

The speakership ... “a timely and teachable moment”

By Brian Kieran
Editor

A throne fit for kings? John Yanyshyn's photo at the right has that feel, and it is not far off the mark. The office of the speaker and his or her regal perch looking down on the house originated in the British House of Commons during the 14th Century. Then, the speaker was required to perform a perilous balancing act with allegiances to the legislative body as well as to the sovereign, and, in the early going, it proved to be a high-risk assignment indeed. Heads did literally roll when the king felt disrespected, his power slipping.

Today, the speaker's chair is still regal, but the occupant's balancing act has little to do with the monarchy and everything to do with diplomacy, fairness, protocol, and precedent right inside the chamber and in the legislative precincts. In the Winter issue of *Orders of the Day*, former speaker Joan Sawicki (1992-1994) wrote us: “Speakers live in such a tenuous and lonely world – sort of a bubble within a bubble. I suspect few (readers) ... understand the various roles of the speaker and the fine line he or she needs to walk.

“It might be a timely and teachable moment for a generic piece in OOTD on the complexity of the speaker's role in our parliamentary democracy. Who knows, some former speakers (and other former MLAs) might be persuaded to weigh in with feedback.”

Acutely aware that such a discussion in this newsletter needs to rise above any possible misinterpretation, I went back into recent history in the search for thoughtful analysis of a speaker's call to duty.

I found essays by respected former House of Commons Speaker Peter Milliken (2001-2011) and our very own BC Speaker Dale Lovick (1996-1998). My apologies to these authors for any failings on my part in the process of editing their words to fit our space requirements.

Milliken writes (on Page 4) about the challenges of the speakership in minority parliaments, something he faced and executed well. Lovick analyses (on Page 6) whether a speaker must renounce all political ties in order to fulfil his or her duty as an impartial arbiter.

I do hope, as did Sawicki, that this timely and teachable moment encourages some thoughtful OOTD readers to join the discussion.



Photo courtesy of John Yanyshyn / Visions West Photography

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Thank You and Miscellany

Orders of the Day is published regularly throughout the year, and is circulated to Association members, all MLAs now serving in Legislature, other interested individuals and organizations.

Material for the newsletter is always welcome and should be sent in written form to:

P.O. Box 31009
University Heights P.O.
Victoria, B.C. V8N 6J3

Or emailed to ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com
or ootd@shaw.ca

Editor: Brian Kieran
Layout/Production/Research: Rob Lee

Association Membership (former MLAs) dues are \$60.00 per year. Annual subscription rate is \$40.00 for those who are not Association Members.
Payment can be sent to the above address.

Thank you to those of you who, when sending in your Member dues or subscription renewals, add a donation to help cover production costs for the newsletter. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Dues, Subscriptions and Donations

Board of Directors 2018-2019

Jeff Bray President
Dave Hayer Vice President
Ken Jones Secretary
James Gorst Treasurer
Penny Priddy Past President

Directors

Anne Edwards	Cliff Serwa
Bill Goodacre	Tim Stevenson
Darlene Marzari	Doug Symons
Lorne Nicolson	Gillian Trumper
	Patrick Wong

Honourary Directors

Hon. Iona Campagnolo, PC, CM, OBC, LL.D
Hon. Steven L. Point, OBC
Hon. Judith Guichon, OBC

Honourary Members

Hon. Darryl Plecas
Speaker of the Legislature
Joan Barton, MLSc., MPA

Honourary Life Members

Jim Hume
Ian D. Izard, QC, Honourary Solicitor
E. George MacMinn, QC, OBC

Life Members

(The late) Hugh Curtis

The Association of Former MLAs of British Columbia is strictly non-partisan, regardless of members' past or present political affiliation. Founded in 1987, the Association was formally established by an Act of the British Columbia Legislature on February 10, 1998.

Orders of the Day was conceived, named and produced in its early stages by Bob McClelland, former MLA and cabinet minister, following his retirement from office. Hugh Curtis ably helmed this publication up through May 2014.

From the Editor's Desk

In 1996, when I abandoned The Province newspaper and embarked on a somewhat perilous exploration of the dark arts of government relations, there would be one particularly bright star that helped guide me and keep me focused. That star was Port McNeill Mayor Gerry Furney, a legend on the Island.

Over the ensuing years, when I returned to wordsmithing, I would write about him frequently. It was so easy capturing the spirit of this great Irishman and dedicated defender of resource sector workers and their communities. In 2015, just after he retired, the headline on my piece for Pacific Coastal Airline's SOAR Magazine read: "The Poet and the Prizefighter." It said it all.

In the mid-1990s Gerry had launched the Council of Resource Community Mayors of BC (CORCM) to lobby the provincial government on the need to support struggling resource communities and not capitulate to well-funded enviro-lobbies. Typical of Gerry, the first thing he did was rent CORCM offices in the UBCM's Municipal House so he could torment government from one block away on Superior Street. He kindly set aside some space in his office for me, and I helped out as best I could.

Down through the years, we remained close, and some of my fondest North Island memories are lunching with Gerry in his favourite Japanese restaurant looking down on his Port McNeill domain ... I swear, he owned most of the town.

We say farewell to Gerry in this issue (Page XX) ... with a heavy heart.

We also pay tribute to Art Kube (Page XX) who defended working men and women with a passion equal to Gerry's. They just came at it from different directions. While I did not know Art well in the Operation Solidarity days, in my recent work with a seniors' advocacy group in Victoria I came to appreciate his second career dedication to seniors' issues in his capacity as head of the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC.

As well, we say goodbye to AFMLABC executive member Bill Goodacre (Page XX) whose service to Smithers earned him the "Freedom of the Municipality" in 2018, and who was universally respected and admired as a tireless ally of indigenous people.

President's Report

With Spring just around the corner, the Legislature back in session, and a fall federal election looming, lots is going on in the world of politics. As former MLAs, we know that politics means one needs to be active in public service. In this issue, we pay tribute to three people, each of whom found a path to distinguished public service. Art Kube was a stalwart champion for the labour movement and for seniors. Gerry Furney was the long-serving mayor and champion for Port McNeil. Bill Goodacre was an invaluable voice for the northwest of this province, and for enshrining the stories and history of the first peoples of the region through his service as an MLA and Smithers councillor. Bill was also, at his passing, a member of this associations' executive.

In this issue, we also hear from two former speakers with unique perspectives on the role of speaker in our parliamentary institutions. Both Dale Lovick and Peter Milliken had distinguished tenures as Speaker of the BC Legislature and Speaker of the House of Commons respectively. They share their insights from their particular vantage point from 'The Chair.'

Finally, please keep those letters coming in! We love to hear from you, our members and subscribers. This association always works best when we can connect former members of the legislature with each other and you, our readers. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the executive of the Association of Former MLAs Of BC for their dedicated efforts on behalf of all of us.



Jeff Bray, President, AFMLABC

TELUS PureFibre™ helps build better businesses.

TELUS PureFibre is the #1 internet technology for speed and reliability¹.

Our 100% fibre optic network gives businesses the advantages they need to operate locally and compete globally.

This direct connection enables seamless uploading and downloading at speeds never before available. Through this technology, TELUS PureFibre gives businesses the power to:

- Process sales transactions quickly
- Update and backup data in real time
- Reimagine the way that they deliver services and innovative new solutions
- Collaborate, connect, and communicate with ease

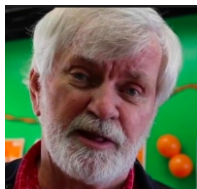
To find more, visit telus.com/businessbenefits



1. Traditional copper wire or copper wire hybrid networks are subject to capacity constraints and environmental stresses that do not affect TELUS fibre optic technology, which is based on light signals. Not available in all areas. TELUS, the TELUS logo, and the future is friendly are trademarks of TELUS Corporation, used under license. © 2018 TELUS. 18_00424

A speaker's renunciation of party politics is unrealistic

(At the time this article was written Dale Lovick was Speaker of the BC Legislative Assembly. This is a revised and significantly edited version of a paper he presented at the 20th Seminar of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in Fredericton in 1996.)



By Dale Lovick
32nd Speaker of the BC Legislature,
1996-1998

It is generally agreed among students of parliament that the speakership is the most important safeguard to the effective working of the institution. There is less agreement, however, as to whether a speaker must renounce all political ties in order to fulfil his or her duty as an impartial arbiter.

This article outlines some arguments on both sides of the issue and concludes that, while impartiality in the chair is essential, complete renunciation of all political affiliation is unrealistic in Canada.

I am entirely mindful that I am a very new speaker talking about a very old tradition. I want, though, to look critically – not irreverently – at one aspect of the tradition – what I have called the mythology of non-partisanship. I use the term mythology in its sense of being a somewhat romantic and attractive fiction designed to explain and simplify a complex concept.

The impartiality of the speaker is and must be, a given. What is in question is whether the speaker must be not only impartial and neutral in the chair but must also be non-partisan out of it.

There is, in fact, an implicit contract between legislature members and the speaker based on a clear understanding that the considerable powers a house gives to a speaker will not be abused; that no favouritism to one side or the other will be shown. That is not in question.

But the idea that the speaker must be non-partisan as well is one we have inherited from Westminster. Paul Silk, in *How Parliament Works*, writes that the tradition of impartiality in the speakership "is so strong that everyone accepts that a new speaker will renounce his party allegiance and become genuinely independent."

Another authority on the British speakership has written: It is inconceivable today that any speaker would ever be consciously partisan. Once elected, the speaker must not only resign from his or her political party but must even resign from any clubs which have political affiliations."

In Canada, the notion of a non-partisan speakership has also been embraced in some quarters. Consider for example the comments of James Jerome, Speaker of the House of Commons from 1974 until 1979. He tells, with obvious pride, how he studiously avoided ever being in the presence of members of only one political party. Here is his explanation of how he maintained the "independence" of the speaker:

"No matter how informal the event, I always made sure that if one member of parliament was to be there, we invited another from each political party. I never attended so much as a testimonial dinner for any of my former Liberal colleagues, and indeed was never at any party function of any sort. Even in the 1979 election, my campaign literature dealt exclusively with local problems, and in public meetings on radio or television, I did the same. During the campaign, I never made any reference to the performance of the government or the opposition parties.

The essential argument for non-partisanship is that the speaker must not only be impartial but must be perceived to be impartial and that any kind of partisan connection will make this unlikely if not impossible.

It is worth noting that one will not find this precise argument stated in the literature on speakership. Even in *Erskine May*, (the bible of parliamentary practice), one will find no specific reference to non-partisan speakership. Instead, one finds only the following: Confidence in the impartiality of the speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object to not only ensure the impartiality of the speaker but to also ensure that his impartiality is generally recognized.

It seems to me that one's behaviour – in the chair and in the exercise of one's other duties as speaker – should be sufficient to combat any question of partisanship.

In short, the notion that one cannot be impartial as speaker unless one severs all partisan connections does not seem to me to be supportable. The argument that membership in and connection with a political party thereby renders one incapable of impartiality is a non sequitur.

One reason I think the mythology of non-partisanship needs to be challenged in the parliaments of this country, and perhaps in other Commonwealth parliaments as well, is that the speakers in Canadian parliaments, and certainly in some other Commonwealth parliaments, do not have the same status as their counterparts in Westminster.

Many have written on the "Westminster Convention," as it is sometimes known, but the critical point for my purposes is that the speaker at Westminster is re-elected without serious opposition for as long as he or she chooses to hold the office. Despite various efforts by various speakers in various legislatures in Canada, the idea has not exactly captured the imagination of Canadians.

In an essay published in 1976, Phillip Laundry noted that the concept of total political independence, though "much admired" in Canada, has, for practical reasons, "not been widely emulated in the legislative jurisdictions of this country." And, in a more recent book, he effectively dismisses the issue of non-partisanship as of little importance.

One of the issues addressed in this book is the political status of the speaker. The fact that he himself may have political attachments is not in itself important, provided he is able to distinguish between party allegiance and his duty to parliament.

I think he is quite right, and it is my view that the concept of a non-partisan speaker is perhaps extra baggage that ought to be thrown overboard. It is an additional and unnecessary burden.

Probably the most frank and ingenuous analysis of the predicament for speakers outside Westminster is provided by the former speaker of the Fijian House of Representatives, Tomasi Vakatora. In an essay written in 1986, he pushes very hard indeed against the restraints of non-partisanship.

He writes: "Although a member of parliament is elevated to the high office of speaker, he must not lose sight of the fact that basically, he is a politician. This is very important to a member if he wants to continue with his political career. If he loses sight of that fact, it could cost him dearly at the next election."

I would also challenge the argument that the speaker must be non-partisan because of the work he has to do in the house. It is clear to me that the task I am called upon to perform as speaker, and the task apparently performed by many other speakers in this country and other Commonwealth countries, differs in certain significant respects from what is done by the speaker at Westminster.

I cannot, frankly, imagine any speaker with any modicum of understanding and appreciation of parliament who would not be mindful of his or her responsibilities to parliament. The speaker who demonstrably favoured one side or faction over the other would have a career that was brutish and short.

Speakers are not free agents who operate on whim or whimsy. And, they are relieved of the burden of personal decision in many of the rulings thanks to the advice available to them through the professional expertise of the clerk of the house and colleagues.

To be sure, the speaker must be impartial and scrupulously fair and indeed perceived to be so. However, to suggest that impartiality would be further enhanced by severing one's political connections challenges credulity.

2019 Dues and Subscriptions

Annual membership for former MLAs in the Association is \$60 (unchanged from previous years) and that includes the subscription fee for *Orders of the Day* (OOTD).

Fans of OOTD who are not Association members should send in a cheque for \$40 to remain on the newsletter subscription list.

Cheques should be made out to:

The Association of Former MLAs of BC

and mailed to:

PO Box 31009
University Heights PO
Victoria, BC
V8N 6J3

Reflections on the speakership in a minority house

by Peter Milliken

Speaker of the House of Commons, 2001-2011

The effectiveness of the speaker rests to a large extent on his or her perceived impartiality. The speaker must be prepared to function as an adjudicator and even as a peacemaker. He or she must vigorously defend the rights and privileges of all members, individually and collectively, without exception. He or she must listen actively and ensure that any decision is manifestly well-founded on the merits of the particular case and on the rules, jurisprudence, and conventions. The rules must be applied to everyone, without exception. This article reflects on the key themes of a successful speakership, particularly during a period of minority government.

Although the House of Commons is no stranger to minority governments, most governments since Confederation have been majorities. Between 2004 and 2011, however, minority governments became the norm, and I had the opportunity to face the challenges of the speakership in minority parliaments; in particular, that of ensuring the continuity in purpose and principal necessary in an institution such as the House of Commons. Indeed, the responsibility of the speaker to act as the guardian of the rights and privileges of members and of the house as an institution requires that he or she be seen to conform strictly to the highest standards of independence and impartiality.

What does impartiality in a minority parliament mean? At all times, the speaker functions as an adjudicator and even as a peacemaker, but this is particularly the case in a minority parliament whose speaker must vigorously defend the rights and privileges of all members without exception. The speaker must be respectful of the roles of leaders and whips and know how to deal with them. The speaker of a minority parliament should make particular efforts to remind the house regularly that he or she is there to serve all members and the institution and to enforce only those rules decided upon by the member themselves.

As speaker of the House of Commons, I made use of a variety of tools, not all of which are found in the chamber, to allow me opportunities to reinforce the member's perception that I was in office as the speaker to serve all regardless of party affiliation. For example, I instituted an ongoing series of dinners to which, in due course, every member of the house was invited. Members from each of the parties represented in the house were invited to each dinner, always in different groupings. The effect of this was to encourage informal social contact between members from the different parties with a view to fostering an atmosphere of greater collegiality and, by extension, greater civility in the house.



Peter Milliken

In May of 2005, I used my casting vote to break a tie on a confidence vote for the first time in Canada's history. I voted in favour of a 2nd reading of the government's budget bill, allowing the minority government to survive by a single vote; a decision that I took great care to explain in detail to the house in order to ensure that all concerned understood that the decision was guided by established principles and not by politics. It is perhaps worthy of note that the use of the casting vote, once a rarity, became a more frequent occurrence. During my years as speaker, I was obliged to resolve tied votes on five separate occasions, half of all such votes since 1867.

During my speakership, I was also faced with the fundamental issue of the ability of the House of Commons to hold the government to account for its policies and performance, and the role of the speaker in this regard.

Regardless of the makeup of the House of Commons, the principal tools of accountability remain the same – interventions during Question Period, written questions, the consideration of estimates in committee and the consideration of opposition motions on supply days.

In recent years, however, there has been an increase in the use of questions of privilege related to issues of accountability when more traditional tools were felt to be ineffective. In these exercises in accountability, the effectiveness of the chair rested upon respect for its authority, its perceived respect for members individually and collectively, and, perhaps most importantly, on its perceived impartiality.

Notwithstanding the interruptions and heckling so prevalent in the parliaments preceding the present one, the daily Question Period is actually highly-regulated. Parties are only allowed to ask a predetermined number of questions based on the size of their caucuses, and they must ask their questions in a specific order predetermined by their party leadership for that day on a list given to the speaker.

Questions and responses are timed in order to prevent excessive speeches and to permit the maximum possible number of questions, and the speaker of the house can cut off the microphones of members speaking after their allotted time has elapsed. The parties may negotiate a maximum time limit for each question and answer; currently, this limit is 35 seconds for each.

The speaker has the discretion and the authority to rule out of order any question posed during Question Period if he or she is satisfied that it is in contravention of house guidelines. He or she may suggest that a question be rephrased or may simply intervene immediately by recognizing another member to ask the next question.

Ideally, questions should: Deal with matters of sufficient urgency; be brief; seek information; and deal with matters within the administrative responsibility of the government or individual ministers. In practice, this is often not the case. The extent to which the speaker intervenes depends on whether a collective will exists among the member and their parties to curb excesses and to seek to hold the government accountable in a disciplined and respectful manner.

Ultimately, the speaker is left to attempt to curb the worst of any excesses, to uphold the rules insofar as this is possible – for example, to ensure that the time limits applicable to questions and answers are strictly held – and to strive to do this in an unbiased and impartial manner. The toleration of some indecorous behaviour is preferable to creating the impression that the speaker is intervening in a partial or partisan way. Neither can the speaker be seen to interfere with or arbitrarily to obstruct the legitimate questioning of government ministers.

When intervening, the speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the member speaking; the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation; and most importantly, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the chamber. Members are asked to withdraw offensive or disorderly remarks. A member's apology is generally considered to have been made in good faith, and the matter is then

considered closed. In those instances in which a member refused to withdraw offending remarks, I found it very effective to decline to recognize him or her until an apology was forthcoming.

The general rule is that it is not for the speaker to judge the content of questions and answers. To do so is to risk allegations of bias. Because of the collegial character of the House of Commons and of the broad privileges enjoyed by its members, no one – not even the speaker – can unilaterally improve the level of discourse.

To conclude, I would emphasize that, for a legislature to function effectively and to hold the government to account for its policies and performance, it is essential that the speaker enjoys the respect of members from across the political spectrum and that the members themselves feel that they are respected by the chair.



Serving Every Community

Throughout BC there are thousands of insurance brokers ready to serve our community. We help families and businesses protect their most valuable assets. We're right there to help settle claims, offer the best advice and deliver helpful information to keep everyone safe. By being close by, we develop a personal relationship and intricate knowledge of every customer's needs. You can't do that on the phone or a website. That's why we're right there.



ibabc.org

Bill Goodacre, a fighter for those marginalized, dies at 67

Bill Goodacre, a long-time Smithers town councillor, former Bulkley Valley-Stikine MLA and lifelong Smithers booster, has died.

Goodacre was first elected to town council in 1990 before going into provincial politics in 1996. He returned to municipal council in 2002 where he remained until the last municipal election, with the exception of three years after a failed bid to become mayor in 2008.

Throughout his political career, Bill's key issues were aboriginal rights and anti-poverty. In a profile for OOTD in 2017, he wrote: "I was, and continue to be, frustrated by the low level of awareness and commitment to these crucial issues. In my life, today I am quite involved with community efforts to address these matters. An example is a joint project of the Office of Wet'suwet'en Chiefs and the Town of Smithers to chronicle our shared history since the formation of Smithers in 1913."

Goodacre said one of the best takeaways from his experience in the Legislature was "a strong sense that people who hold different political perspectives can treat each other with respect, something I think may not seem evident to the general public."

In October 2018, he retired from politics for health reasons and was awarded the Freedom of the Municipality, the town's highest honour.

Smithers Mayor Taylor Bachrach said: "Bill was a tireless ally for indigenous people, especially the Wet'suwet'en, and was particularly passionate about the Shared Histories project for which he was an instigator and champion. He stuck up for those on the margins, those without homes, and those among us who were suffering. He held a vision of community based on compassion and, most of all; he wanted people to be kind to each other."

Nathan Cullen, Skeena-Bulkley Valley MP, recalled it was Goodacre who first convinced him to run for political office. "He was such an incredible advocate. Bill was so unique; he was his own person and loved the valley so much. I loved the guy, such a caring person and totally himself, didn't care too much what people thought, and that's not too common in politics."



Bill Goodacre pictured here in October 2018 receiving the Smithers Freedom of the Municipality award passed in January at the Bulkley Lodge. He was 67 years old.

(Interior News archive photo)

In 2017, Bill told OOTD: "I've been involved in social justice activity since I was a teenager. None of my immediate family were involved in politics although most voted Liberal both federally and provincially.

"My draw to the NDP started in 1965 when Tommy Douglas spoke in Smithers. I was 14 at the time. I was involved in municipal politics as a town councillor in 1996 when the opportunity to seek the nomination for Bulkley Valley-Stikine came up, so I put my name forward and ended up in the Legislature."

Goodacre's heroes were former MP Frank Howard, who became a good friend, and his cousin Tom Berger. Both Tom and Frank were solid supporters of aboriginal rights.

The new Supportive Housing development is being named in Goodacre's honour. "He has left a mark in our hearts and in our town, and he will be greatly missed," Bachrach said.

The flags at Town Hall were lowered to half-mast to mark his passing.

“Mayor” Furney toiled for those in caulk boots

By Brian Kieran

We have lost Gerry Furney, one of the finest municipal leaders in BC history, a Vancouver Island icon, and a great friend of many members of AFMLABC. The former mayor of Port McNeill died Feb. 3rd. He was 85.

On Canada Day in 2016, I was proud to be on hand as Port McNeill said thank you to its retired mayor of 38 years. A new town clock was unveiled, and banners celebrated “Time well spent Mayor Furney.”

Then 82 years old, Furney proudly entered the municipal history books: BC’s longest-serving municipal leader with 47 years on council, 38 of them as mayor; and, one of Canada’s longest serving mayors. He stood in line behind John Hamlyn, the 86-year-old former mayor of Crow Head, Newfoundland who reigned for 51 years and ahead of Hazel McCallion, 98, the retired mayor of Mississauga, Ontario in office for 36 years.

I was invited to say a few words on Canada Day. It went something like this: “Years ago, when I was a working journalist, the Union of BC Municipalities AGM was a must-attend event.

“Gerry was always there, always in the centre of a clutch of politicians. Premiers and cabinet ministers would seek him out for a handshake and a photo-op. Rookie municipal politicians would seek him out for a wee dram of good counsel.

“His smiling Irish brogue never masked his passion ... the wellbeing of BC’s hard-working resource communities often labouring through hard times.

“Gerry fought steadfastly for responsible resource extraction so vital to the sustenance of towns like Port McNeill.”

He was BC’s voice for the men and women of the Hinterland who toiled in the mines and the mills and on the water. His poem, *Caulk Boots*, (from his collection titled *Popcorn for Breakfast*) says it all: “It’s sad that men in fancy suits don’t know too much about caulk boots.”

Bruce Rozenhart, the volunteer executive director of the Council of Resource Community Mayors of BC, told OOTD: “I mourn Gerry’s passing. I am reflecting on the many fine things he did for his community, the North Island, and BC. I will miss his humour, his commitment to making Port McNeill better, his common-sense approach, his ability to listen, his care for rural communities, his respect for people, and his commitment to his family.

“We shared many common interests, one of them was the founding of the Council of Resource Community Mayors of BC that served as an issues-based coalition of resource community mayors addressing rural issues that needed rural team support and advocacy. I remember our involvement with the Yellow Ribbon Rally for rural BC in the 1990s.

“Gerry Furney made a difference. He was what a politician should be, and what a friend should be. God bless him,” Rozenhart said.

Gerry arrived in BC in the mid-1950s. He was a 21-year-old adventurer from Ireland via England, Europe and New York. He found a job in a Port McNeill logging camp and the only way to get there was by boat. He was given a one-way ticket on board the S.S. Catala berthed at the Union Steamship dock in Vancouver.



What Furney found when he arrived were “conditions about as primitive as you could imagine,” he recalls. There was no road south to Victoria, no bridge over the Nimpkish River, no houses to speak of, no stores, no phones, no nothing.

“I was living in a bunkhouse with about 120 other loggers who were mostly all immigrants like me. I soon found out that the job of a ‘chokerman’ was the lowliest job in the woods and also the most dangerous.”

In the early ‘60s, Furney started his fuel and explosives distribution business. “If it burned or went boom we sold it.” He was also the founding president of the Port McNeill Chamber of Commerce where a vision of a permanent community took shape.

In those first years, he got a lot of help from Cominco which operated the Old Sport copper mine under Merry Widow Mountain. The company wanted its staff to have a sense of permanence, and it developed about 20 home sites. Port McNeill began taking shape.

“We estimated we could build a community of about 1,000 people,” Furney told me a few years ago. “In its heyday when the mines were still functioning, we were up to about 3,000.” Today, the town is home to 2,600 souls and forestry continues to be its mainstay.

“At the chamber, we had a mantra – ‘We can make a community of this place.’” That determination has resulted in “a fairly stable community,” Furney said. Unlike other resource towns in BC, Port McNeill has not experienced booms and busts. “We never BSed ourselves into believing we’re something we’re not. We never tried to grow beyond our means.”

What kept this resource town icon coming back election after election to serve his community? Simple: Furney may have had the soul of an Irish poet, but he had the heart of a political prizefighter. And, he was never better than when he defended Port McNeill’s resource-based way of life from assaults by the higher purpose nabobs of urban BC who often abandoned resource towns in the name of progress.

Gerry is survived by his wife, the amazing Carmel, his children Liza and James, and five grandchildren, all of Port McNeill.

Mr. Solidarity, Art Kube, has died at 84

The announcement seemed almost matter-of-fact, but the news was a real blow to the BC labour movement and to BC seniors.

BC Labour Heritage Centre Chair Ken Novakowski said: "The BC labour movement has lost one of our leaders. Art died early in the morning, Feb. 10th at the age of 84. He had been in declining health for several years.

"Born in Poland in 1935, Art came to Canada as a 19-year-old and worked in a number of trades around the country. He became active in the labour movement in the 1960s. After two decades, he advanced to the position of President of the BC Federation of Labour. He held that position from 1983 to 1986, which was a tumultuous period in BC's labour history under the Socred provincial government."



Journalist and labour historian Rod Mickleburgh recalled that period: "In the summer of 1983, Art Kube emerged from the backrooms of the labour movement to lead and inspire Operation Solidarity, the largest, most protracted, and broad-based protest movement in Canadian history.

"Brother Kube ... was a good, good man with a big heart, who embraced Operation Solidarity and the fight against (Social Credit Premier) Bill Bennett's unprecedented onslaught of repressive legislation as the cause of his life."

Novakowski says Art was also deeply involved with the Council of Senior Citizens Organization of BC (COSCO-BC), as well as the National Pensioners and Senior Citizens Federation. His lifetime commitments were recognized in 2015 when he received the Order of Canada.

"Art's last appearance at a BC Labour History Centre event marked the 35th anniversary of Solidarity in the fall of 2018," Novakowski says. "He also participated in the Centre's Oral History Project in 2016."

Reflecting on his life Art said: "I truly hope that I have been able to help make a difference in this world and that the legacy of my life will live on in my children, grandchildren and the many people that I have been honoured to work with and serve in my life."

Novakowski said: "We offer our condolences to Art's wife Mary and his family as we remember Brother Kube's legacy and his decades of contributions to the labour and social justice movements."

The BC Federation of Labour also paid tribute on its Facebook page: "Art was a tremendous labour activist who led the Federation through tough times with the Socred government in the mid-80s that resulted in Operation Solidarity. Art was a coalition builder, a big picture thinker and a true friend to working people. Art was a lifelong activist ... We send our deepest condolences to Art's family and friends. Rest in power, Art."

The COSCO-BC website states: "Art's volunteer work with seniors spanned almost 30 years. A remarkable record that included presidency of the New Vista Society, Seniors on Guard for Medicare, and various executive positions culminating in his presidency of COSCO.

"He worked in collaboration with others, both in his own organization and other organizations. His capacity for seeing the larger context – the big picture – was an essential quality. Seniors housing, health care, transportation, pensions and advocacy were all issues of concern to Art and the object of his work. Principles of equality and fairness guided his work.

"He was pivotal in helping to develop COSCO's Health and Wellness Society, the organization that delivers workshops for seniors all over the province, free of charge."



**INVESTING
WHERE
WE LIVE.**

**WE ARE COMMITTED
TO CONTINUOUSLY
IMPROVING OUR
PRINCE GEORGE BREWERY
TECHNOLOGICAL UPGRADES
MEAN QUALITY PRODUCTS
THAT TASTE BETTER
& STAY FRESH LONGER**

**PACIFIC
WESTERN
BREWING**

PWBREWING.NET

Western grievances, Quebec alienation highlight tensions

by Angus Reid

One of the common threads of Canadian history is the palpable tension between provinces and regions. While violent rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada are left to history, modern domestic turmoil often takes the form of economic debates and policy protests.

The latest study from the Angus Reid Institute finds a long-held sense of alienation continues to pervade significant segments of Canada's population west of Ontario.

Indeed, the percentage of residents in the West claiming that provinces treat them unfairly is significantly higher than the percentage saying this in the East. A simmering frustration with Ontario – and particularly Ottawa – within Alberta and Saskatchewan drives much of this, while a disconnect between Quebec and the Prairies carries significant import as well.

Half of Canadians (53 per cent), including one-in-five Quebecers themselves (21 per cent), say that Quebec takes more from Canada than it offers in return. On the other end of the spectrum, one-in-three Canadians (32 per cent) say that Alberta is giving more than it receives as a part of confederation.

For its part, Quebec holds the distinction as the province with the least positive sentiment coming from outside its borders. Even in Ontario, the province that four-in-ten Quebecers (44 per cent) say they have affection for, just one-in-ten residents (12 per cent) say they feel the same way about Quebec.

Meanwhile, the West is hardly a unified front on the matter of inter-provincial admiration. While Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba each give each other high praise, only one-in-five in each province say they get a fair shake from British Columbia.

As a federation, Canada has long been home to simmering regional tensions. Perhaps the most significant example of this historically, the French-English divide, is still felt on several issues in the country. In recent decades, sources of angst west of Ontario have been exacerbated by a perceived lack of respect for the relative wealth western provinces provide. This refrain has been echoed loudly in the most recent oil slump, with many in Alberta requesting the government do more to help those suffering as one of Canada's key economic engine sputters.

While they have different reasons for believing so, the sentiment that the eastern provinces often look down their noses at the West is widely held within western provinces. Note that for the purposes of this report, the West is defined

as the four western-most provinces (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba).

Asked which of the provinces they feel are particularly friendly toward their own province, residents of the Prairies hold each other in relatively high esteem. Three-quarters of Alberta residents (77 per cent) say Saskatchewan is a buddy, while a similar number in "Rider Nation" say the same of their neighbour to the west. The friendly feelings are slightly more muted in Manitoba when considering Saskatchewan, but still comparatively strong. More than six-in-ten (63 per cent) Manitobans say Saskatchewan is an especially close friend.

The outlier among the four westernmost provinces is British Columbia. The relationship is not nearly as strong, regardless of whether one is looking from the perspective of BC residents, or gauging opinions of that province drawn from the Prairies. Three-in-ten British Columbians (31 per cent) say they believe Alberta is friendly to their province, and one-in-five say this of Saskatchewan (19 per cent).

In each of the other three western provinces, just one-in-five residents say they view BC as having a close relationship to their own – a far cry from the strong connection voiced between the three other western provinces to each other.

For the most part, Ontario residents do not view any other province with particular affection, and the same relationship holds when other Canadians consider their province's association with Ontario.

Notably, however, the province with which Ontarians feel the most kinship is Alberta. Canada's oil production epicentre is the only province to hold the affection of more than one-in-five (28 per cent) in Ontario, while all others fall at or below that mark. Ontarians share one commonality with British Columbia – in both provinces, four-in-ten residents choose "none" when asked which provinces they consider to be especially close to their own.

When considering how the rest of Canada feels about Ontario, the level of goodwill is similar. Quebecers are most likely to say they consider their neighbour a close friend – four-in-ten do (44 per cent) – but no other region holds this view among more than 20 per cent of its population.

One of the most notable data trends in this study is the relative lack of connection felt between Quebec and the rest of Canada. As noted, 44 per cent of Quebec residents consider Ontario a friend (but just 12 per cent of Ontarians return that affection).

Greek minister tells EU official to butt out

ATHENS (Reuters) - Greece's deputy health minister has told the European Union's top health official to butt out after being chewed out for smoking in public.

Deputy minister Pavlos Polakis was caught on video footage recently holding a cigarette while dancing in a nightclub. He had also been photographed smoking at a news conference in 2016.

It drew a rebuke of "shameful" from EU Health Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, who was in Athens to mark World Cancer Day.

Polakis, who is also a surgeon, said he was dealing with more pressing issues at the ministry than smoking. "I'll decide when to stop smoking, on my terms," Polakis said.

Greece has the highest smoking rate in the European Union. It bans smoking in indoor public spaces, such as the nightclub where Polakis danced as red napkins fluttered around him.



Freeze-dried fajita in Brexit survival kit

LEEDS (Reuters) - With just weeks to go until Britain is due to leave the European Union, a company is selling worried Britons a survival kit to help them prepare for the worst.

The "Brexit Box," retailing at 295 pounds (\$380), provides food rations to last 30 days, according to its producer, businessman James Blake, who says he has already sold hundreds of them.



James Blake from emergency food storage.co.uk sticks a label on the company's "Brexit Box."

With still no deal on how Britain will trade with the EU once it leaves, retailers and manufacturers have warned a "no-deal" Brexit could cause food and medicine shortages due to expected chaos at ports that could paralyze supply lines.

The Brexit Box includes 60 portions of freeze-dried British favourites: Chicken Tikka, Chilli Con Carne, Macaroni Cheese and Chicken Fajitas, 48 portions of dried mince and chicken, firelighter liquid, and an emergency water filter.

Customer Lynda Mayall, 61, who ignored government assurances that there is no need to stockpile food for Brexit, said: "I thought: let's make sure I'm covered in the event of things going awry."

When fake news makes appealing headlines

WASHINGTON, DC - "UNPRESIDENTED," reads the giant headline. "TRUMP HASTILY DEPARTS WHITE HOUSE, ENDING CRISIS."

That shocking story was delivered on crisp newsprint to commuters around Washington, D.C., under what appeared to be the signature banner of The Washington Post.

Online, a website bearing an eerie similarity to the Post's, described a secretive resignation, global celebrations and the swearing-in of Mike Pence as president. Printed on real paper stock, someone spent some coin producing this.

As copies of the counterfeit paper were distributed outside the White House and the city's train station, the Post's PR team rushed to clarify the obvious: "There are fake print editions of The Washington Post being distributed around



downtown DC. They are not Post products, and we are looking into this."

"This paper is a dream; it's not a deception," said anti-Trump organizer L.A. Kauffman in an interview with NPR.

An invitation to donate to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund

The Victoria Foundation looks forward to receiving donations to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund from all of Hugh's well wishers and friends.

By phone: Call 250-381-5532 to make a donation by credit card directly via the Victoria Foundation.

By cheque: Send cheques to the Victoria Foundation at #109 645 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1G2. Please ensure they are made out to The Victoria Foundation. Note the name of the fund in the memo line or in a cover letter.

Online: The Victoria Foundation's mechanism for online donations is [CanadaHelps](#) and the steps are:

Go to www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca

Click on the [Make a Donation](#) button and then on the "Online" link and then the [CanadaHelps](#) link which will take you to the Foundation's page on the CanadaHelps web site.

Click to indicate whether you want to donate now or monthly and you will be taken through the steps to make your donation.

In the section for designation of your gift, click on the drop down menu to select the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.

You may pay with VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Interac or through a PayPal account.

After you pay for your gift, CanadaHelps.org will send you an online receipt.

There are several privacy permissions available. If you choose to include your name and address in the information which is sent to the Victoria Foundation, the Association will be pleased to acknowledge your gift.

If you have any questions about how to make a donation to the Victoria Foundation, please contact Sara Neely, Director of Philanthropic Services, at 250-381-5532 or sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca

Member News

Please send news about your activities to ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com for the next newsletter.

Where are they now?

Each issue we ask a former Member of the Legislative Assembly a series of questions. What drew them to public service; what lessons have they taken away; and, most important, what are they doing now.



This month we welcome the Honourable Neil Vant, Social Credit MLA for Cariboo from 1986 to 1991. He served as Minister of Transportation and Highways and as Minister Responsible for BC Rail and BC Ferries.

What prompted you to seek public office?

It was a very long process. It started when I was president of the Young Socreds in the Cariboo Constituency, and we were getting our MLA Bill Speare re-elected while also trying to get Robert Bonner elected in a byelection in 1966. In 1969, I helped our long-time Mayor of Quesnel, Alex Fraser, secure his first Social Credit nomination. W.A.C. Bennett convinced Alex to run, and I helped with the grassroots support, as Alex's background – like that of his father John A. Fraser, MLA and MP, was Conservative. Over the years, I was involved in public service as chair of the 100 Mile and District Hospital Board and served for three years as a Human Rights Commissioner for the Province. Maintaining a keen interest in public life, I ended up seeking the Social Credit nomination and became Alex's running mate in 1986.

Which political figure most influenced you?

W.A.C. Bennett tops the list as I was impressed with his vision for the North. We used to have brownouts and blackouts when our little diesel power plant in the Village of Quesnel failed. The PGE Railway went from nowhere to nowhere, from Squamish to Quesnel. W.A.C. changed all that with the delivery of the province-wide power grid, and the extension of the railway to North Vancouver, Prince George and beyond. He also upgraded and paved Highway 97.

Was it hard making the transition from private life to public life?

Being an Anglican clergyman, it went smoothly for me. The Anglican Bishop granted me a leave of absence to campaign and extended that after my election. For a few months, I was still Priest in Charge of the Parish with no pay, and we continued to live in the Rectory until my replacement arrived. I never mixed politics and religion.

What was the biggest challenge in returning to private life?

I served the Anglican Church from 1966 to 1986 in Barkerville, 100 Mile House and Williams Lake, and sat as an MLA from 1986 to 1991. At the end of my term, not having been offered anything of interest, I got involved in the value-added forest product industry. As part of the senior management team, I saw the company grow from 30 employees to more than 325 employees by the time I retired in 2007.

What is the biggest lesson that stuck with you since being an MLA?

I really enjoyed helping my constituents, the three municipalities, and two regional districts with their needs and concerns. I enjoyed my colleagues on both sides of the house, to varying degrees. As a cabinet minister, the biggest challenge was to privatize road and bridge maintenance. I was delighted to hear that the auditor general confirmed that, in the first three-year contract period, the saving to the taxpayers was \$160 million. Sure, there were wrinkles to iron out, but most of the 28 contract areas ended up confirming that while the province was still responsible for the work, they could still contract it out. I did learn that in politics, friends come and go, and enemies accumulate. Sadly, a house divided will fall, and that is what happened to Social Credit in 1991.

Tell us about your active or part-time professional interests.

I am learning to say "No" but I still do some consulting in the forest industry. In late 2012 and early 2013, I helped get a sawmill and a planer mill running in Terrace for the new Chinese owner. I enjoyed hiring more than 100 people. With both placer and hard rock mining experience, I still do some consulting out of Wells near Barkerville.

Finally, pet projects? Hobbies? And the value of remaining involved in the Association and OOTD.

I have been a long-time supporter of Barkerville, and Hugh Curtis coaxed me to submit articles on Barkerville for OOTD. I served for seven years as a founding director and eventually as chair of the Barkerville Heritage Trust to keep Barkerville going after Gordon Campbell offloaded all the heritage sites in BC. I am very involved in the Masonic Lodge in Barkerville which, in terms of membership, is one of the largest in BC – pretty good for a ghost town. I am Past Master of the Barkerville Lodge and Past District Deputy Grand Master for the Cariboo District. I enjoy hunting every fall to put meat on the table, and square dancing which helps Jeanie and I stay in shape.

Letters

75 years ago

CCF changes tone of government in Canada

In 1944, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), led by the dynamic Tommy Douglas, won Saskatchewan to form North America's first socialist government. The party that had begun as a social welfare movement changed the tone of Canadian government.

Douglas would serve as premier until 1961 when he was succeeded by Woodrow Lloyd, who had been Douglas' education minister and treasurer.

The story of the CCF began during the Great Depression. The stock market crash of 1929 and a lengthy drought devastated the economy. Neither Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his Liberals nor R.B. Bennett and the Conservatives were inclined to do anything, believing that the economic crisis required no extraordinary measures. Both parties suggested changing the Canadian market through tariffs, leaving the provinces to handle the social problems caused by the economic collapse.

In the 1930 election, Bennett's Conservatives emerged as the surprising victor. Bennett maintained the self-made man's attitude to social distress that self-help was better than public assistance. He soon became the target of intense dislike by Canadians who needed tangible help, not sermons, to cope with their hardship.

As Bennett's government failed to restore the nation's prosperity and the Depression ground on, unrest grew across the country. One effect of the disintegrating Conservative government was the emergence of new, unorthodox political movements. One of these was the CCF, founded in Calgary in 1932 by a coalition of farmers, academics, and Ottawa MPs associated with farmer and trade-union organizations. They produced the Regina Manifesto in 1933, calling for the creation of a political vehicle that would rescue Canada from the Depression.

The Manifesto promised unemployment and health insurance, public housing, agricultural price supports, laws to protect farmers from creditors, and public ownership of major industries and financial institutions. Its first leader was J.S. Woodsworth, a sensitive man and devout Christian who held strong opinions on helping the less fortunate.

Woodsworth challenged the division between rich and poor and questioned Canada's immigration policy and those who tolerated treating immigrants like commodities, "as cheap labour."



The CCF quickly became established in Canadian politics, electing its members to provincial legislatures and Parliament. World War II hastened the party's shift from social welfare to political action. At the beginning of the war, the CCF was split between supporters of Woodsworth, who believed that war solved nothing and only distracted people from important social problems, and those who supported Canada's entry into the war.

M.J. Coldwell, favouring Canada's participation in the conflict, succeeded Woodsworth as leader. Under his guidance, the party flourished. In 1942, the CCF won the York South byelection and, in 1943, held enough seats to form the opposition in Ontario. The following year the party in Saskatchewan formed North America's first socialist government.

King and his party responded to the CCF's success by adopting some of the party's most popular policies, cutting off "the threat on the left" and initiating the federal government's involvement in social and economic affairs.

After the war, the CCF declined in popularity and was accused of being associated with communism. Cold War tension at the time made it a ruinous comparison. In 1956, the party replaced the Regina Manifesto with the more moderate Winnipeg Declaration, to no avail. The party did very poorly in the 1958 federal election, winning only eight seats.

Although the CCF never held national power, the adoption of many of its policies propelled Canada's evolution into a social democracy with universal social programs, a strong union movement and a state committed to creating jobs and eliminating regional disparities. The CCF became the NDP in 1961.

The Canadian Encyclopedia