debt to GDP



Source: International Monetary Fund

The European Union has already launched its recovery policy path to the future. They have recently agreed to a trillion dollar plus (Canadian) recovery fund. The policy framework is composed of five big missions—cancer, climate change, oceans, cities, and food. The missions are designed to bring evidence, resources and policy experimentation to long-term issues. Targets will be set—along the lines of President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 vow to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

US Presidential candidate Joe Biden will campaign on a long-term recovery policy “Build Back Better”. The high-level plan focuses on four long-term challenges—manufacturing, infrastructure, children, racial equality. While financing the challenges will depend on a presidential victory and congressional backing, the Democratic candidate is proposing government support well in excess of a trillion dollars.

In Canada, policies to address long-term issues such as climate change, income disparity, economic and health resiliency (i.e., our

“While financing the challenges will depend on a presidential victory and congressional backing, the Democratic candidate is proposing government support well in excess of a trillion dollars.”

capacity to address the next policy shock, whether a pandemic or financial or geopolitical crisis), and competitiveness are urgently needed. Governments need to lay out a vision (a north star) and plans to build confidence and partnerships (investment). Why not pro-actively shape and drive our future—more sustainable, more equitable, more resilient, more digital.

I hope that over the summer and early fall that cabinet ministers and finance officials spend some time reading EU documents and US presidential campaign materials and maybe the odd spy novel like *The Pala-*

din. If they do, maybe the economic recovery strategy will be focused on long-term challenges. We can use a Canadian version of the “missions” approach to generate the evidence, collaboration, and policy experimentation to hit defined targets.

If we are going to use deficit finance to dig our way out the economic hole created by COVID-19 then it is essential that spending is future-focused to help the next generation. In a Canadian context, the EU/US long-term fiscal stimulus would be well in excess \$100 billion over the next five years. This number might have been inconceivable a few years ago, but not now in the context of an estimated decline in GDP of 7 percent in 2020, millions of Canadians out of work, and a record increase in the estimated federal deficit to \$340 billion. If our competitors can afford it, can we afford not too when our public finances are in better shape? **P**

Contributing Writer Kevin Page, formerly Canada’s first Parliamentary Budget Officer, is founding President and CEO of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Democracy (IFSD) at University of Ottawa.



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Policy Magazine presents *The Week in Policy*, our weekly look at developments in the world of policy and politics in Ottawa, Washington and points beyond. Written by *Policy* Associate Editor and *Hill Times* columnist Lisa Van Dusen, *The Week in Policy* hits the screens of Canada’s political and policy community every Friday afternoon.

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The Mood of Canada:

BEYOND THE CORONAVIRUS SUMMER OF OUR DISCONTENT

Shachi Kurl

Six months in, no clear end in sight. As Canadians turn their first major corner living with COVID-19, here's some developments to watch for this fall, and some thoughts on how public opinion will affect them.

At the Angus Reid Institute we were in the field in mid-August, asking Canadians whether they approved or disapproved of Justin Trudeau as prime minister. His approval rating, high during the first several months of the pandemic, definitely took a major hit with the WE Charity negative news explosion over the summer.

We looked at a lot of things Canadians are concerned about, and the re-opening of schools was high on the anxiety list, although Canadians as a whole were more anxious about the situation than they were relieved to have come through it. And while generally approving of vaccinations (46 percent) should an effective one become available, many said they would wait a while before getting one (32 percent). In terms of diversions, the prospect of the summer NHL playoffs beginning in August had 72 percent of Canadians very or somewhat excited about the prospect of the return of hockey.

It would have been too much, I suppose, to have hoped in this most trying of years the political Gods might have given us the summer off. If ever we needed to flake out, to swing in our hammocks, to lounge lakeside and contemplate our altered lives in the "new normal", surely it would have been these past weeks.

Alas, this summer of our coronavirus discontent was also punctuated by

“ This summer of our coronavirus discontent was also punctuated by non-stop political drama that started with a now-cancelled contract to WE Charity to run a student volunteer program and ended with the awkward resignation of Finance Minister Bill Morneau. ”

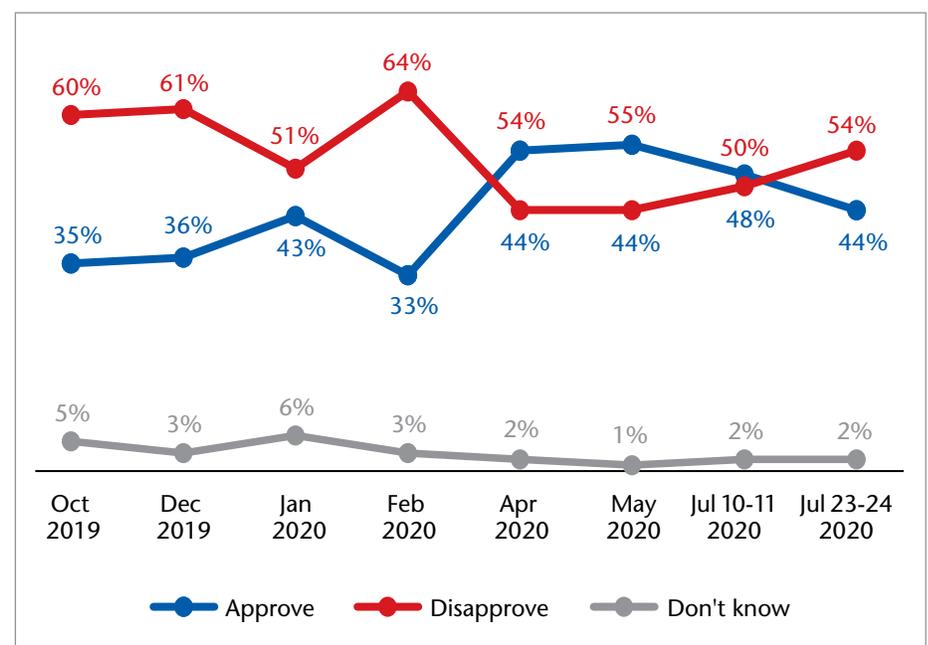
non-stop political drama that started with a now-cancelled contract to WE Charity to run a student volunteer program and ended with the awkward resignation of Finance Minister Bill Morneau. Officially, to try for the

job of Secretary General of the OECD. All but officially, to quell what was turning into open warfare between the Prime Minister's Office and Morneau, whose proximity to and expensive travel with WE did an already-damaged Justin Trudeau no favours in the affair.

In an administration pocked by resets, Morneau's departure offers a tantalizing opportunity for another, albeit risky one. For better or for worse, Trudeau has been the face of his government. Having soared in approval in the first months of the pandemic, the scandal has largely eroded whatever gains he made.

In a largely anonymous cabinet, Morneau was one of the better known, but least publicly liked ministers. He is now replaced by one of his only other well-known cabinet colleagues Chrystia Freeland.

Chart 1: Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau. August 2020



Source: Angus Reid Institute

Freeland has a high profile and has carried high approval ratings. But she will come to one of the most demanding and high-stakes jobs in government already carrying her duties as Deputy Prime Minister. Tasks such as transitioning from CERB to an enhanced Employment Insurance program, getting women disproportion-

ately affected by the pandemic back into the workforce, and re-starting Canada's economy from all but a standstill are each daunting enough. Freeland may be a political dynamo, but a super-powered eight-armed Vedic goddess she is not. Stretching any mortal this thin also highlights what has been a chronic deficit in the Lib-

eral caucus' bench-strength. It's muscle they'll need build in order to fend off attacks from a Conservative Party refreshed with new leadership.

Little wonder then, that Trudeau prorogued Parliament, announcing August 18 the beginning of a new session on September 23, only two days after the previous session was to have resumed. But he also promised an early vote of confidence on the new Speech from the Throne. The opposition Conservatives may not like it, but hey, Stephen Harper set the precedent in 2008 proroguing a minority House to avoid defeat on a confidence motion.

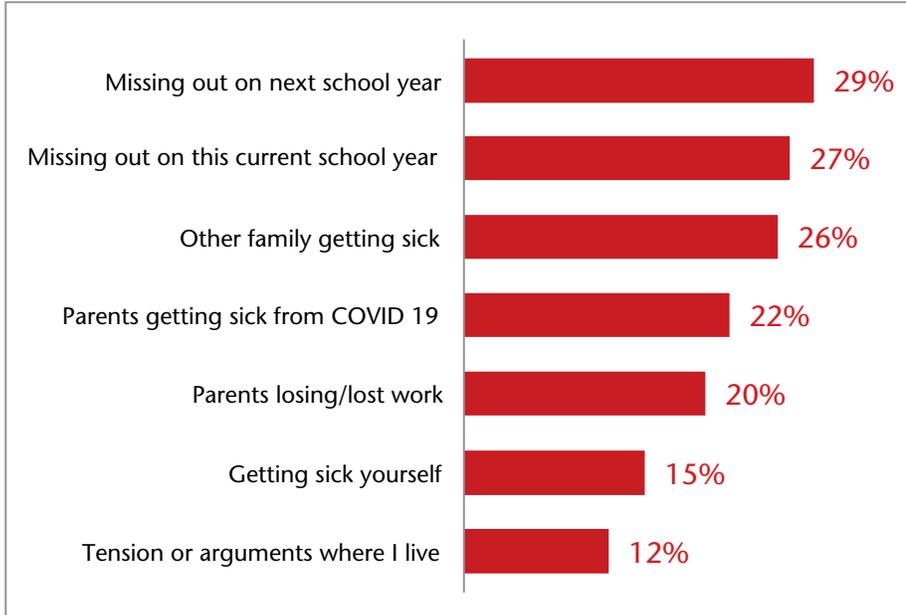
Luckily for the Trudeau government, what is likely to be the single biggest stressor for parents over the next three months falls under provincial jurisdiction. As tantalizing as the prospect of no longer home-schooling the kiddies may be, what appears to be patchwork of at times nebulous, yet-to-be-defined, back to school plans from province to province offers little comfort. Guidance around social bubbles is effectively popped with all the small folk hanging around with each other again. Multi-generational households that depend on grandparents for pick-ups and drop-offs are flummoxed.

Two key upsides of sending kids back to school: it enables many parents without alternative childcare to go back to work. It's also what the kids want. In the spring, just six weeks into the transition to learning from home, Canadian children were so over it. They were missing friends, feeling unmotivated, and worried about falling behind in class:

Sending kids back to class will represent an unprecedented public health experiment. If it doesn't go well, expect the grown ups to give their provincial politicians failing grades.

Coronavirus fatigue set in a long time ago, but it's how we're dealing with it that sets segments of Canadian society apart. A

Chart 2: Percentage of Canadian children ages 10 – 17 who say each is a 'big worry' for them. (n=650) May 2020



Source: Angus Reid Institute

Table 1: How Canadians say they have been feeling over the past few weeks. August 2020

	Total (n=1,511)	COVID Compliance Index		
		Infection Fighters (n=704)	The Inconsistent (n=537)	Cynical Spreaders (n=270)
Worn out/Fatigued	37%	34%	40%	40%
Anxious	26%	29%	26%	20%
Grateful	22%	26%	19%	15%
Normal	21%	20%	22%	24%
Happy	15%	16%	14%	17%
Bored	14%	14%	16%	12%
Lonely	11%	11%	11%	11%
Angry	9%	7%	7%	17%

Source: Angus Reid Institute

Table 2: If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available, would you get vaccinated, or not? August 2020

	Total (n=1,519)	Region						
		BC (n=205)	AB (n=156)	SK (n=127)	MB (n=126)	ON (n=448)	QC (n=300)	ATL (n=157)
Yes, I would get a vaccination as soon as one became available to me	46%	52%	41%	33%	44%	46%	47%	44%
Yes, I would eventually get a vaccination, but would wait a while first	32%	30%	30%	31%	32%	35%	29%	34%
No, I would not get a coronavirus vaccine	14%	10%	22%	20%	17%	13%	14%	11%

Source: Angus Reid Institute

late summer study revealed that while almost half of Canadians continue to fight their best fight against community transmission by practicing fastidious hygiene, wearing masks and keeping their social bubbles small, about one-in-five sit on the other end of the spectrum, and could care less about precautions. These “Cynical Spreaders” are not only more likely to socialize with larger groups of people, (often not well known to them, often inside, without masks), they also take a more jaded view towards the public health officials and politicians exhorting them to change their ways.

A number of factors delineate the “Infection fighters” from the “Cynical Spreaders”—but one of the most striking differences is age. The majority of those 65+ are in the uber-cautious group. Those aged 18-24 are twice as likely as the national average to be found among the don’t care bears. In terms of their mental and emotional health, the Cynical Spreaders are far more likely to define “anger” as the emotion they’ve experienced the most lately when compared to other segments. By contrast, Infection Fighters are significantly more likely to say they’ve been feeling “grateful”.

If there is such a thing as “back to normal”—we will not even be able to dream of it until much awaited vaccines find their way up our noses or jabbed into our arms. It could be a long wait. Whenever this potentially life saving substance is made available to the general population, fewer than half of Canadians say they’ll be lined up immediately to be vaccinated. Indeed, more than 20 per cent say they either won’t get the vaccine or aren’t sure. Willingness to be vaccinated varies regionally, which means public health officials in some provinces will have more work to do than others if they hope to achieve vaccination levels above 70 per cent—the number some say is needed to achieve herd immunity.

What’s driving some of the reticence—or at least the desire to “wait and see”? Consider that a majority, six-in-ten—express worries about side effects from a hypothetical coronavirus vaccine. One-fifth fret the vaccine won’t be effective anyway. And so it goes. Shades of anti-vaccination sentiment towards other illnesses are revealed around a vaccine that doesn’t yet exist. New sickness, old arguments. In one head-shaking finding, 25 percent

of those who say they wouldn’t get a vaccine themselves say vaccination should be mandatory... for health care workers.

“*Let there be no mistake. Canadians have been intensely focused on the greatest concern of their lifetime for the last six months. A little diversion is healthy.*”

When the poet Juvenal wrote of “bread and games”—it was to illustrate the shallowness of a society neglecting greater concerns. Let there be no mistake. Canadians have been intensely focused on the greatest concern of their lifetime for the last six months. A little diversion is healthy.

Little wonder then, that hockey fans left indefinitely in the penalty box when the NHL suspended its season took to the midsummer playoffs like a power forward to Gatorade. The games have been a little odd, what with no fans and all, but hockey is hockey, and we have been happy to have it.

Sadly for some, the CFL is done for the season, having failed in their bid for \$30 million from the Trudeau government. For a government that calculates (and sometime spectacularly miscalculates) funding decisions based on political math, bailing out the Canadian Football League may have earned thanks in the end zone, but not at the ballot box. CFL fans are a passionate bunch. But predominantly over the age of 55, the majority male, they correlate more closely with voting Conservative than Liberal NDP or Green. **P**

Contributing Writer Shachi Kurl is Executive Director of the Angus Reid Institute, the national non-profit public opinion research and polling firm based in Vancouver.

The Way We Wore:

THE COVID CRISIS IN CANADA'S CLOTHING INDUSTRY

Among the myriad impacts of the pandemic lockdown on human behaviour, including commercial consumption patterns, has been the fact that, whatever you do for a living and whatever your gender, chances are you're not wearing a suit right now. That fundamental, unforeseeable fact has shaken Canada's clothing manufacturers. Bob Kirke and Eliot Lifson of the Canadian Apparel Federation provide a case study from the front line of the pandemic recession.

Bob Kirke and Eliot Lifson

After months of difficult trading conditions, Canada's apparel industry remains one of the sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The industry has restarted operations, and is looking for signs of recovery and a return to some sort of "normal". But it is equally true that substantial restructuring of the industry is looming.

When you put it in the context of the pandemic, and how it's changed our lives, it's not very complicated. The way we were is gone. And so is the way we wore.

Offices have been closed since March. Canadians haven't been going to work, and they don't need to dress up to work from home. Working on Zoom, you don't even need a jacket, much less a suit. A golf shirt and shorts will do just fine. From kindergarten to graduate studies, nobody's been going to school. No dressing up for the graduation ceremony or the prom. Weddings and funerals, when they haven't been cancelled, have been limited to small groups of people sitting two metres, or six

feet, apart. You don't need a new suit for that.

You get the idea. A major industry is in big trouble, facing unprecedented and costly change. In Canada, clothing is a very big industry. The Canadian apparel sector (pre-COVID) employed more than 70,000 people and more than \$31 billion in clothing is sold in Canada each year. Pretty good for an industry once written off for dead. More than anything, the clothing industry is diverse: On the one hand, the Canadian apparel sector is a global industry with domestic and offshore production, incredible product development, and strong supply chain management capabilities. On the other, we have dynamic local designers and innovators. Canadian global clothing brands are both global and local.

In previous years, government-industry sectoral groups were a prominent feature of policy-making. In particular, the Sectoral Advisory Group for International Trade (SAGIT) for clothing and footwear, played a major positioning role for the clothing industry in the talks leading to the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement in 1987. Under the FTA

rules of origin, the content of finished Canadian-made clothing was considered Canadian, irrespective of where it came from.

In many respects, the government's initial response to COVID-19 had to be broadly based: there was an urgent need at the outset to stabilize personal incomes and corporate finances. The government correctly rolled out benefits for individuals (CERB) and wage subsidies for firms (CEWS) plus a host of other programs. As we restart, it is becoming clearer that all sectors of the economy are not equally impacted, nor do they need the same policy responses.

While the apparel sector is among the most seriously impacted by the pandemic, firms with stronger balance sheets, deeper management skills, and stronger brands were able to move more of their business online or pivot to the manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPE). Firms that retain significant domestic manufacturing have shown particular resilience through this challenging time. But the reality is that no industry can lose 30 percent of its annual sales, watch major customers fall into insolvency and not be affected.

Canadian retail sales of clothing were down more than 50 percent in March, and nearly 90 percent in April. Sales for May and June showed signs of recovery, but only when compared to the complete collapse in March and April. The absolute decline in apparel sales has been compounded by the seasonal nature of the merchandise.

No other retail commodity has encountered similar sales declines. Prospects for the rest



A deserted shopping mall in Montreal during the pandemic. At the low point of the lockdown, retail clothing sales in Canada were down 50 percent in March and 90 percent in April, before recovering somewhat over the summer. *Alesia Kazantceva Unsplash photo*

of the year are uneven at best, and the market will stabilize only in 2021. Canadians are prepared to avoid non-essential purchases and wherever possible minimize trips to non-essential retail stores.

“ Canadian retail sales of clothing were down more than 50 percent in March, and nearly 90 percent in April. Sales for May and June showed signs of recovery, but only when compared to the complete collapse in March and April. ”

Canadian clothing manufacturers/importers finance Canadian retailers by extending credit. When fashion retailers restructure or close, their suppliers are the last to be paid. While we commend the government for measures to support Business Development Canada and Export Development Canada in lending to Canadian business during the pandemic, Canadian financial institutions have been less willing partners. Companies connected to retail have

faced frequently insurmountable challenges in accessing financing—even when the federal government took on 80 percent of the risk.

Another issue contributing to the liquidity squeeze facing the sector is squarely in the government’s court. Import duties charged on clothing represent a significant outlay for importers, one that is hard to afford in the present circumstances. In the case of Spring 2020 merchandise, many firms imported apparel six to eight months ago and were assessed duties of 18 percent at the time of import. It should be noted that imports represent 90 percent of clothing sold in Canada.

These duty payments constrain firms trying to invest in raw materials needed for the development of new lines and prevent firms from extending credit to their retail customers.

COVID-19 is not the first challenge this industry has faced, nor will it be the last. COVID has accelerated the pace of change in fashion/retail, enabled by technology, and reinforced by consumer insecurity. This industry is changing at an incredible pace. Brands are moving to sell directly to consumers, stronger retailers are rebalancing their supply chains, diversifying their offerings, and boosting e-commerce capabilities.

We need to confront all of these challenges and we need the government to be a partner in this. One of the reasons for this is the significant impact of government policies, current and planned, on this sector.

While the government has many mechanisms in place for economic guidance and consultation with the private sector—the sort of restructuring likely to take place over the coming year within this sector does not fit squarely into the mechanisms the government has created. Economic Strategy Tables and the newly formed Industry Strategy Council focus on specific priorities. While the government rightly supports endeavours such as advanced manufacturing, the industry is facing sectoral challenges and this warrants a different type of action from government. It is time for the government to complement these longer-term initiatives with targeted engagement with sectors facing specific challenges, with a 12-to-24 month time horizon to help specific sectors through this crisis.

The apparel industry needs to become more agile, more sustainable, and more digital—but getting there is no small feat. It is important to align the needs of the industry with the priorities of the government. For sectors less impacted by COVID-19, this may not be needed; for ours it is. We have a skills challenge, international trade hurdles, demands from the government for new, more responsible sourcing practices, greater sustainability and challenges around digital transformation.

As we move forward, it will be important to look ahead and be proactive. We need to bring about a meaningful recovery for the sector, while helping the industry work through a fundamental restructuring. The future of the Canadian clothing industry depends on it. **P**

Bob Kirke is Executive Director of the Canadian Apparel Federation.

Elliot Lifson is President of the Canadian Apparel Federation and Vice-Chairman of Peerless Clothing.

A Summer Road Trip: Resilience and Hope on The Rock

Vianne Timmons

When I was turning 15, my family left Labrador and moved to Nova Scotia. This was one of the most traumatic experiences in my life. Growing up in Labrador was a wonderful experience. We did not have a lot, but we (six children) had a town full of large families, friends and activities. I can honestly say I had a fabulous childhood.

I cannot say that about my teenage years. We moved the first of June and my parents decided we did not need to attend school as the year was almost over. That meant for three months I knew no one. It was a lonely time.

I share this because resilience comes from many places. It is often built from experiences that are positive, but also negative. These experiences can define us. Many people are experiencing things during this pandemic that will have a lasting impact on them. I hope resilience will help see them through.

I accepted a new job in December 2019 as President and Vice-Chancellor of Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's. I served as President of University of Regina for 11 years prior and had many great experiences during that time. In March 2020, there were a number of events planned at the University of Regina as a send-off, and events in April at Memorial to welcome me, including a formal installation. Due to the pandemic, all were cancelled.

I had to self-isolate for 14 days when I arrived in the province, so I left Saskatchewan early and set up in an Airbnb in St. John's. I could work from home anywhere, so I finished my term at the University of Regina while in St. John's.



Memorial University President Vianne Timmons on the ferry from Newfoundland to her native Labrador. A working family's daughter in the Iron Ore Company town of Labrador City, she writes: "I can honestly say I had a fabulous childhood." *Stuart Mason photo*

Relocating, buying a house and starting a new job during a pandemic was not easy. There were small challenges, such as being unable to get my Newfoundland and Labrador driver's licence, to bigger ones, like difficulty getting the internet hooked up in my home. These issues resolved themselves over time. But as you will read, not everyone can get internet issues fixed.

As a university president it is important to have a solid team. I am fortunate as I did inherit such a team. It is interesting that—as I had to work virtually—I did not meet the vice-presidents in person until the end of June. I realize now how important that personal contact is, as you learn so much from watching body language and interactions. I found that chairing Senate was also tricky, as there are close to 100 participants and I have not yet built relationships with faculty.

As president, one of the things I enjoy immensely is walking through a campus, meeting faculty, staff and

students. A challenge for me, as a new president, was how can I be visible?

I did use Twitter, but not extensively. I decided on April 1, the first day on the job, to record a video. I filmed a brief amateur 20-second spot and posted it. I slipped during one of the takes, and decided to post that one, too. Posting little videos became a way to connect with the campus. People responded positively so I bought my first selfie stick. During these unusual times, we all have to adapt, learn new skills and connect in different ways.

Though unable to meet with students in person for the most part, as a president they are always on my mind. So, of course, I have been thinking a lot about the COVID-19 generation—the students of today who are missing milestones in their lives, such as graduation and attending university for the first time. They have to adapt, learn new skills and figure out different ways to connect.

“ In early July, when Newfoundland and Labrador lifted some pandemic restrictions, I decided to venture outside of St. John's and see for myself how Memorial University is perceived by communities throughout the province. ”

In early July, when Newfoundland and Labrador lifted some pandemic restrictions, I decided to venture outside of St. John's and see for myself how Memorial University is per-



Dr. Timmons with local doctors, masked for the pandemic, in the town of St. Anthony, in the northern part of the Great Northern Peninsula during her month-long summer tour in July 2020. *Stuart Mason photo*

ceived by communities throughout the province, and if there are things we can do better. It was a month-long road trip during which my husband and I logged more than 6,000 kilometres, visiting our multiple campuses, training sites and research centres. I learned so much about the province, the university and, most importantly, the challenges our students are facing.

You can read about the Pye Farm in Labrador, you can view pictures of the Bonne Bay Marine Station and Aquarium or you can speak with graduates of the safety training program in Stephenville, but until you see it in person or speak to people on the ground, you do not realize the amazing work being undertaken and the impact it has. As a new president, it is important to see the campuses' multiple sites and meet the people who work there every day.

The most important aspect of the road trip was the discussions with students. Many live in Northern, rural or remote areas of the province. In a normal year, they experience challenges such as leaving their home communities, support networks and friends to attend university. They bear extra costs for accommodations and travel.

Now, during the pandemic, they are anxious. Many could not secure employment during the spring and summer months as they had done in the past. They are struggling with internet accessibility and lack of peer sup-

port. They are finding solutions, such as logging on after midnight to get access to somewhat reliable internet, volunteering to gain experience when there is no employment and connecting with study groups online.

“ I have learned more about resilience from this generation of young people. They are creative, innovative and many times frustrated. They have adapted to one of the most difficult periods in our lifetime. ”

Some students even moved to a different town to get reliable internet access. Their families have taken on the cost of housing, food and expenses so their children can start or complete university studies remotely. I met with one father in St. Anthony on the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula on the island of Newfoundland who has three daughters attending Memorial University. One daughter relocated to Corner Brook on the West Coast, 470 kilometres away, to access online courses. The other two daughters have had

to figure out the best times to access the internet at home.

On the road trip, I returned to my childhood home in Labrador. I stood in front of it and did a little video for Memorial. I was overwhelmed with memories and struck by the journey I had been on. Not just the month-long road trip across the province, but also the journey of my life that brought me back to the place where I started. It also made me think of our students and how this time will define them for the rest of their lives.

As I mentioned earlier, I learned about resilience from an early age. But I have learned more about resilience from this generation of young people. They are creative, innovative and many times frustrated. They have adapted to one of the most difficult periods in our lifetime. They are still optimistic about their future. The COVID-19 generation is learning about resilience in a complex world.

I have confidence in our future that this generation will leave our world better than we left it for them. I can't wait to see where they take us. **P**

Contributing Writer Vianne Timmons is the new President and Vice Chancellor of Memorial University in St. John's. Previously she was President of University of Regina.



Christia Freeland is sworn in as Finance Minister at Rideau Hall. Also at the socially-distanced ceremony, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau (left), Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic Leblanc (centre) and along the wall, Governor General Julie Payette and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. *Adam Scotti photo*

The Politics of Prorogation

Proroguing Parliament is not an inherently suspect course of action. But because the 2020 prorogation by a minority government has the power to stop a precarious political narrative in its tracks, this prorogation can be interpreted as a highly political gambit. The intersection of the WE scandal with the reality of the Trudeau government's vulnerability provides an opportunity for reflection on the potential use of prorogation as a political tool.

Lori Turnbull

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the political landscape was far less adversarial than usual. Governments announced financial aid packages and emergency measures, usually with the support of opposition parties, and political conflicts were generally put on hold as the country was focused on stopping the spread of COVID-19.

The WE controversy brought a somewhat abrupt end to this political *détente*. In late June, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the WE Charity would administer a federal student grant program

that would provide students with paid volunteer opportunities across the country. These positions were meant to provide help to students during the financial crisis and to replace some of the internships and coop placements that had been lost.

The selection of WE for this responsibility raised eyebrows immediately, given the prime minister's known connections with the organization and its founders, Marc and Craig Kielburger. Trudeau has appeared on stage at WE events several times in the past, as have his wife, Sophie Grégoire Trudeau, mother Margaret Trudeau, and brother Alexandre Trudeau. Margaret Trudeau received \$250,000 in speaking fees and her agent 20 per cent more for 25 speeches over five years, while the PM's brother Sacha received \$28,000 plus agent's fees for seven speeches in a two-year period, while the PM's wife was involved as a goodwill ambassador for WE, which understandably reimbursed her travel and accommodation costs.

“ *As the data showed that government efforts to flatten the curve in Canada had been effective, opposition parties could get back to business as usual.* ”

During the lockdown period, opposition parties were between a rock and a hard place: on the one hand, it is in the public interest that unprecedented levels of government spending be met with the closest opposition scrutiny; on the other, an economic and public health crisis is not the time for the opposition to be seen to be playing politics or questioning government efforts to stabi-



Flanked by freshly sworn-in Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominique Leblanc, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces the prorogation of Parliament. On its return, a vote on his Throne Speech could result in the fall of his minority government and an early election. *Adam Scotti photo*

lize the economy and enforce public health measures.

Therefore, in the darkest days of the pandemic, opposition criticism was subdued. But the WE story came at just the right time for them, when provinces had started reopening their economies, shops and restaurants were doing business again, and social distancing restrictions were still in place but nowhere near as strict. As the data showed that government efforts to flatten the curve in Canada had been effective, opposition parties could get back to business as usual.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as well as the Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics have both been investigating

the circumstances around the decision to enter into a contribution agreement with WE Charity to deliver the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG) program, which would have connected students with volunteer opportunities that would have paid between \$1000 and \$5000. Witness testimony revealed a lot. Clerk of the Privy Council Ian Shugart and other senior public servants testified that the recommendation from the public service was to have WE deliver the program, that no other organization including the public service was in a position to do this, and that there was no political interference in the advice. However, government documents that have been released in connection with the story have raised new questions about communications between the

Kielburgers, the office of now former Finance Minister Bill Morneau, Minister of Small Business Bardish Chagger, and the Prime Minister's Office. Committee testimony from Morneau was particularly explosive; he told the committee that, on the morning of his testimony, he wrote a cheque to the WE Charity for over \$41,000 to close the loop on expenses related to two trips that he and his family took with WE, for whom one of his two daughters served as a volunteer while the other worked as a contractor.

Part of the opposition's strategy has been to drill down into vulnerabilities in the WE organization itself; after all, the worse WE looks, the harder it is for the government to defend the choice to trust them with the CSSG program. The public learned in testimony from Michelle Douglas, former board chair at WE, that the executive was not transparent with the board about the organization's finances, which led to her resignation.

The internal structure of the WE organization, and the relationship between the charity and the profit-making social enterprise, is unorthodox to say the least. Charity Intelligence, an independent organization that assesses the impact of charitable donations, has raised questions about WE's financial practices.

On the day that Morneau was replaced by Chrystia Freeland in the Finance portfolio, the prime minister also announced that Parliament would be prorogued until September 23. This means that the committees' meetings and queries will stop, at least in the formal sense, until late September.

As many commentators have pointed out, this decision might prove to do more harm than good to the government. All prorogations land somewhere on the following continuum: at one end, there are truly benign, routine prorogations de-

“ Even with the prorogation, newly-released government documents raise new evidence and questions that will make it difficult for the government to reset the minds of the public. ”

signed to allow a new Speech from the Throne when a government begins a new phase of its mandate; on the other end, there is the example of December 2008 when Prime Minister Stephen Harper sought a prorogation to avoid a confidence vote that his minority government was sure to lose.

“ It is surely at odds with Trudeau's party's 2015 pledge to do government differently in the use of prorogation. There is no reason to prorogue other than to shut the committees up. ”

This one isn't as bad as that, but it's not good. And it is surely at odds with Trudeau's party's 2015 pledge to do government differently in the use of prorogation. There is no reason to prorogue other than to shut the committees up. The lightly-shuffled Trudeau cabinet could have "reset" its priorities even as committees kept meeting. That said, even with the prorogation, newly-released government documents raise new evidence and questions that will make it difficult for the government to reset the minds of the public.

There will likely be an election at some point in the next 12 months. With a new leader, the Conservatives will have to choose whether to try to make the government's eth-

ics record the key election issue, or whether they will instead focus on a broad vision for Canada that provides a true alternative to the Liberals. Chrystia Freeland's appointment as finance minister could mean a shift to the left for the government, which could potentially open up space for the newly-branded Conservatives. It is possible that the next election will feature a true choice between competing scenarios for a post-COVID Canada. **P**

Contributing Writer Lori Turnbull, a co-winner of the prestigious Donner Prize, is Director of the School of Public Administration and Associate Professor at Dalhousie University.



"Now the real work begins," new Conservative Leader Erin O'Toole declares in his late night victory speech at the party's leadership meeting. *André Forget, CPC photo*

The Conservatives and Post-Pandemic Politics

The Conservative Party of Canada has chosen Erin O'Toole to lead it into the next election. But the context of a pandemic that has killed thousands of Canadians and drastically realigned the country's fiscal margin of manoeuvre demands a new perspective. Herewith some invaluable free advice from Earncliffe Principal and strategy maestro Yaroslav Baran.

Yaroslav Baran

When a new party leader ascends the stage, it is normally against a jubilant landscape of excitement and renewal. Some party rebuilding is required (after all, leadership contests are often catalyzed by election defeat) but Canada's politics and economy have been blessed with protracted relative stability, allowing new leaders to focus internally and cultivate a vision and brand without external encumbrances. No more. Erin O'Toole takes the helm of his party in an inverted environment: his party is strong, solvent and largely united, but the surrounding policy environment is unstable and unpredictable.

In a transformation of the status quo unleashed by a viral outbreak that became a global pandemic, today's chief political concerns are contagion, unemployment that neared five million working-age Canadians, a \$343 billion deficit, and paralysis of entire economic sectors—unimaginable dynamics just a year ago.

How, then, does a new party leader begin his work? What are the opportunities, if any, to begin building? Following are nine prescriptions for the new leader.

1. Unite the caucus, and quickly.

Despite the euphoria, leadership races are also divisive and expose fault lines. The biggest in this race were between the harder-edged “take back Canada” types (embodied first by Pierre Poilievre and later by O’Toole) versus a more moderate conservatism represented by Peter MacKay. The divide is more about style and tone than it is about actual policy, and it cannot be allowed to fester. This is best done by reaching across camps and welcoming the strongest MPs into the shadow cabinet, regardless of whom they supported in the race. Magnanimity and outstretched hands are the most effective political salves.

2. Do not obsess about the fiscal.

With an economy struggling to recover from the pandemic, and a deficit hovering around \$343 billion, Conservatives will have to suppress their instinctive urge to proclaim gimmicky (and unrealistic) timetables on how quickly they will rebalance the books. In the short term, the economic message should centre on *job growth* and *labour force reintegration*. These are a precursor to levelling off the support spigot anyway, so why risk the political exposure of sticking to an old script unsuitable to the times?

3. Recognize that values will be the strongest contrast point with the Liberals.

Counterintuitively, the most rewarding policy battleground will

“ *In a transformation of the status quo unleashed by a viral outbreak that became a global pandemic, today's chief political concerns are contagion, unemployment that neared five million working-age Canadians, a \$343 billion deficit, and paralysis of entire economic sectors.* ”

not be the economy (a traditional strong suit for the Tories), as incumbent governments are being forgiven these days for not getting everything right amid a pandemic, and are being rewarded for attentiveness and compassion. Don't try to compete there—particularly if your opponents wouldn't think twice about outspending you. Draw the political contrast not on what you will spend on, but on who you are.

Each government's Achilles' heel is well known the day it is first sworn in. We don't know when it will fall, but we do know *why*. This government's is elitism and an aloof out-of-touch quality—both themes that have been amply fertilized in recent months. O’Toole's challenge will be to leverage the government's repeated conflict-of-interest scandals to actively portray the pattern as a fraud against the government's stated ideals, which are in fact more genuinely embodied in a modern, humble and middle-class conservatism. With the Aga Khan Island flap, forgotten French villas and sponsored trips, numerous conflict-of-interest censures, Trumpian attempts to lean on and fire attorneys-general, and miscellaneous public reminders that the law also applies to the ruling clique, a short five years have offered ample yarn to weave a cohesive “let them eat cake” narrative against the Liberals.

4. Recognize that Parliament will matter.

New leaders often deliberate between getting into the House early and staying outside Parliament

and getting to know the country (and allowing the country to get to know them). The theory is that Canadians don't watch CPAC, so why bother when you could be meeting them instead. Not now. The government's deals to dramatically curtail scrutiny and accountability, capped by a prorogation to shut down uncomfortable committee inquiries, present a rare opportunity to leverage the very concept of Parliament.

“ *The government's deals to dramatically curtail scrutiny and accountability, capped by a prorogation to shut down uncomfortable committee inquiries, present a rare opportunity to leverage the very concept of Parliament.* ”

5. Broaden the conservative tent to more fully include central and eastern Canada.

O’Toole has an opportunity to carve out an alternative to what has been called “the Laurentian Consensus”. This can be a National Consensus—one that embraces a true diversity by including all parts of Canada, where not all people need to think alike, where all aspects of history, culture, and



A family in waiting: Erin O'Toole waiting for the leadership vote results with his wife Rebecca and children Mollie and Jack on the balcony of the O'Toole's campaign's convention suite at Ottawa's Westin Hotel overlooking Parliament Hill on the afternoon of August 23. André Forget, CPC photo

economic outlook are respected. And built on *regular people*. This means competing for blue-collar and middle-class voters who feel left behind, and building an entire election strategy around that. Harper did this successfully in 2006. It's largely competitive with the NDP, but it works.

6. Work to bridge West and East.

Despite the prime minister's promise of building a Nirvana of federal-provincial relations and the all-hands-on-deck fed-prov unity necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, things are decidedly more fractured and adversarial than when Trudeau took office. O'Toole has the political experience and knows the players well enough to take this on. His style is more consensual than confrontational. He is ready to make deals rather than waste time in ideological battle. He also has the strongest network of experienced advisors in the land. Here, he can naturally shine.

7. Remember the North.

The issue set of Canada's territories is a natural collection of strengths for a Conservative willing to put in the effort. Between Arctic sovereignty, addressing centuries-old marginalization, tech connectivity, sustainable resource development defined by Indigenous participation, modernizing the North's energy profile, and environmental conservation, the North is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate a modern and sophisticated conservatism in a contemporary context.

8. Focus on what you stand for, rather than what you stand against.

Too many conservatives today focus on the latter, translating into a perception that they are always angry and always outsiders. That, in turn, fuels a self-perpetuating cycle of outsider status that prevents the Conservative brand from being seen as mainstream. The cycle must be stopped. Oppositional

conservatives tend not to have an understanding of how the power game works, tend not to have taken the time to develop a coherent worldview, and tend not to have a firm grasp of the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of their thinking and what they are trying to achieve. O'Toole must take care that that tone and approach not become the dominant one for his caucus.

9. Resist a negative campaign.

There is a time and a place for everything. Given their recent controversies and polling, the Liberal Party will be flailing and running an aggressively negative campaign. This is a guaranteed opportunity to drive contrast. The angrier and more accusatory his opponents become, O'Toole should reinforce his composure and positive messaging. Such contrast is noticeable, and will play in his favour.

One view holds that bolstering Canada's conservative movement means aggressively cultivating it as something very distinct—a sharply separate worldview and agenda to compete with the Liberals' practice of fusing *their* ideals and interests with a "Canadian" identity.

An alternative approach is more incremental and humbler: Work to shed the remaining baggage that makes conservatism anachronistic and stodgy—particularly to young voters. Recognize the fiscal and policy circumstances of our times, and leverage the Liberal Party's self-inflicted wounds against it rather than competing with an alternative worldview. Make the contrast less about policy differences, than about values and style. This is the winning road for O'Toole. **P**

Contributing Writer Yaroslav Baran, Managing Principal of the Earncliffe Strategy Group in Ottawa, is a former chief of staff to the Government House Leader and senior communications strategist on numerous Conservative campaigns.

Job One for A New Leader— Putting the Party Back Together

If there's a best practices model for managing the bruised egos, loyalty rewards and score-settling reflexes of a post-leadership Conservative Party, it is arguably the victory of Brian Mulroney over Joe Clark in 1983. Veteran Tory strategist and Earnscliffe Principal Geoff Norquay, who survived that transition and thrived through subsequent leadership changes, provides a blueprint for keeping the party together.

Geoff Norquay

Erin O'Toole is the newly crowned leader of the Conservative Party and leader of the Official Opposition. Like all new leaders, he faces a huge set of challenges and opportunities, complicated by a minority government weakened by scandal and the country still in the throes of a pandemic. But before he turns his mind to those issues, he must ensure a clean launch by healing the wounds of the leadership contest and putting the party back together. Doing so effectively requires all the leadership skills—sensitivity, decisiveness, patience, generosity, balance and team building.

The stakes are high for a successful transition: issues from leadership campaigns that are not put to rest have a habit of returning and hurting the leader and party later on.

Leadership contests are risky times for political parties. Caucus members are forced to pick sides. Longstanding personal friendships can be made or destroyed. Harsh words are spoken, and dirty tricks played. Policy, ideological and regional cleavages can emerge

and grow. Serious and lasting damage can be done to a party if the new leader does not act quickly and effectively once it is all over to heal the wounds left by a leadership race.

“ Serious and lasting damage can be done to a party if the new leader does not act quickly and effectively once it is all over to heal the wounds left by a leadership race. ”

When election day comes and a new leader is crowned, the contenders gather onstage, the losers pledge their fealty to the winner and their collective intention to march forward arm-in-arm toward a brighter future. That's when the new leader faces his or her first big challenge—putting the party back together.

That's usually the way when the convention is live in one hall. The end of the Conservative leadership race

on August 23 was a reflection of the times—a virtual event in deference to the pandemic, with the results of ranked ballots simply announced by party officials. But live audience or not, the immediate challenge for a new leader remains as always—unite the party. Period.

How a new leader sets about transition and its success are critical to the party's and his or her future fortunes. There's no available handbook to consult; each new leader and team must create a plan and get to work. The smart ones will have anticipated the win and put in place a rudimentary transition plan. If the party is currently in office, obviously that planning step is both essential and critical: there's a government to be made over and a country to run.

The first overtures the new leader must make are to the other contestants in the race. This is the first critical step in forming a new and cohesive team. On both sides—the winner and the losers—any lingering animus from the campaign must be set aside, and sensitivity shown for any bruised feelings about what might have been. An exchange of views on potential future roles is the starting point and may involve an offer of the deputy leader's position, a preferred cabinet or senior critic role, or even some time off to recharge batteries.

After he lost the Progressive Conservative Party leadership to Brian Mulroney in 1983, Joe Clark chose to step away from day-to-day politics for a few months and became a visiting professor at York University in Toronto. Mulroney wisely gave Clark the room for reflection and recovery, and he was soon back to vig-



Joe Clark, with Maureen McTeer, concedes defeat to Brian Mulroney at the Progressive Conservative leadership convention in Ottawa, June 11, 1983. Colin McConnell, *Toronto Star Photograph Archive*, Courtesy of Toronto Public Library



Joe Clark and new PC leader Brian Mulroney, campaigning as a united team before the 1984 election, that saw Mulroney sweep the country, with Clark becoming his foreign affairs minister. Photo courtesy Brian Mulroney

orously fight the 1984 election. Afterwards, when he rose for the first time in the House as the newly appointed Minister of External Affairs, his first words—delivered with a broad smile—were, “As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted....” It was a pretty good recovery from what had been a shattering defeat.

Relations between the two top contenders after a leadership do not always go as smoothly. When Tommy Douglas beat Hazen Argue for the leadership at the founding convention of the NDP in 1961, Argue became a Liberal, later a Liberal Senator. For the rest of his life, locals would cross the street in Saskatoon rather than greet him. After attempting to split the party with the “Waffle,” Jim Laxer challenged David Lewis for the leadership in 1971. Many in the party considered it such an offensive insult that they never spoke to him again.

At the Liberal Party leadership debate in Montreal in 1990 when Jean Chrétien refused Paul Martin’s challenge to endorse the Meech Lake Accord, hundreds of Martin youth supporters chanted “vendu” (sellout) and “Judas” at Chrétien, who blamed Martin and never forgot the slight. Martin served as a highly successful finance minister for nine years under Chrétien, until Martin’s acolytes ultimately pushed too loudly for the prime minister to leave, and Chrétien fired him from cabinet. The discord resulting

from that Shakespearean power struggle—mirrored in the Tony Blair-Gordon Brown internecine Labour battles in the UK with similar outcomes—split the Liberal Party for well over a decade.

“ *The second set of essential discussions for the new leader is with his or her strongest supporters in caucus and in the party. The key point to make is that this is not a time for triumphalism or hot talk about the settling of scores from the leadership.* ”

The second set of essential discussions for the new leader is with his or her strongest supporters in caucus and in the party. The key point to make is that this is not a time for triumphalism or hot talk about the settling of scores from the leadership. The message needs to be, “OK, we won, but now I need to bind up the wounds in the party, so I need you to be quiet while I do that.” That’s the approach Brian Mulroney took in the wake of his leadership victory in 1983; it calmed everyone down after a bruising contest and sent the message

that there would be no retributions based on who had supported whom.

The new leader also faces potentially difficult decisions about how to staff the leader’s office and party headquarters. The people who have just worked so effectively to elect you leader may not be the right ones to run your office or a federal campaign and some may have to be let down easily. In addition, key supporters of other leadership contenders may have distinguished themselves as skillful managers, communications professionals or policy advisors, and they may deserve a key position. Such a move will help smooth relations with defeated rivals.

Next, what is the new leader to do with the leader’s office staff he or she has just inherited? Some top advisors to the outgoing leader will obviously depart, but what about the rest: who should leave and who should stay? When Mulroney became leader of the PCs in 1983, I was Clark’s director of research. The day after his victory, the *Toronto Star* identified me as the second on a list of three or four senior staffers likely to be “dropped head-first off the Peace Tower.” I survived the transition because members of caucus told the new leader’s advisors that my research team had been particularly attentive to serving them in a difficult period over the three previous years. When Mulroney won in 1984, Hill and party



Incoming Premier Bill Davis and retiring Premier John Robarts in 1971. The passing of the torch of a Conservative dynasty that ruled Ontario for more than 40 years. Davis would serve four terms and 14 years in office before retiring undefeated in 1985 as the head of the legendary Big Blue Machine. *Frank Lennon, Toronto Star Photograph Archive, Courtesy of Toronto Public Library*

staff moved smoothly into PMO and ministers' offices.

Mulroney was magnanimous with others too. Peter Harder had been Clark's principal secretary and was now out of a job as a result of the leadership change. The new leader helped Harder with a move to a position in a Crown corporation. Harder quickly returned to Ottawa within a year, served as Chief of Staff to Erik Nielsen, the deputy prime minister, and ultimately went on to a stellar public service career as the deputy minister of several major departments in the governments of Jean Chrétien and Stephen Harper.

When Justin Trudeau moved into government in 2015, he and his senior advisors went out of their way to make a clean break with the past. They studiously avoided bringing in battle tested staffers from the Martin and Chrétien eras to PMO and ministers' offices. The result was that in its early days, the new government lacked exempt staff with the necessary institutional knowledge of how the federal government worked, which created problems both internally for lack of experience and externally as the veterans left out became a chorus of unattributed critics.

Leadership races can bring out the worst in parties, but they can also bring out the best, such as the testing of ground-breaking or-

ganizational techniques or innovative policy, communications or fundraising approaches. Leadership is also often a valuable recruitment tool for parties as they bring in new people eager to road-test new approaches and ideas. That's the way the "Big Blue Machine" (BBM) rose to prominence in 1971 through the election of Bill Davis as the leader of the Ontario PCs.

According to all expectations, Davis should have walked away with the 1971 leadership contest to succeed John Robarts. Only 41, and with nine years as a highly successful Minister of Education and University Affairs, he was the logical successor. On a snowy night at Maple Leaf Gardens at the end of an old-style delegated convention, Davis eventually emerged victorious, but the final result was a squeaker, with a razor-thin 44-vote plurality over cabinet colleague Allan Lawrence.

The principals behind the BBM, Dalton Camp and Norman Atkins, were well-known to Davis and the PCs (they were behind Robert Stanfield's federal leadership victory in 1967), but Davis was wary about Camp's very public campaign against the leadership of John Diefenbaker and believed their support would be toxic. As a result, they supported Lawrence, and almost defeated Davis.

Immediately following the leadership, Davis brought Camp and Atkins onside and the rest was histo-

ry. The Big Blue Machine became the campaign organization that dominated Ontario and national politics for a generation, playing a key role in the election of Mulroney in 1984 and becoming the brains trust of "go-to" strategists for many conservative politicians across Canada and in several other countries. Its generations of alumnae—among them Toronto Mayor John Tory—still occupy positions of influence across Canada.

The final set of transition decisions facing a new leader is to form the shadow cabinet. In addition to reflecting gender and regional balances and taking aptitudes, experience and expertise of caucus members into account, the leader needs to seek balance between his or her supporters and those of other candidates. These appointments will be watched closely within the party for favouritism.

In 2004, following the creation of the new Conservative Party from the former Reform Alliance and Progressive Conservatives, newly elected leader Stephen Harper faced a difficult set of choices in creating his shadow cabinet. Within the new party's merged caucus, he had to move high profile Reform Alliance critics out of their positions to make way for the incoming PC MPs. This was achieved with significant sensitivity on the leader's part and generosity on the part of those who were making way for the newcomers. Many people put water in their wine to make a bold experiment work.

Like everyone else in a new job, new leaders never get a second chance to make a first impression. Canadians will be watching how the new Conservative leader handles his first big challenge. **P**

Contributing Writer Geoff Norquay, a Principal of the Earncliffe Strategy Group in Ottawa, was research director for Conservative Leader Joe Clark, senior adviser on social policy to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and later was Director of Communications in opposition under Stephen Harper.

Erin O'Toole's Political, Policy and Pandemic Challenges

After a marathon vote-counting drama that saw conventional wisdom overturned, Erin O'Toole was elected leader of the Conservative Party of Canada on the third ballot by a clear margin of 57 to 43 percent over Peter MacKay. The new leader faces unique challenges unforeseen just months ago. With the COVID-19 pandemic still taking Canadian lives and upending our economy, politics and governance, O'Toole becomes Opposition Leader at a moment unprecedented outside of wartime.

Jaime Watt

To the victor belong the spoils. But also—as Erin O'Toole is about to learn—the toil.

O'Toole has won the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada in what was surely the strangest partisan competition in our history. New and relatively unknown candidates, the impact of COVID-19 on campaigning, and the persistent hanging-on of the outgoing leader all contributed to a contest about as interesting as the live stream footage of the party's empty ballot vault in Ottawa.

With a determined effort and a persistent focus on down-ballot support from social conservatives, O'Toole has earned his win. But with that triumph come serious challenges—challenges that go well beyond the usual uphill battle facing a new leader.

By now, it is a trope to point out just how much the world has changed in 2020. But still, consider how things looked when O'Toole threw his hat in the ring to be leader in January. Canadians were focused on Iran's downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane

carrying 57 Canadians. We were contemplating which high-end area code in Canada Prince Harry and Meghan Markle might land in. Simply put, we had no idea what was coming.

“O'Toole needs a big-tent approach that brings Conservative supporters onboard while acknowledging the essential need to modernize and align with Canadians' contemporary priorities.”

But the world today looks very different, and it will take some time for our federal political parties to adjust. Now that Erin O'Toole is leading the Conservatives, what challenges does he face in the party, in the House, and across the country—and how should he address them?

First of all, the party.

While this race has proven far less divisive and the party less conflicted than in 2017, there is no denying the challenge that O'Toole faces. The ever-present divisions between social conservatives and the rest of the party have quieted down, but by no means have they disappeared. O'Toole needs a big-tent approach that brings Conservative supporters onboard while acknowledging the essential need to modernize and align with Canadians' contemporary priorities.

Managing this uneasy alliance is always difficult, and some leaders have fared better than others. The reality is that while O'Toole owes his victory to social conservatives, he is not one of them. The truth is O'Toole has always been a progressive and so he will have to work to meaningfully address their concerns while not forgetting the three quarters of members who opted for a moderate, modern party.

He seemed to understand that in his victory speech, when he established a land speed record for distancing himself from social conservative allies and staked out a big blue tent.

Especially if there is an impending federal election, it will be quite a balancing act for O'Toole to conclusively put to bed social issues like equal marriage and reproductive rights, as Andrew Scheer was neither able nor seriously willing to do. It has become increasingly awkward to watch Conservatives across Canada contort themselves around these issues.

Andrew Scheer's refusal to properly address climate change was undoubtedly a factor in his political demise. As Canadians overwhelmingly accept the scientific consensus on climate change, it's no

longer feasible for the Conservative Party to ignore their clarion call for some form of climate action. O'Toole ran with a plan to reduce emissions in Canada and around the world, but he would be wise to promptly begin working with other Conservatives to come up with a serious alternative to the Liberals' carbon tax.

In this area, O'Toole has an advantage over his competitors. He provided a refreshing dose of realism on the campaign trail by acknowledging that the Tories won't win another election without a real climate policy that speaks to Canadians. And he's right. We simply cannot afford to lose another election by refusing to address the urgency of a planetary, existential threat.

But 2020 has also brought unprecedented, rather than familiar, challenges to the party. As COVID-19 has brought us further apart through social distancing measures, the typical vehicles for assembling supporters and reaching donors are no longer an option. Tactics will need to adapt, and quickly at that. There will be no mass conventions to rally party members, no glad-handing with donors or influential meetings of minds in stuffy rooms. But O'Toole has already figured that out. Rather than being stymied by the restrictions of the virus over his campaign, he figured out how to use it to his advantage. A judo move, if you will. He quickly mastered the art of Zoom. His campaign team used technology skillfully and O'Toole found his footing in a whole new way of campaigning.

So, he has an advantage over Justin Trudeau in that he's already figured out how to campaign outside of traditional channels—and win. In his leadership race, he Zoom-called folks in every low-turnout riding, and he's sure to do the same in a federal election.

We know there will be challenges for O'Toole across the board, and the House is no exception. No one doubts O'Toole's *bona fides* when it comes to governing and parliamentary procedure—he's been an MP for eight years



Erin O'Toole introduces himself to the national media at his first Ottawa news conference as Conservative Leader on August 25. *André Forget, CPC photo*

and has served as a cabinet minister. Unlike MacKay or Leslyn Lewis, he also has the authority and platform provided by a seat in the House of Commons, starting on day one.

Conservatives are also eager to have their leader on the Hill—at least virtually—so that he can champion the party's efforts to keep the government in check. For months, the job has fallen to Pierre Poilievre as shadow minister of finance. But with a new leader elected in a time of national—and global—crisis, it is high time for the leader of the Opposition to fulfil the very essence of the role by providing oversight and acting as a check to the government's impulses. I look forward to Erin O'Toole's maiden question period, as do, I'm sure, many Canadians who feel that an effective foil to Justin Trudeau has been sorely lacking in the green chamber.

Erin O'Toole will also have to reckon with a Parliament that has changed in remarkable ways since he first took office in 2012. The Bloc Québécois are back to stay it seems, and the new Tory leader will need to get better acquainted with Yves-François Blanchet and his colleagues in relatively short order, if he is going to have any say in making the weather.

But aside from issues in the party and the swift action needed in the House,

O'Toole faces challenges across the country, not least of which being exactly how he will grapple with the role of Opposition leader during a global pandemic and the vicissitudes that entails.

First, he will need to reckon with a new, post-pandemic politics. Social attitudes in Canada and around the world have changed, largely in response to the grave inequalities and injustices revealed by COVID-19. The issues, too, have changed along with the tone of conversation. So have Canadians' expectations of their leaders and parties. Here, again, O'Toole will need to address these challenges, in part by reconciling his longstanding identity as a moderate voice from Ontario, with his recent courtship of the party's right-wing.

The final and, it seems to me, most significant challenge O'Toole faces is really how to "own" his role as leader of the Opposition while preparing to contest a federal election.

I believe that Canadians are hoping for more than just a candidate for prime minister. They want someone who will hold Justin Trudeau to account for his actions. Someone to remind them what the Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition is meant to do: contest fiscal overreach, press the government on their response to this pandemic and ensure that the mad rush of COVID legislation does not go without serious oversight.

If O'Toole can effectively do that while whirring up the party apparatus for a fight, he stands a real shot at convincing Canadians of the imperative for a Conservative government. And if the NDP and Bloc are eager to play ball, it could be as early as next fall.

It will be gruelling work, but his task couldn't be more essential—for Conservatives and more importantly, for all Canadians. **P**

Contributing Writer Jaime Watt, Executive Chairman of Navigator Ltd., a Toronto-based national public affairs consulting firm, is a Sunday columnist for the Toronto Star, and frequent television commentator from the moderate Conservative perspective.



Guest Column / Lee Richardson

Jock Osler, Beloved Politico. Honestly.

Jock Osler, a popular figure of national and Alberta political life who passed away August 5 at 83, bequeathed a bipartisan legacy of “respect, courtesy and generosity of spirit,” writes his longtime friend Lee Richardson, with whom former prime ministers Joe Clark and Brian Mulroney shared their memories.

Jock Osler lived on the sunny side of the street. Through six decades of journalism and political life, he was always positive, never off-balance—the kind of person people liked to be around. To adapt an aphorism, he was always the same way twice—collegial, reflexively helpful, insightful and unfailingly, often hilariously, honest.

While there were other talented writers, superb political strategists and tacticians of all stripes in all parties, none could emulate Jock’s breadth of spirit and *joie de vivre*. He was fun, with a razor-sharp mind, a wry self-deprecating wit, and an encyclopedic knowledge of Canadian political history.

But *the* thing about Jock was this: he respected everyone. Allies and opponents alike were treated with the same respect, courtesy and generosity of spirit. He regarded everyone he worked with as a colleague and made common cause with all for the job at hand in any election, and later for the good of the country.

Perhaps prophetic was an encounter shortly after Jock began his career in the newsroom of the *Calgary Herald*. The paper hired a young Joe Clark for the summer, (the future prime minister remembers being referred to as either, “copy boy” or “coffee boy”).

Clark recalls today: “Jock was the first to reach out, to take me in and look after me and others in a hectic newsroom. He had a quality, a capacity to bring the team together.” Jock

reached out again to assist then-rookie candidate Joe Clark in the 1972 federal election.

Seven years and two elections later, Joe was prime minister of Canada with Jock at his side, a trusted advisor. Of his loyal friend, Clark remembers now, “There is an intelligence of knowing things, and there is an understanding of things. That was the essential part of his advice.”

Through all the years in Ottawa, the exhilarating wins and the devastating losses, the party leadership contests and general elections, in government or in Opposition, Jock Osler was respected and admired on both sides of the House and in the Press Gallery for his decency, ethics and courtesy to all.

When Clark lost the hard-fought 1983 leadership battle to Brian Mulroney, the Progressive Conservative Party was fractured and divided.

With a general election looming, it was imperative the former leader and the newly elected Mulroney resolve their differences and unite their respective supporters. When Mulroney graciously extended the olive branch, Clark did not hesitate in response. The efforts of his collegial confidant, Jock Osler, were significant in that successful rapprochement.

During the early months of the new Mulroney government’s efforts to renew positive Canada-US relations with the White House and on Capitol Hill, Mulroney appointed Jock minister counsellor in the Canadian Embassy

in Washington. He now says of Jock, “He had an easy charm, a positive attitude, and that Alberta work ethic ... he was a natural fit in Washington.”

Even in the sadness of his recent passing, it’s hard to think of Jock and not smile. He’ll be deeply missed for his sense of humour, his kindness, and his contribution to community, particularly here in Calgary.

An icon of the Calgary Stampede as, with his trademark baritone, voice of the Grandstand show, Jock was a community builder, and an animator in the theatre scene in Calgary. Jock and Diana gave generously of their time and treasure to numerous arts and community groups across the city. Their four children, Will, Suzy, Ted and John, were so loyal to Jock that, as reported by columnist Don Braid on his passing, they drew straws in 2005 to see not who would lose and donate a kidney to their dad, but who would *win* and donate a kidney.

While Calgary went through our eternal boom and bust cycles, every struggling arts group in the city wanted Jock on their board at the bottom of the cycle, both for his sage advice and connections, but probably even more for his calming influence.

Above all, he loved and was cherished by his family. He was a gentleman in the finest sense of the word and a shining example of a life well lived.

Jock, his beloved Diana and wonderful family have become a part of modern Calgary history. His legacy will live on in a grateful community. **P**

Lee Richardson, a Conservative MP during the Mulroney and Harper years, was previously chief of staff to Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, and later a director of the Calgary Stampede. He knew Jock Osler all along the way.



Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and his choice for vice president, Sen. Kamala Harris, together in his hometown in Delaware on August 12. She makes history as the first Black and South Asian woman nominated for Veep in American history. *Joe Biden Flickr photo*

Reports of the Death of America Have Been Greatly Exaggerated

As one of the most important US presidential elections in history approaches on November 3, Donald Trump is addressing the gap between more than one thousand days of degradation and disruption and plausible electability by pre-emptively attacking the integrity of the result. Veteran US diplomat and now Ottawa-based Earnscliffe Principal Sarah Goldfeder writes that Americans have never been in better fighting shape to confront this challenge.

Sarah Goldfeder

The United States sits on the eve of an election that many pundits have identified as the most important in our history. The results of this election will no doubt be challenged, prolonging the uncertainty and contributing to division. The popular vote may not determine who wins the White House—making this the third time in this century the archaic rules of the grand compromise protected the rural minority in the face of the more progressive urban centres. Challenges will no doubt be filed regarding vote suppression and fraud.

The intensity of activity in America surrounding this election has been

long-absent from American electoral politics. Perhaps it is partially because Americans, due to the pandemic, have been at home, watching the news more. Perhaps it is that Americans are participating more in the conversation about governance because in a pandemic, we have an attachment to government that we might not have had before. And of course, there is Donald Trump, who has invigorated the American electorate since his entrance into the Republican nomination race in 2015. Americans have disagreed about his approach from day one, but his chaotic approach to controlling the virus has led to a yo-yo effect that is progressively eroding away what limited faith Americans have in government. Americans have long been suspicious of government, with the most recent slide in trust having begun in 2000 (Pew Trust in Government 1958-2019) and continuing throughout both this administration and the last. At the same time the failures to adequately supply hospitals, support businesses, and provide for individuals as they have lost their income, have illustrated the power and importance of the institutions of government.

“ That Americans do not always agree on the best path forward, whether it be a pandemic response, global engagement, race relations, reproductive rights, or the conduct of immigration officials, should surprise no one. ”

That Americans do not always agree on the best path forward, whether it be a pandemic response, global engagement, race relations, reproductive rights, or the conduct of immigration officials, should surprise no one. The



Protesters took to the streets of Seattle to march on May 30 in response to the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was killed while being taken into custody by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. *Kelly Kline Flickr photo*

experiment that is the United States of America was founded on the idea that its citizens would disagree.

The notion that there is more than one way to view the world, to understand the priorities of government, and to map the best pathway for a country's citizens is foundational to democracy. Fundamental to great democracies is that politics and government is for all, not just for political scientists. Critiques that focus on the intensity of disagreement of American voters and the repercussions of that intensity miss the underlying important character of the United States.

The underlying chaos of the Trump administration has energized both Republicans and Democrats as they head into the 2020 contest. The Trump administration is a reflection of the pendulum of democracy. After eight years of the Obama administration exercising executive power to entrench progressive values, those that disagreed with that vision united behind a can-

didate that had no political ideology beyond being the anti-Obama.

In the four years of the Republican Party being molded into this something new, something absent a coherent requirement beyond loyalty to the president, the party no longer looks familiar to many. However, without a champion of their own to stand up to the battle cries of the president, they have chosen power over good governance. The few Republicans that have stood up to the president have been pushed aside not just by the White House, but by their colleagues in the House and Senate. Meanwhile, in 2018, the pendulum swung in many congressional districts towards more progressive Democrats, but the race for the presidential candidacy in 2020 has moved the Democrats back into the centre.

How is the pandemic influencing this election? COVID-19 has not proven to be an equitable disease. For a whole host of reasons, the virus affects Black Americans, more often and more virulently than white

Americans. The virus brought to the surface a litany of evidence of systemic racism. Notably, Black Americans were more likely to have been unemployed as an effect of the shutdowns across the country, and at the same time, were more likely to be the jobs with high risks of exposure to the virus.

Add to that cauldron of inequity: the murder of George Floyd, the Black man asphyxiated by a white police officer in Minneapolis on Memorial Day; three white men shooting a Ahmaud Aubery while he jogged through his own neighborhood in Georgia; and a white woman, Amy Cooper, who called the New York City Police with a complaint about a Black man, Christian Cooper, when he asked her to follow the rules and leash her dog. The headlines came rapidly, while Americans sat at home, on TV, Twitter, and Tiktok, and the rage boiled over.

In the months before a pivotal election and in the middle of a pandemic, Americans took to the streets and demanded that government be accountable. The Black lives Matter movement has moved beyond protesting about police brutality to demanding that the police, as an institution, be replaced. The argument that the law enforcement system is so broken it cannot be fixed has resonated across communities from California to Chicago to Minnesota to Washington D.C. The argument that the people are not the problem, that the system is the problem, provides a policy path forward.

As the world watched, an American president failed to take on the usual mantle of leadership as COVID-19 spread globally. Not only did America fail to take on its usual supporting efforts to contain this virus, it gave up on its own domestic response. Despite mixed messages and disparity of experience, it turns out that many agreed with the president, many believed the severity of the situation to be a figment of the imagination of the mainstream media. And even

now, with death rates and infection rates at global records, many Americans repeat the president's tweet from the early days of spring, "WE CANNOT LET THE CURE BE WORSE THAN THE PROBLEM ITSELF."

This summer, what should have been a busy and energized campaign season with buses and planes crisscrossing the continent, has been rendered virtual. With a captive audience of millions on social media platforms, Trump has worked to rally his base in the heartland, and Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have made history. Polling reflects a still-divided America. With the margins between the two campaigns hovering in the low double digits, it is clear this will be a fight to the finish. A handful of states, as in previous years, look to determine the outcome and those include many on the northern border; Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Maine. Florida will once again take centre stage as a must-win state with the added challenge of many absentee voters. The president's war on vote-by-mail has been elevated to new heights by his current attempted weaponization of the US Postal Service. Little wonder, as the states of the west coast—all governed by Democrats—are all vote-by-mail.

As has been consistently made clear in so many, previously unimaginable ways during Trump's presidency, democracy is messy. And the adjustments that have been made over time may have actually contributed to the current situation. Arguably, the deployment of executive orders to force policy that could not find its way through the legislative branch was a technique the Trump Administration learned from the Obama Administration. The results of those orders have been disruptive—forming an unstable foundation for the policy environment. The power of one president to shape the judicial branch for a generation is also outsized and threatens that unstable foundation. This adminis-

tration has taken advantage of many of the weak spots of the scaffolding that holds the government accountable to the people. That doesn't mean those weak spots won't be shored up. The consequence so far has been a strengthening of the local politicians, governors and mayors of America.

“From outside the country's borders, it may look like America is unraveling. But inside, Americans remain resilient. Even while the president stokes division, Americans find unity of purpose. This is not an unraveling; this is an opportunity.”

From outside the country's borders, it may look like America is unraveling. But inside, Americans remain resilient. Even while the president stokes division, Americans find unity of purpose. This is not an unraveling; this is an opportunity. Americans are not ones to forego opportunity.

There is a window here that comes along once a generation and is generally preceded by tragedy and strife. While some will argue that this moment is different somehow because Americans have grown lazy and complacent, the truth is that Americans have never been more ready—never been in better fighting shape. **P**

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Column / Don Newman

Beyond the Election, the China Card

They come along from time to time. Politicians who change the dialogue, change how the political conversation is conducted, whose influence outlasts their time in office and sets the benchmarks against which people then measure success. In Canada two come easily to mind. Pierre Trudeau changed Canada so that no future prime minister would be unable to speak French. One result was that when Trudeau's time ran out, bilingual Brian Mulroney was chosen, in 1983, to lead the Progressive Conservative Party, becoming the only Quebec native to lead that party to two majority governments.

For his part, Mulroney then changed the economic dialogue in the country. Canada had been growing increasingly nationalist economically. Mulroney championed free trade with the United States and won re-election in 1988 election doing so. The Liberals who had opposed free trade and fought against it in the election then became the North American Free Trade Agreement's biggest champions when they formed government in 1993.

Margaret Thatcher changed the political dialogue in Britain when she became prime minister in 1979. Thirty years later, much of the change she wrought still resonates. And in the US, Ronald Reagan upended almost 50 years of American political thinking stretching from the New Deal in the 1930s with the conservative ideas he espoused though didn't necessarily always follow.

Now we have another American president who has changed the game. Donald Trump is seeking re-election this fall. Whether or not he wins he has impacted the American political dis-

course in ways that may live on even if he loses to Joe Biden, a more intelligent, more capable and more reasonable successor.

The fact is that most politicians who change the dialogue arrive at a time when the dialogue is starting to change anyway. In many ways, they are facilitators rather than innovators. Donald Trump has been that in spades, going far beyond where much of the American public has been, but nevertheless advancing familiar themes which have been growing in the American psyche for many years.

So, Canadians shouldn't expect an instant revival of the "special relationship" that Trump has so derided, notwithstanding the negotiating success of the new NAFTA. The capricious tariffs on Canadian aluminum he has imposed to help his re-election effort may not suddenly disappear. And don't expect the American security umbrella to suddenly unfold again across Canada with the anti-ballistic missile system protecting targets in our country as well as the US. On missile defence, we will actually have to sign on and pony up a percentage of the cost to be covered.

And most importantly, America-China tensions will intensify. This will have ramifications for the entire world, but particularly for Canada. Trump is building his re-election campaign around confronting China. Canada is already caught in the middle of the dispute, detaining Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou on an extradition request from the US, while China holds two Canadians—Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig—seized in retaliation.

As Canada confronts the challenges of this new world, now is the time for this country to change its political dialogue. It doesn't necessarily take a change in personalities but it does take a change from the "feel good" Canada to the "be real" Canada. China and the US and their disputes provide the first opportunity to do that.

The Meng case is not primarily a legal one as the government has treated it. It is a geopolitical one in which Canada as well as the two principal players have a stake. Beijing is eager to have Meng back and are playing hardball to get her. We should play hardball back. The Chinese don't participate in simultaneous release of people being detained because they think they lose face. Well, this time we should tell them they will have to release the Canadians simultaneously with Meng or they won't get her back.

If the exchange happens, the Americans will be annoyed. But when the exchange is complete, we will be able to do what we already want to; exclude Huawei from our 5G wireless network as the US wants. That will make Washington happy.

To follow that course would be to make our own foreign policy. Ultimately in a US-China confrontation we are on the American side. But we can try to be on it on our own terms. Whomever wins in the United States in November is going to create challenges for Canada. But if we meet them on our own conditions, that can be a tremendous opportunity as well. **P**

Columnist Don Newman, Executive Vice President of Rubicon Strategies in Ottawa, is a lifetime member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.



AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde at the table of the First Ministers Meeting on Indigenous affairs in 2017. *Adam Scotti photo.*

First Nations Self-Policing: A LEGACY OF SUCCESS, AND A ROAD TO HEALING

The principles and practices of First Nations self-policing are informed by spirituality, nature, history and, above all, relationality—the concept of being in “right relations” with those around you. At a time when conventional policing practices are producing especially alarming outcomes for Black and Indigenous people amid a worldwide outcry for reform, First Nations justice provides an alternative approach that works.

Perry Bellegarde

λάλιγá sila (Frank Brown), a hereditary chief of the Heiltsuk First Nation on the north coast of British Columbia, has made extraordinary contributions to the health and well-being of his people. But his life could have turned out very differently. At 14, λάλιγá sila was convicted of armed robbery and was about to be sent away to juvenile detention when his family requested that Heiltsuk law be followed instead. As a result, the young man was exiled to an island within Heiltsuk territory, to reflect on his crime, to learn his own traditions, and to heal. λάλιγá sila credits this intervention for turning his life around.

Frank Brown's story has been on my mind lately. Recent high-profile incidents of police violence against First Nations women and men, and the catalyzing spark of Black Lives Matter, have focused long-overdue attention on the reality that First Nations continue to be both dangerously overpoliced and tragically under-protected. It's clear that immediate action is needed to hold police accountable and to build and strengthen alternatives to respond to individuals in crisis. However, in this moment of reckoning, we must remember that First Nations have traditions of law and order—traditions that are able to generate healing rather than multiplying tragedy.

“ Police violence against First Nations women and men, and the catalyzing spark of Black Lives Matter, have focused long-overdue attention on the reality that First Nations continue to be both dangerously overpoliced and tragically under-protected. ”

In June, 26-year-old Chantel Moore was killed by police in New Brunswick after reportedly brandishing a knife during a “wellness check” at her apartment in the middle of the night. A member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, a neighbour to the south of Frank Brown's Heiltsuk Nation, she had recently moved to Edmundston to be closer to her mother and six-year old daughter. Not two weeks later, Rodney Levi, a member of the Metepenagiag First Nation, was shot and killed by an RCMP officer during an incident near Miramichi, N.B. A CTV News analysis published in June showed that an Indigenous person in Canada was more than 10



Indigenous citizens lead a healing walk on June 13 in honour of Chantel Moore, shot five times by a local policeman during a “wellness check” in the middle of the night at her apartment in Edmundston, N.B., in June. Chief Bellegarde writes: “The example of First Nations policing offers not only a path to reform, but a best practices model.” *CP photo.*

times more likely than a white person to have been shot and killed by a police officer since 2017.

These tragedies crystallize the urgent need for reform. At a time when public attention worldwide has been galvanized by the death of George Floyd and in Canada by these tragically violent encounters between police and First Nations individuals, the example of First Nations policing offers not only a path to reform but a best practices model, adaptable and scalable beyond our communities.

As University of Victoria Law Professor John Borrows and others have written, First Nations legal orders come from different sources than the more familiar laws of the *Criminal Code*, including spiritual teachings, traditional stories, and watching and learning from nature. Creator's Law, Natural Law and First-Nations' Law all work together to encourage people to live in harmony. Relationality is key. To be in “right relations” with those around you is the foundation of wellness and safety.

These laws and traditions are resilient. From the Dog Soldier societies that fiercely resisted colonial violence in the 1800s to the Bear Clan Patrol formed in the 1990's to re-

spond to a crisis of violence in Winnipeg's inner city, there are numerous, dramatic examples of how we have upheld our laws and worked to keep our communities safe. There are also countless subtle and everyday ways in which conflicts are mediated and grievances healed through the guidance of our Elders.

Where these traditions continue to be practised, they may go unnoticed and unremarked precisely because they have been so effective at keeping the peace. What is noticed, instead, is the way that safety and wellness are jeopardized when these traditions break down. Much like clean water, when Indigenous justice systems are not maintained—or when they've been sabotaged or taken away—we're suddenly confronted with the life-and-death consequences of their absence.

Today, First Nations communities and individuals are living through a crisis that is not of their making. Canada's efforts to eradicate the cultures, languages, and laws that define First Nations have resulted in profound intergenerational trauma. They have also put many of our people, especially our youth, on a collision course with a foreign structure of law and order that rare-

ly demonstrates meaningful understanding of our reality, real capacity to meet the needs of our people, or accountability to our communities.

Canadians need to appreciate that the history of policing in this country is part of a larger story of the violent denial of our inherent rights in support of colonialism, itself inherently racist. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that the residential school system, and myriad other colonial laws and policies, were part of a systematic effort to seize our lands and wipe out First Nations as distinct cultures and peoples. Police were used to overthrow Indigenous structures and traditions of law and order and, in their place, impose laws aimed at our destruction.

In fact, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, was created explicitly for this purpose. Their history includes confining First Nations to reservations while forcibly removing our children to attend the residential schools. There's good reason why my Carrier Sekani sisters and brothers in British Columbia know the RCMP in their own language not as "friends" or "relations" but as "those who take us away."

Today, many First Nations women and men continue to learn through hard experience to mistrust and fear the police. The tragic reality is those incidents of police violence and abuse that come to public attention because they are caught on camera are just a small part of a much wider pattern that is all-too-familiar to every First Nations person in Canada.

In my life, I have had the good fortune to also experience another side of policing. I have three brothers who have served with distinction in the RCMP, each having received their long-term service medal. I have also known many officers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who are deeply knowledgeable and respectful of First Nations history and cultures and are, in turn, respected and admired in the communities they serve.

“ I have no doubt that there are a great many police officers out there who genuinely want to be part of the solution. The trouble is that the system itself works to prevent them becoming the kind of police officers they want to be. ”

From my own experience, I have no doubt that there are a great many police officers out there who genuinely want to be part of the solution. The trouble is that the system itself works to prevent them becoming the kind of police officers they want to be and that our communities need and deserve.

Officers are routinely sent to our communities with limited prior knowledge of First Nations cultures and little or no experience working in a First Nations context. Indeed, a great many RCMP sent to more remote and isolated communities are fresh out of Depot with little or no prior hands-on experience of any kind.

They often live apart from our people in the equivalent of gated communities that only reinforce the gulf of misunderstanding and mistrust. Furthermore, these officers are inevitably moved on to other communities before they have the chance to develop the relationships on which trust and effective policing are built.

These problems are compounded by an increasingly militarized policing model that emphasizes capacity to exercise overwhelming force rather than the skills to de-escalate and resolve conflict peaceably. There is something wrong when grandmothers defending rights affirmed in the Constitution and international human rights law are confronted by police officers armed for military combat. There is also something profoundly and dangerously wrong when armed law enforcement officers are the only ones able to respond when our community members are in crisis and call out for help. Throughout the country, mental health services have been neglected

for far too long and the situation is particularly concerning for First Nations. One consequence is that police are filling the gaps, even though they don't have the training or expertise needed. And their very presence can be triggering for individuals in crisis, contributing to the tragic escalation of those encounters.

I don't believe that the solution to this crisis is to simply transfer resources from policing to social services. In First Nations communities, policing is also underfunded and under-resourced, both in comparison to services provided to other communities and in comparison to our needs. Rather, what is needed is a different model of policing that is able to meet the real needs of First Nations, that is prepared to work in partnership with our communities, and that is adequately resourced to succeed.

Today, many First Nations administer their own police services, particularly in Quebec and Ontario. The benefits have been demonstrated time and again. Consider the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service in northern Ontario. In twenty-six years of policing 38,000 people in 34 communities they have never shot or killed anyone and never had an officer killed in the line of duty.

I have strongly advocated to Public Safety Minister Bill Blair that First Nations-controlled and administered police services be recognized as an essential service. In June, Minister Blair told the House of Commons that the federal government would work "to co-develop a legislative framework that recognizes First Nations policing as an essential service." I am hopeful we will soon see new federal legislation on First Nations policing that

will provide a foundation for significant investment in meeting the real needs of our communities.

It is also crucial that every officer receive human rights-based training that fosters cultural competency and promotes relationship building. Critically, the effectiveness of this training must be subject to independent review, including from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and racialized communities.

Today, many First Nations have developed their own orientation programs to ensure that officers entering their communities understand their history, protocols, and expectations. These programs, which help officers feel more at home and be more effective at their jobs, should be supported by all levels of government. It is also critical to dedicate more resources to community-based alternatives to calling in the police when individuals are in crisis. Funding models need to be flexible enough to ensure that each community can design the wrap-around services that they need and can develop multi-year program plans with the confidence that funding won't suddenly

run out. These measures and more are essential to addressing the immediate needs of First Nations. However, this is just the beginning.

“ What is needed is a different model of policing that is able to meet the real needs of First Nations, that is prepared to work in partnership with our communities, and that is adequately resourced to succeed. ”

Last year, the federal government adopted new child welfare legislation that responded to the strong desire of First Nations to exercise jurisdiction over family services according to our own laws and traditions. Implementation of the legislation will directly address one of the critical points of conflict between First Nations and the Canadian justice system, namely, child apprehen-

sion. More than that, the new legislation demonstrates that there is space within Canada to reconcile national laws and Indigenous legal orders.

So, I put to you a combined call to both action and justice, as numerous inquiries and inquests have done before. When Canada supports—tangibly and systemically—the revitalization and exercise of First Nations laws and legal orders, the crisis of First Nations policing, and indeed the crisis in the criminal justice system overall, will end. There are tangible steps already being taken and they must be built upon. There are also numerous policy proposals dating back decades yet to be meaningfully implemented.

When Canada chooses to be in right relations with First Nations it will be a better country and a beacon of justice and hope in a world that is grappling with how to achieve justice for all, not only the privileged few. **P**

National Chief Perry Bellegarde has led the Assembly of First Nations, representing Canada's 634 First Nations, since 2014. He is a proud member of the Little Black Bear First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory, Saskatchewan.

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A Year of Unity Milestones Remembered

In a year when Canadians, including their frequently quarrelsome governments, have united against the existential threat of a pandemic, the country may be distracted from three crucial anniversaries. Graham Fraser, who spent years as a journalist explaining Quebec politics to the rest of Canada and a decade as Commissioner of Official Languages, reminds us of three moments when history might have pivoted to a different outcome.

Graham Fraser

This is a year for national unity anniversaries: 25 years since the 1995 Quebec referendum, 40 years since the 1980 referendum, and 50 since the October Crisis. Each milestone marked the country's historical consciousness; each one occurred in a context that now seems as distant as the Second World War.

The October Crisis, provoked by the kidnapping of Montreal-based British Trade Commissioner James Cross by the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) and escalated by the murder of Quebec cabinet minister Pierre Laporte, led to the War Measures Act, the suspension of civil liberties and the imprisonment of over 400 people who were never charged. I was in Italy during the October Crisis, and watched grainy television clips of Vietnamese students being loaded into paddy wagons—a frightening giveaway that the police were rounding up people who had nothing to do with the FLQ.

Except for a few minor incidents, the October Crisis marked the end of

seven years of terrorist bombings in Quebec. But it also led to overreach by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The burning of a barn to pre-empt a rumoured meeting of the FLQ and the Black Panthers and a break-in to steal membership lists of the Parti Québécois (PQ) resulted in the McDonald Commission inquiry and the creation of the national spy agency, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS).

Rather than eliminating the Quebec independence movement, the federal excesses had the effect of strengthening it; a number of PQ cabinet ministers in the Lévesque government would date their commitment to Quebec independence to the October Crisis and the federal response. Ten years later, PQ leader René Lévesque was premier of Quebec, determined to fulfill his promise to hold a referendum on sovereignty-association. Three-and-a-half years into his mandate, despite realizing he would not win, he kept his commitment and held a vote; 60 percent voted No and 40 percent voted Yes. The night of the vote was

poignant; hoarse and exhausted, all but alone on stage, Lévesque said, almost plaintively, “À la prochaine fois”—until the next time.

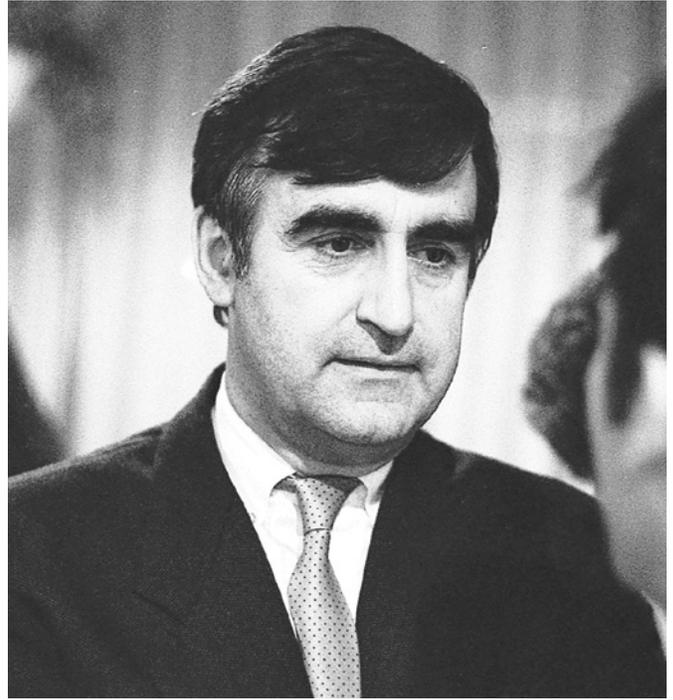
Holding a referendum was not a risk-free proposition. Losing one, as it turned out, involved losing powers for Quebec. Pierre Trudeau had vowed that if the Yes side were defeated, he would take it as a mandate to change the Constitution. Quebec nationalists interpreted this as a promise to give more powers to Quebec. When the ultimate result—a Charter of Rights and Freedoms—was enacted without Quebec's support, there was a bitter sense of betrayal that still lingers, and helped drive support for the federal, antifederalist Bloc Québécois party.

“A number of PQ cabinet ministers in the Lévesque government would date their commitment to Quebec independence to the October Crisis and the federal response.”

The bitterness created by Quebec's exclusion led to the defeat of the federal Liberals and the dramatic victory of Brian Mulroney in 1984, fuelled by his promise to bring Quebec into the constitution. The failure of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 contributed to the return of the PQ, led by Jacques Parizeau, determined to succeed where Lévesque had



Quebec Premier René Lévesque and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1977, each in his manner the incarnation of Quebec. *Graham Bezzant, Toronto Star Photograph Archive, Courtesy of Toronto Public Library*



Lucien Bouchard, shortly after leaving the federal cabinet in May 1990 that would lead to his founding of the Bloc Québécois. *Wikipedia photo*

not. In the spring of 1995, Parizeau had yielded to pressure for a softer referendum question from Lucien Bouchard, who had bolted from Mulroney's cabinet in 1990 over the handling of Meech Lake and formed the Bloc Québécois. When the beginning of the campaign went badly and it looked as if the result would be a repeat of 1980, Parizeau named Bouchard chief negotiator and gave him a leading role in the campaign. I was in Washington, and came back three times to cover the referendum campaign: each time, the situation looked very different.

Bouchard acquired almost mythic status in Quebec, having nearly died a few months earlier from a flesh-eating infection that resulted in the amputation of his leg. Limping to the stage night after night, obviously in pain, he poured out his rage and resentment at what he conveyed as the humiliation of Quebec by Trudeau's so-called betrayal.

Referendum night, October 30 1995, was tense. The Yes vote had surged into an early lead with the votes from eastern Quebec; the No vote

gradually inched back, only pulling ahead with the votes from Montreal and the Outaouais. The final result was a razor-thin victory for the No: a margin of 54,000 votes out of 4.6 million votes cast; 50.6 percent voted No, and 49.4 percent voted Yes.

“ Lévesque had the gift of convincing conservative nationalists and socialists, hardliners and moderates, that he really favoured their position and only tolerated the others. This fiction blew apart, and none of his successors was able to pull together all of the nationalist factions. ”

If the 1980 referendum night was marked by poignancy and sadness, the 1995 post-mortem was stained

by anger and bitterness. Angry Yes voters surrounded the No headquarters, blocking people from leaving; there were bonfires and angry demonstrators on rue De Maisonneuve in Montreal. Deputy Premier Bernard Landry vented his fury at an immigrant hotel worker, and Jacques Parizeau shocked even his supporters by infamously blaming “money and the ethnic vote.” The next day, Parizeau resigned. Within weeks, Bouchard was swept into the premier's office. And the result further weakened Quebec: The Supreme Court decided the terms under which Quebec could separate.

So, what happened? How is it that a movement that was on the brink of triumph 25 years ago has dissipated and fractured?

Part of the reason was the sheer, exhausting intensity of the 1995 referendum itself. As people recovered, no-one but the most strongly committed wanted to relive the trauma they had just endured. In a few years, the sovereignty movement was, in Parizeau's phrase, a field of ruins.

One reason was the Supreme Court decision in 1998 on the Quebec reference, which described four unwritten principles of the constitution—federalism, democracy, constitutionalism and the rule of law, and the protection of minorities—and laid out the conditions that would require the federal government to negotiate: a clear answer to a clear question. Claimed as a victory by both Ottawa and Quebec City, the Supreme Court reference made it clear that a referendum vote would not be, as Bouchard had claimed, a magic wand. It became equally clear that the 49.4 percent vote was not a permanent block of support for sovereignty.

Another factor was the lack of a unifying sense of mission. Lévesque had the gift of convincing conservative nationalists and socialists, hardliners and moderates, that he really favoured their position and only tolerated the others. This fiction blew apart, and none of his successors was able to pull together all of the nationalist factions into a common front. The sovereignty movement suffered an existential crisis in 2007 when the Parti Québécois finished third, and Quebec nationalism began to turn inward. Until then, many sovereignists believed they were still only 54,000 votes from independence.

Quebec's grievances against Ottawa became more and more technocratic. As the late Washington guru of *realpolitik*—and, as a McGill University alumnus, former Quebec resident—Zbigniew Brzezinski once observed, countries don't break up over who has jurisdiction over manpower training. There was a flicker of hope among *indépendantistes* when Stephen Harper was elected, the first prime minister from Western Canada since John Diefenbaker to win a majority—in 2011 after two minority governments. But Harper took pains to speak French first in every public declaration he made, everywhere in Canada and around the world. And he was equally dis-

“*Francophones are no longer at an economic disadvantage in Quebec. In fact, Francophones in Quebec earn more than Anglophones. French has not withered in Quebec, it has thrived. Support for federalism has increased during the COVID crisis.*”

ciplined in respecting provincial jurisdiction.

The political crises that have taken place in Quebec over the last few years—corruption in the construction industry revealed by the Charbonneau Commission, the massive *carré rouge* protests that shut down French-language universities in Quebec in 2014—were squarely in provincial jurisdiction. There was no federal bad guy to blame. And when there was, with the sponsorship scandal, the surge in support for the Bloc Québécois was only temporary. More recently, the Brexit debacle in the not-so-United Kingdom has been a graphic indication that extracting oneself from a political entity—as a sovereign country, let alone a province—is fraught with problems.

But more than that, an underlying shift has occurred. Francophones are no longer at an economic disadvantage in Quebec. In fact, Francophones in Quebec earn more than Anglophones. French has not withered in Quebec, it has thrived. Support for federalism has increased during the COVID crisis. Montreal welcomes immigrants, even if the rest of the province is uneasy about them, and while the metropolis is underrepresented in the National Assembly, its diversity is changing Quebec. In a sign of the changed times, Quebec Premier François Legault, a former PQ minister who leads a party that proudly calls itself a coalition (Coalition Avenir Québec), recently asked the federal government to send the army into long-term care facilities that had been overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic—almost half a century after

troops patrolled the streets in October 1970, and in a move that would have been unthinkable until now for any previous premier.

When he was an advisor to Prime Minister Mulroney, the late Marcel Côté gave me an interesting insight. He argued that some 25 percent of Quebecers want Quebec to be part of Canada under any conditions; 25 percent want Quebec to be part of Canada provided it is treated with respect as a senior partner in the federation; 25 percent want Quebec to be independent provided there is no cost, and 25 percent want Quebec to be independent whatever the cost. Those numbers have fluctuated over the years, but the insight remains valid. When Quebecers have felt insulted or humiliated by Ottawa or the rest of Canada, as was the case when the Meech Lake Accord died, support for independence has soared. When Quebecers feel that the federal system works—as it generally has during the COVID crisis—that support wanes.

But no-one should imagine that the appeal of sovereignty will ever disappear entirely. All it could take is a generation that didn't live through the trauma, feels excluded, and embraces the romance of the *beau rêve*. **P**

Contributing Writer Graham Fraser covered the 1980 referendum for The Gazette and the 1995 referendum for The Globe and Mail. He is the author of René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power, and Sorry, I Don't Speak French: Confronting the Canadian crisis That Won't Go Away. He served as Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages from 2006-16.



Guest Column / Jean Charest

A Day for the History Books

Whenever I'm asked about the 1995 referendum campaign and the extraordinary Place du Canada rally in Montreal just three days before the vote, I almost always start by remembering the feeling of tension and anxiety as the images come back to mind.

The morning of October 27 was grey, cold and windy. My wife Michèle and I were driven from our hotel to Place Ville Marie to join up with the head of the NO camp, Quebec Liberal Leader Daniel Johnson, and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

It was silent. Michèle turned to me and said "J'ai froid," and a few seconds later, she took my hand and said "Je suis inquiète."

The three leaders had only been together a few times.. This would be our last meeting before the vote on October 30.

The first part of the referendum campaign had been almost uneventful. The NO side was leading. It was all too good to be true.

At mid-campaign, on Thanksgiving weekend, the leader of the YES camp, Premier Jacques Parizeau made a stunning move. He stepped aside and he let his rival, the charismatic Lucien Bouchard, leader of the Bloc Québécois, take over. The effect was immediate and for the federalist side it was devastating.

Bouchard, who had torpedoed his long friendship with Brian Mulroney to embrace Quebec sovereignty, would, at every rally, convey political passion and a sense of mission.

At the midpoint of the campaign, the NO camp had all the charm of a company auditor loaded with statistics.

Our mission was to pull Quebec away from the edge and survive this referendum. The fate of Quebec and Canada hung in the balance.

On the previous Monday, all three of us had attended a very intense rally at the Verdun arena. I had never seen or experienced anything like it. The emotion and intensity of the crowded arena was such that when Michèle and I entered the building, our feet never touched the ground until we reached the stage. During that week, the markets had taken a hit. The dollar had weakened and business had come to a halt. These events set the context of our speeches at Place du Canada.

We made our way to the stage with relative ease. It felt to me like three gladiators heading into the ring. If we lost this fight, there would be no going back. The judgment of history would be brutal and unforgiving.

Once on stage, we could finally get a better sense of how big a crowd and how important this moment would be. The outpouring of emotion from tens of thousands of people was unlike anything any of us had ever experienced.

I remember asking the crowd whether they believed the YES campaign and whether they were ready to risk all they had with Canada to enter the black hole of separation.

Chrétien, as prime minister, committed himself to changing Canada. Daniel Johnson, as leader of the NO campaign, spoke about how Quebecers could feel proud to be Canadians. They were both eloquent and convincing.

The size of the crowd became a hotly

debated issue in the media. The separatists said there were "only" 30,000 people. The organizers announced 120,000 people. As usual, the truth would lie somewhere in between.

When the event came to an end, the crowd sang "O Canada" and then lingered. They had experienced something they knew would only happen once in their lifetime. Many of them took to the streets of Montreal to campaign, convince and plead with the Quebecers they met to stay in Canada.

We all thought this referendum campaign would end with the vote to be held three days later. On voting day, 94 percent of eligible voters showed up to express their choice. The NO side won by the slimmest of margins, 50.6 to 49.4 percent.

Canada would go on to fight another day.

But the 1995 referendum left a legacy of broken friendships and divided families, which most Quebecers never wanted to live through again. In my first election as Quebec Liberal Leader in 1998, one of our campaign themes was "No Referendum". And during our years in government from 2003-12, a referendum was precluded simply by our winning three elections in a row.

A quarter century later, October 27, 1995, remains a defining moment in the modern history of Quebec and Canada. **P**

Jean Charest, a partner at the Law Firm of McCarthy, Tétrault and three-term Premier of Quebec from 2003-12, was leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and a keynote speaker at the historic No rally in Montreal, October 27, 1995.

An Open Letter to MPs and Senators

Re: Stimulating Private Sector Support for Charities

Dear MPs and Senators,

As many of you have noted, the loss of funding for charities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is among the most unfortunate occurrences of recent months. And this at a time when the help provided by the charitable sector is needed more than ever by Canadians.

The economic and employment losses are indicative of an unprecedented emergency among charities. A May 2020 study by Imagine Canada reports donations declining by 31 percent, with 73 percent of charities seeing donations down. The report forecasts a loss of private sector donations of between \$4.2 billion and \$6.3 billion depending on the length of the crisis, with job losses estimated between 117,000 and 195,000.

This is devastating for the charitable sector, for the Canadians who provide these services, and the millions of Canadians who receive them. A report by the Cardus think tank in July found that seven charities out of 10 reported lower revenues and had already laid off 84,000 full and part-time workers.

Potentially, jobless workers are eligible for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy provided their employers' revenues have declined by the requisite 30 percent, but as you know there's no CEWS benefit for the registered charities themselves.

In its first initiative in April, the government announced a \$350 million sectoral relief fund to be administered by United Way/Centraide, the Red Cross and Community Foundations Canada to help with grass roots delivery of services. But this turns out of be a drop in the bucket of the needs of the charitable sector to deliver relief to our fellow Canadians in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Fortunately, there is something to be done for it, which would deliver immediate relief to help Canadians through the present economic emergency without significant additional costs to a fiscal framework that is already running historic deficits.

The proposal is simplicity itself, and achievable at low cost while significantly stimulating donations to the charitable sector.

The government would simply remove the capital gains tax on donations of private company shares and real estate to a registered charity. The foregone federal tax of \$50-\$60 million would result in an increase of charitable donations several times over. Existing jobs would be saved, new jobs would be created and urgently needed benefits would be delivered to Canadians.

This can be accomplished by a simple amendment to the *Income Tax Act* that could easily be adopted by Parliament either as a stand-alone measure, as part of a fiscal update or in the upcoming budget during the new session of the House beginning September 23.

As a tax change, it could be implemented immediately, since Ways and Means motions are by convention deemed to be in effect "upon tabling", even when the legislation itself hasn't been tabled, let alone passed. And while it must be passed eventually, of course, relief could flow overnight.

This is not a matter for partisan debate or division. Our soundings indicate that parties in the House would support such a measure, as would members of the Senate.

And all stakeholders in our hospitals, social service agencies, universities and the arts, and the millions of Canadians they serve, will be very appreciative of any additional support as a timely reminder that we are, indeed, all in this together.

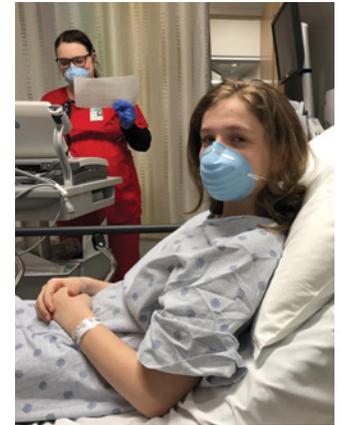
Yours sincerely,



Donald K. Johnson, O.C., LL.D.

Director, Toronto General & Western Hospital Foundation
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Chairman Emeritus & Director, Business / Arts
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HEALTHCARE



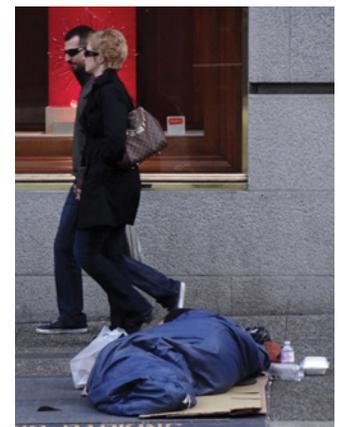
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