

## With spring, our hopes take flight



Photo credit: John Yanyshyn/Visions West Photography

### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

#### **BC gov't panel**

Rejects a  
basic income



Page 8

#### **UNBC student**

Grateful for  
AFMLABC  
scholarship



Page 10

#### **Hume's history**

When racism  
was the law



Page 15

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

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*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

I am hoping this issue of Orders of the Day will serve as a springboard upon which members can bounce back some of their thoughts and opinions in the form of letters to the editor.

On Pages 4 and 5 we have two distinctly differing views on how Canada and the provinces are managing the funding of the COVID-19 crisis response. I'd also like to get your take on a BC government panel's rejection of a universal basic income (Pages 8 and 9).

Then there's the Page 11 poll informing us that 43 per cent of Canadians want to eliminate the role of governor general. Another outcome of the former GG's anger management issues is that 91 per cent of Canadians says the PM should no longer be allowed to appoint the Queen's representative.

A handful of MLAs come to the Precincts after service in local government and a few return to local government service after concluding their time at the Legislature. On Pages 12 and 13 a Samara Institute study looks at many elements of service in municipal government. One of the statistics that grabbed me was the fact that just 30 per cent of local politicians are women. I'd like to see some views on that particularly since March 8 is International Women's Day and, appropriately, the theme is "Choose to Challenge."

The current government's feminist agenda is far reaching. Grace Lore, the new MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity last fall. She says: "The mandate letter given to me by Premier John Horgan is ambitious – I'll focus on a gender-based violence action plan, a move towards pay equity transparency, and gender-based and intersectional analysis in our public decision making."

There you go ... lots of good stuff to chew on. So, dust off those Commodore 64s and get tapping. Your deadline is March 20. Email me your submissions at: [ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com](mailto:ootd.afmlabc@gmail.com). Or mail them to the address in the left-hand panel on this page.

I hope our front-page picture – soaring gulls behind the Leg. – raises your spirits and encourages you to believe that normalcy is on the horizon. Thanks, as always, to steadfast veteran photographer John Yanyshyn for donating his good works to the cause.

# The President's Report

Like most of you I'm waiting for the vaccine and looking forward to once again moving around this amazing province. Not to mention getting away from my cable news addiction. One item that troubled me was the story about the resignation of Governor General Julie Payette. There is of course no excusing maltreatment of your staff by any public official which seems to have happened here. A couple of years ago I had a look at a different Payette.

The Canadian Club of Vancouver, of which I was one of the directors, invited the then-new GG to visit BC (her first) and give a luncheon speech. The speech was about space, she being a former astronaut, and the importance of science and technology. It was illustrated with great photos of each major Canadian city from the space station. I've heard, maybe like you, a lot of luncheon speeches. This was one of the best. My seatmate, former judge and MLA Tom Berger, told me he wanted to go home and study science. At our table GG Payette, a single parent, told an engaging story about her teenaged son. So, how disappointing to hear the other story. It did make me think about the role of the Queen's representative both nationally and provincially.

Like some of you who have spoken to students about the role of our government, I have had to explain how our constitutional monarchy really works. The role of the GG or, provincially, the Lieutenant Governor is largely symbolic except in exceptional circumstance. The best example of that happened recently right here in BC when then LG Judith Guichon, a rancher and former President of the BC Cattlemen's Association, refused Premier Christy Clark's request for another election (after an almost hung recent election) and asked John Horgan to form a government.

So, the GG and provincially the LGs are an important (and often misunderstood) part of our constitutional monarchy. I'm hoping in the fall we can get a "Legislature to campus" program going once again and our members can tell these stories.

Best,  
Ian Waddell



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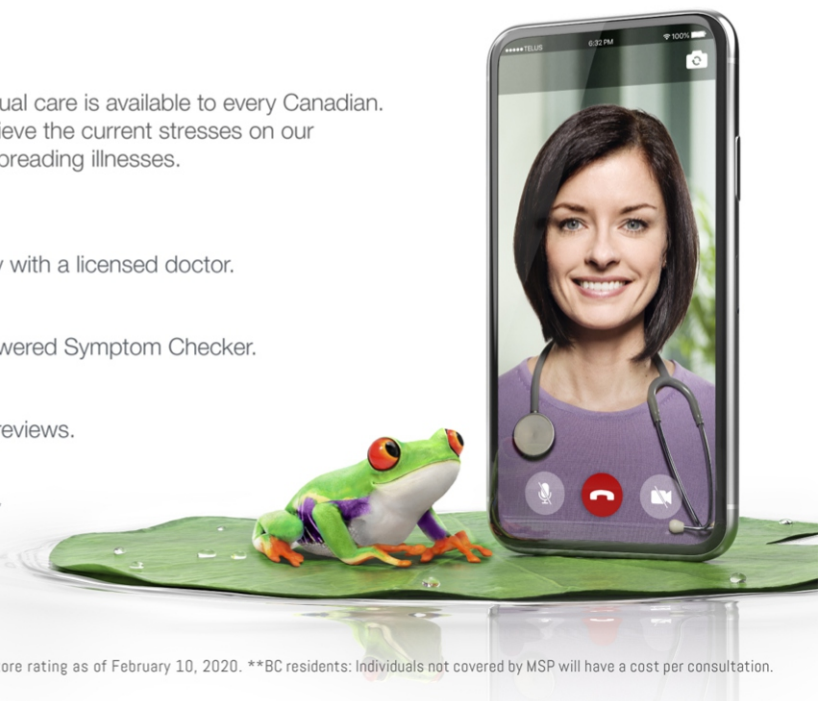
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# Canadian federalism is “mostly” doing its job – CCPA

By David Macdonald

The global COVID-19 pandemic has required government leadership on a scale that's unprecedented in modern Canadian times. Including liquidity and unallocated funds, federal and provincial governments have announced almost \$600 billion in spending commitments across 849 measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

“Picking Up the Tab,” a report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, is a “who is doing what” exercise. Among the key findings: Federalism is doing its job, mostly. The federal government came into this global pandemic with the greatest fiscal breathing room. Even with historic investments in COVID-19 rapid response, the federal government is doing so in an environment of historically low interest rates, a manageable debt-to-GDP ratio, and a Bank of Canada that serves as a backstop. It's only fitting that the federal government took the lead during this time of crisis: the federal government is spending \$343 billion between the fiscal years 2019-20 and 2021-22 – \$24 billion of which is being transferred to the provinces.

In turn, the provinces have committed to spend \$31 billion. In other words, of all direct spending commitments during the pandemic, only eight per cent is coming from the provincial governments; 92 per cent of that spending is on the federal tab.

Most support for individuals and businesses has come from the federal government: Almost all of the money provided directly to individuals or businesses is on the federal tab. Businesses are receiving more help than jobless Canadians. Individuals and businesses receiving government support are only receiving four per cent and six per cent, respectively, from provincial government coffers.

The feds are doing the heavy lifting on health care: Health care is the third largest category, including spending on traditional direct health care costs like hospitals, doctors and nurses, but, also, long-term care, personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and mental health.

This is a provincial jurisdiction, yet only 12 per cent of COVID-19 health spending is coming from provincial coffers – 88 per cent of these expenditures is on the federal tab. The federal government is spending \$30 billion on PPE, vaccines, testing and contact tracing. Another \$9 billion is going to the provinces through Safe Restart agreements. The provinces are spending \$5 billion of their own money on health care.



*Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland spends billion fighting COVID-19*

Almost every province is leaving federal money on the table: Three out of 10 provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, P.E.I., New Brunswick) haven't even spent the federal money transferred to them for COVID-19 health measures yet.

COVID-19 direct measures in British Columbia amount to \$10,300 a person, the second highest after Alberta. BC is second highest due to substantial provincial government spending, whereas Alberta is highest due to far more federal support. Although most expenditures were on the federal tab, 16 per cent of that total is on the provincial tab, the highest provincial contribution in Canada. Individual supports amount to \$4,500 per British Columbian, mostly on the federal tab through CERB, CRB and EI changes.

The BC government stands out as providing the highest per capita individual supports, worth over \$800 a person – eight times higher than the next highest province, Quebec. BC businesses also benefit from federal money to clean up former oil and gas wells. Health measures in the province amount to \$1,150 a person, 94 per cent of which is on the federal tab – though, unlike other provinces, BC took early leadership by committing much of its COVID-19 health care spending early in the pandemic, prior to knowing the full amount of federal dollars that would later become available.

The CPA's complete “Picking Up The Tab” analysis can be found here: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2021/01/Picking%20up%20the%20tab.pdf>

*continued next page*

## Little to show for billions in spending – Fraser Institute

By Livio Di Matteo,  
Fraser Institute

As the pandemic moves into 2021, it's important to reflect on how Canada is dealing with its impact. After a summer that included a semblance of normality, the fall and winter have brought a resurgence that's taxing our ability to cope.

The current sentiment seems to be that while Canada may have made a few mistakes along the way, we've been doing relatively well and deserve a pat on the back. Yet, despite spending hundreds of billions of dollars at the federal and provincial levels with combined budget deficits approaching \$500 billion for 2020-21 and the largest deficit-to-GDP ratio of any developed IMF country, we seem to have little to show for it.

One wonders if, in the end, the disjointed, confused and slow response to the pandemic was partly the result of the current interpretation of Canada's federal system by its leaders.

Federalism is a system of government where units are able to be both independent and coordinate and should accommodate regional preferences with the economies of scale and political direction of a larger country. The Canadian federation has been held up as a model for the world given our standard of living, the freedom of our population and the stability and diversity of our political system.

While Canada's diversity has meant regional tensions between the federal and provincial governments and perpetual crises and tug of wars over jurisdiction, it's managed to remarkably stay aloft for more than 150 years. Indeed, one pundit remarked how Canada is a "bumblebee nation" able to fly despite being aeronautically impossible. However, one wonders if the flight of the Canadian bumblebee is more attributable to luck than ability.

Given our high standard of living, we've come to think of ourselves as high-flyers, but it increasingly seems that we are mediocre flyers caught up in gusts of wind provided by the historic proximity to a relatively benign and wealthy southern neighbour and our abundant natural resources. Canada's leaders seem increasingly unable to solve problems. Our governments are increasingly bureaucratic and adept at planning but not at implementation. While quite accomplished at spending



large sums of money – especially at the federal level – our governments seem extraordinarily incapable of getting things done themselves or harnessing private initiative. Indeed, when it comes to the private sector, our governments are experts in imposing rules and regulations rather than incentives.

During COVID, governments across the country have issued inconsistent and contradictory statements about masks, the rules for gatherings and so on. Consequently, many Canadians increasingly don't know what they're supposed to do to stay safe and some may think they're following the "rules" even when they're not. We're told these are unprecedented times – but obviously not unprecedented enough for politicians of all stripes who tell us to stay home while they gallop around the world demonstrating an appalling lack of leadership.

Our federal government intones that health is a provincial responsibility, but there are federal and provincial health ministries and public health agencies and federal health transfers. Health as a provincial responsibility should provide experimentation and flexibility in dealing with the pandemic. But there seems to be little learning going on given that the relative success of the Atlantic provinces has yet to rub off on other provinces.

Ottawa has chosen not to do more to tackle the pandemic directly by hiding behind a strict interpretation of provincial jurisdiction over health. This federal government seems to act as if health is a provincial responsibility when necessary, but not necessarily a provincial responsibility. Sadly, all Canadians will pay the price for the failure of our governments.

# Time has come for a reset in Canada/U.S. relations

By Christopher Sands  
Policy Options

Shortly after his inauguration as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Joseph Biden issued an executive order to revoke the presidential permit for the Keystone XL pipeline. Biden's spokesperson later announced that the president's first call with a foreign leader would be with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, a consolation prize of sorts.

Following Biden's KXL permit cancellation, Trudeau made excuses for the action. Biden had campaigned on canceling the permit, so this was not a surprise. There are larger issues at play such as the completion of work to upgrade Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline that crosses through the United States to deliver Canadian oil to Sarnia, Ontario. And there is great potential for Canada to work with the Biden administration on climate change policy, so it is better not to make a fuss over KXL now.

All of that is true, and Trudeau's response is tactically sound. But it misses the larger, strategic issue that Biden's swift move against KXL raises: Three U.S. presidents in a row appear to have judged that there is no cost to crossing Canada. Former president Barack Obama and Biden over KXL and former president Donald Trump over NAFTA, national security tariffs and more.

This serious problem warrants a reset in Canada-United States relations, and the start of a new administration is an opportunity to do just that, particularly at the start of this administration. Biden's position is weak domestically, and as a committed multilateralist, he needs allies like Canada to help him to achieve his goals internationally, from addressing climate change to sustaining the challenge to China and Russia. Far from being helpless, Canada's position vis-à-vis the Biden administration is strong, making this the time to push back.

President Biden now leads a bitterly divided country. He won the election with more votes than Trump, but Trump won more votes than any losing candidate in U.S. history. Democrats underperformed in congressional and state races, and although the House of Representatives and Senate are controlled by Democratic majorities, the margins are narrow. This means that confirmation officials to staff the administration, budgets and other legislation will proceed only if House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer can count on nearly every Democratic representative and senator to vote together. Holdouts gain enormous leverage within the Democratic caucuses. Yet, since the Democrats are nominally in control of Congress, voters will blame Democrats for what is done and not done regardless of the level of difficulty.

It is no secret that the two main political parties in the United States are also divided, with activist fringe groups in each party pulling the Democrats and Republicans away from centrist positions. Biden was a compromise candidate for Democrats, and historically has been more in tune with centrists than the party's progressives. The same can be said for Pelosi and Schumer. What unites Democrats has been opposition to Trump. This is why Pelosi pursued a second impeachment of Trump and also why Biden made executive orders that undid Trump executive orders – such as Trump's approval of a permit for the KXL pipeline – his first priority. Instead of showing strength, both Biden and Pelosi have acted in ways that reveal their weak hold on support from the Democratic base.

The challenges facing Democrats in Washington domestically and internationally are staggering. In the 2020 elections, Democratic candidates charged the Trump administration with mishandling the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this partisan framing of the pandemic raised expectations that Democrats would do better once in charge. Trump's economic lockdowns put millions of Americans out of work and out of school, and now the pent-up frustrations of those Americans will be directed at Biden. Ottawa and Washington have added to their respective national debts in order to keep economies afloat, but the COVID-19 induced recession will widen budget deficits by reducing tax income for governments at all levels, with some municipalities in serious financial difficulty.

*continued next page*



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The same economic and public health challenges are affecting all countries, but they have not lowered regional tensions in the Middle East, Korean peninsula, or the South China Sea. Great power competition puts Biden under extra pressure to recapitalize the International Monetary Fund and other global financial institutions lest China take the lead in funding recovery for developing countries with strings attached. As the Trump presidency made clear, multilateral institutions from the World Health Organization to the World Trade Organization need reform. Even so, they remain the best venues for addressing tensions between the United States and other great powers. Biden will need the support of middle powers like Canada to restore American leadership.

Past crises tended to strengthen Canada's relationship with the United States by building trust and mutual understanding. Cooperation in establishing new institutions and policy responses after the Second World War and even after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States institutionalized cooperation on a range of issues and provided Canada with a way to communicate with U.S. leaders that benefitted Canadian national interests.

And yet there have been times when Canada needed to challenge the United States in order to remind Americans not to take Canada for granted. In 1951, a threat by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent to build the St. Lawrence Seaway without the United States led U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower to sign a 1954 agreement to build the Seaway together. In 1960, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker appointed Vincent Bladen to lead a commission to study the trade imbalance with the United States in the auto sector; Bladen's report prompted Canada to increase tariffs and incentives to support Canadian production, prompting the negotiation of the U.S.-Canada Auto Pact by Prime Minister Lester Pearson and U.S. President Lyndon Johnson in 1965.

In 1973, the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau established the Foreign Investment Review Act to evaluate foreign investment, particularly U.S. investment in the Canadian economy. Similarly, the 1980 National Energy Program sought to limit U.S. ownership of Canadian oil producers and resources. Both actions drew U.S. objections, but brought the Reagan administration to negotiate the Canada – United States Free Trade Agreement with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who was elected in 1984.

To be clear, I am not advocating that Canada pick a fight with the Biden administration because it is in a weak position domestically and internationally. I am suggesting, it is because of that weakness the Biden administration is not taking Canadian interests into account and it is for this reason that there needs to be a reset. Canada needs to make it clear that our support is not unconditional and that actions that hurt Canada will not be accepted with a smile.

The United States constitutional design makes the country hard to govern. This produces complex domestic politics that force U.S. presidents and the Congress to preoccupy themselves with the domestic forces that determine the success or failure of legislative initiatives or an administration. U.S. foreign policy therefore tends to respond best to international crises and opportunities. The success of Canada-U.S. relations has been its fatal flaw. For the Biden administration, Canada does not appear to present a crisis or an opportunity that warrants careful attention to Canada.

The Trudeau government should seek to change that dynamic. The Biden administration's early action against the KXL pipeline is a wakeup call for Canada that Biden's friendly disposition toward Canada over the years is insufficient to safeguard Canadian interests. Canadians should not take good bilateral relations for granted, and neither should the United States.



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# BC-appointed panel rejects universal basic income

(Editor's note: The authors of the study framed their approach this way: "Our work has been guided by a vision of British Columbia becoming a more just society. A society where, in Adam Smith's words, the assistance we need from each other is 'reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem.' A society where the recognition of the richness of life had been eloquently described by Chief Joseph Gosnell as leading us to the conclusion that we must act so that 'no one gets left behind.' While there are almost as many visions of what a just society looks like as there are people in this province, we believe that the shared vision of these expressions of hope and principle coming from such different cultures and times points to a way forward. All notions of justice arise from the ideas that we owe each other self-respect and dignity and that we should treat each other as equals deserving of our respect.")

By Moira Wyton,  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter  
Writing in *The Tyee*.

A panel appointed by the provincial government in 2018 to examine the idea of a basic income has reported that it would not be the most effective way to improve people's lives.

Instead, the spirit of basic income should underlie "co-ordinated and substantial" reform of the province's existing social programs, according to the panel.

Targeted basic incomes should replace some social supports like disability and income assistance, as well as support youth leaving care and women fleeing violence, the report concluded.

The panel also called for universal extended health benefits for low-income people as part of a recommended overhaul of social services in BC.

"We recommend a broad mixed system that includes some targeted basic income but also basic services," said panel chair David Green of the Vancouver School of Economics at the University of British Columbia.

The panel also included Jonathan Rhys Kesselman of Simon Fraser University and Lindsay Tedds of the University of Calgary, supported by consultant and co-author Daniel Perrin.

Basic income refers to a set of policies that aim to reduce poverty and improve health and social outcomes by providing income that lifts everyone over 18 at least to the poverty line.

Proponents say it gives people the opportunity to decide how to use money to meet their needs, frees them to refuse unsafe work and keeps them from financial disaster if they are laid off or need to stop working.

The panel said it appreciated the spirit of basic income but argued any program "needs to stand on a base of support to make effective individual autonomy possible."

Its 65 recommendations propose a substantial redesign of current social programs and assistance to bridge gaps and address concerning poverty levels among working-age, single adults.

Disability assistance rates should be raised by \$500 per month to reach the poverty line and the \$300 pandemic top-up — cut by \$150 by the current government — should be made permanent, the report recommends. The disability assistance rate for a single person is now about \$1,200 a month to cover housing and all other costs.

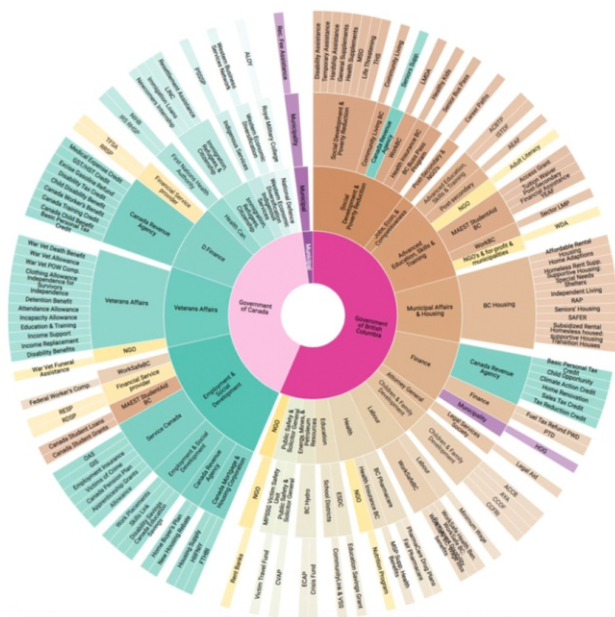
The government should also ease rules that deny support if people have assets and allow people on disability assistance to earn more money without losing benefits.

The panel also suggested integrated support for women and children fleeing violence and youth aging out of care, two groups who have specific needs. This would effectively create a basic income for those groups that is responsive to their needs and easier to access, Green said.

Green stressed that the pandemic's challenges are unique and that the proposals aim to respond to pre-existing issues as well. "You need to separate out what is going on with the pandemic from what is ongoing and systemic," he said when asked by *The Tyee*.

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BC's income and social support system makes for a big wheel

"It's not necessarily that you want to design your system the same way based on the pandemic's issues ... you have to make sure the rest of the system is there for when people have individual crises."

But one of Canada's leading scholars on basic income says the recommendations don't go far enough, particularly as the pandemic revealed big gaps in existing supports.

"I don't disagree with any changes they recommend. I just don't think they go far enough, and I don't think they're going to be implemented," said Evelyn Forget, a professor at the University of Manitoba who has studied basic income for decades.

Basic income and support services aren't mutually exclusive, she said, and current programs don't deliver much of the autonomy the report praises.

"It goes back to the deserving and the undeserving," said Forget, noting people with disabilities, youth aging out of care and seniors are seen as deserving while others are not.

The report notes single working-age adults, with and without children, are just under one-third of those living in poverty.

Forget said its proposals to strengthen labour regulations, expand rental assistance and extend health benefits don't necessarily treat those people as deserving of autonomy over their decisions. A basic income would give them control.

"What basic income doesn't require is a lot of personal oversight, and it doesn't require us to police people's decisions," said Forget.

The BC Greens, who made a study of basic income a requirement before they would support the NDP's former minority government, welcomed the report.

"The NDP government needs to recognize the urgent need for transformation of our social safety net, including implementation of basic-income style policies outlined in this report and beyond," the party said in a statement.

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction Nicholas Simons said in a statement the government would heed the recommendations in preparing this year's budget, expected in April.



Reporter Moira Wyton, (photo by Elizabeth Wang.)

## 2021 Member Dues are due!

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# UNBC student grateful for scholarship

To the editor of Orders of the Day:

To start off, I want to thank you for choosing me as a recipient of the Association of Former MLAs of BC Scholarship. It is a great blessing to have a portion of my schooling paid for, having some of the added pressure of tuition costs taken off my shoulders.

The scholarship has enabled me to continue to pursue my degree in English and Political Science at the University of Northern BC. It enabled me to focus more on school and doing my best work than on working to be able to finance my education. I have also been able to work on giving back to the community, participating as a volunteer for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, a campus ministry group. This has enabled me to create friendships and have fun memories as a part of my university experience. It has also allowed me to work on my leadership skills, something I am always working on.

After university, my plan is to go to law school to pursue a Juris Doctor degree, focussing on criminal defense. I have always had a mind for justice, so the legal system interests me greatly. I also hope to pursue a political position in the future, potentially running as a candidate to be a Member of Parliament.

The more I learn about the political system, the more it interests me. Good leadership is crucial to a good country, so I hope to become a part of that one day. In the pursuit of this goal, I plan on becoming a member of the university senate next year, getting my foot in the door of politics and beginning to understand it in practice.

Thank you once again; I am blessed and honoured to have been chosen to receive the Association of Former MLAs of BC Scholarship.

Sincerely,  
Kostas Bach



**(Editor's note: Emmy Blouin, Development Officer – Donor Relation at UNBC, tells OOTD that a total of 17 students have been recipients of the Association of Former MLAs of BC endowment scholarships since it was established in 2004. To be eligible for the \$1,500 award recipients must be full-time students enrolled in Political Science who demonstrate an interest in future public service. The criteria include satisfactory academic standing and a letter indicating the student's desire to enter into politics through public service or a legislative assembly.)**

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# Polling suggests days numbered for governors general

Julie Payette's unprecedented resignation under a cloud from her role as governor general is setting off a debate among Canadians about the future of a job tied directly to this nation's status as a constitutional monarchy.

The latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds that as support for maintaining the monarchical status quo declines, a majority of Canadians are also inclined to reduce (19 per cent) or eliminate (43 per cent) the role of the governor general. In Quebec, a full majority (63 per cent) would eliminate the position, but elsewhere residents are divided between eliminating, reducing, or even expanding the purview of the position. In BC, 34 per cent would eliminate the position.

Those who say they would reduce the purview of the position (approximately one-in-five Canadians) are most likely to say they would eliminate the governor general's place as a symbolic leader to the Canadian Armed Forces, if they could change the job.

While half of Canadians support continuing to recognize the Queen as head of state, just one-third (32 per cent) say they would like Canada to remain a monarchy for coming generations. This is down 10 percentage points over the past five years

Further, Canadians are in near-unanimity over who should actually hire Payette's successor. Nine-in-10 (91 per cent) say that decision should be up to a parliamentary committee, rather than at the sole discretion of the prime minister.

In January, an independent review of conduct at Rideau Hall found current and former employees describing the work environment under Payette and her second-in-command, Assunta Di Lorenzo, as "toxic," among other negative descriptors. The report, which drew from interviews of nearly 100 public servants, also contained accusations from staff of "yelling, screaming, aggressive conduct, demeaning comments and public humiliations."

Currently the Governor General receives a salary of around \$300,000 per year, in addition to having use of Rideau Hall as a residence, a personal driver, and a pension of up to \$150,000 per year after leaving the office. After leaving the role, the GG can then claim up to \$200,000 a year in expenses related to continuing responsibilities of the position after retirement. Canadians are near-unanimous that GGs are overcompensated. Two-thirds (65 per cent) say the benefits and payments are far too generous, while one-in-five (22 per cent) say in turn that it's "a bit" too rich.



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The Payette affair has Canadians pondering the larger issue of the role of the monarchy in Canada. While individual members of the royal family are never far from the headlines (be it news of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's latest pregnancy or the latest speculation over Prince Andrew's connections to Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell), just one-in-five Canadians (21 per cent) currently feel the royal family is just as relevant in Canada as ever.

There has also been a notable decline over the past five years in willingness to recognize Queen Elizabeth II as the official head of state for Canada. Now, half say they would continue to do so, while half disagree.

Asked another question about Canada's place as a remaining constitutional monarchy for generations to come, it becomes clear that the Queen's personal popularity outranks the perceived advantage of the system by which she is Canada's head of state. Compared to the half who say they're happy to continue to recognize Queen Elizabeth herself, just one-in-three (32 per cent) want Canada to remain a constitutional monarchy, long term. Notable is the lack of disagreement among generations on this question, all of which offer approximately one-third support for remaining a constitutional monarchy. This, and past Angus Reid Institute data, suggests that when Her Majesty dies, future monarchs – and the institution itself – will be less well received.

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# Local politicians ... mostly male, white-collar, over 50

By Declan Ingham and Mike Morden

In Canada, federal and provincial legislators tend to command the spotlight, but local politicians have a major impact on Canadians' lives. They are responsible for the public services that Canadians experience most directly, and can meaningfully shape attitudes toward, and expectations of, public institutions.

Local governments raise 12 per cent of every tax dollar (including user fees) and spend 19 per cent of all government expenditure. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, local leaders have been continuing to provide essential services, working with local public health boards, protecting transit riders, re-deploying staff, and communicating to the public.

But much less is known about the thousands of municipal politicians who, apart from ensuring potholes are filled and garbage is collected, are designing and redesigning our communities. The Samara Centre for Democracy joined a partnership of universities and researchers surveying mayors and councillors in the more than 400 municipalities across Canada. From Corner Brook, Newfoundland, to Squamish, British Columbia, more than 940 councillors, mayors, reeves, and borough councillors responded to the first annual Canadian Municipal Barometer survey, shedding light on their paths to politics and lives as local politicians.

Mayors and councillors, newly elected officials and municipal veterans, politicians in urban and rural places – respondents represented a cross section of Canada's local leaders. Their responses provide a better understanding of who local politicians are, how they experience public life, and what their career paths look like.

Here are some of the essential findings of the survey:

**City council is not a gateway office:** High-profile examples of municipal politicians making the leap to provincial or federal politics are the exception, not the rule. Only five per cent of respondents said it is very likely they will run for provincial or federal office, even after nearly half said they have been actively recruited. Generally speaking, local politicians do not see themselves as a “farm team” for provincial, territorial, or federal politics.

**Civil society talent pipeline:** Only a minority of local politicians take an explicitly political path to office, through advocacy, partisan involvement, or holding other offices. Most (56 per cent) point to involvement in community associations and neighbourhood groups as experiences that helped them prepare for public life.

**Lonely work, hours vary:** The survey probes the capacity of councillors and mayors and asks how they spend their time. The one dimension that makes municipal politics distinct from other orders of government is that the job is still often treated as a part-time commitment, rather than a full-time profession. The result is that half of respondents (49 per cent) are only part-time representatives, and, of those, most (77 per cent) hold other jobs. Three-quarters (76 per cent) of respondents have no staff support.

**Not all roads lead to city hall:** Diversity in representation is pivotal in ensuring all voices can be heard at the decision-making table. The findings of this report confirm that Canadian municipalities have a long way to go in diversifying local government. Only 31 per cent of respondents are women, 91 per cent are white, 70 per cent are 50 years old or older, and white-collar professionals are heavily overrepresented.

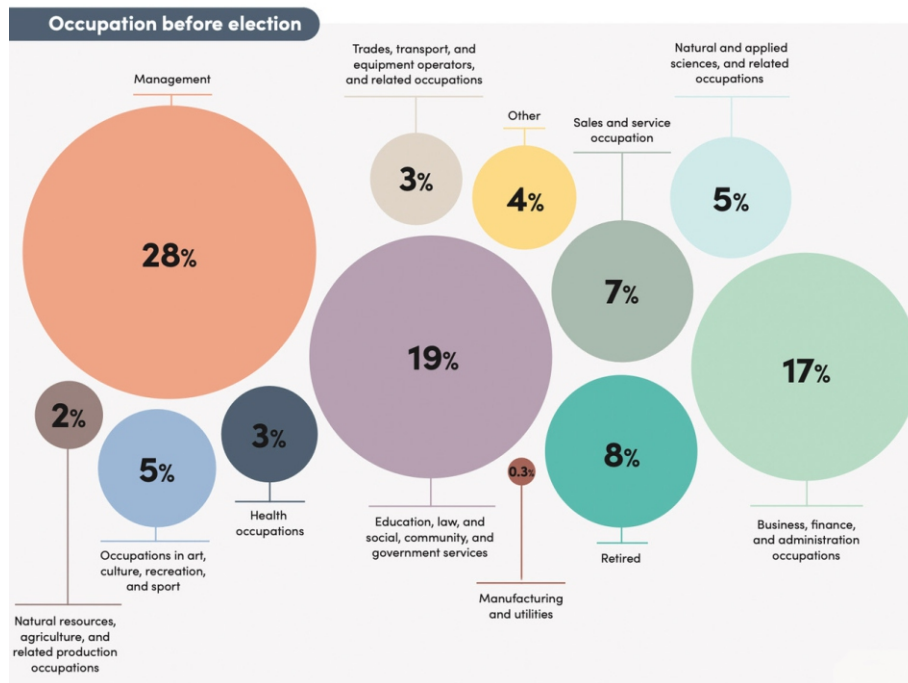
Canadians sometimes perceive politicians as lifers, careerists, and a class apart. The Samara Centre's past research with federal MPs has found that they often regard themselves as “accidental” politicians – unlikely to have ended up in the positions they hold.

**What about local politicians:** How do they find themselves in public life? The survey provides some clues. It finds common professional backgrounds, with strong overrepresentation of people from white-collar careers. But civic organizations also provide a training ground and platform for aspiring local leaders. Many respondents were recruited, or received encouragement to run. Overwhelmingly, local politicians themselves cite their interest in public service and the well-being of their communities as the key motivators for seeking office at the municipal level.

While it is true that local politics draws from a wide range of professional backgrounds, there is marked overrepresentation of those with a professional background. The number of corporate directors and consultants far outweighs the clerks and cashiers, while business owners outweigh them all.

Twenty-eight per cent of respondents had previously worked in management, whereas less than five per cent had worked in blue-collar sectors like construction, manufacturing, or natural resources. Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of the politicians surveyed came from three white-collar sectors: Management; business, finance, and administration; and education, law, social, community, and government services. Class-based and occupational underrepresentation, often overlooked but always present at other levels of politics, are certainly evident at the local level too.

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In addition to having similar professional backgrounds, local leaders often share a past involvement in civil society or civic life. Most local politicians surveyed suggest that their path to politics began, or was aided by, experience in community associations. About a third of respondents reported past participation in business associations and service clubs. Just over a quarter had been involved in advocacy. Most respondents had been involved in multiple kinds of associations before being elected to office, while a tiny fraction (27 out of 691 respondents to this question) listed no formative civic engagement.

Though anecdotally it appears to have become more common for people who held office provincially, territorially or federally to take up municipal politics after retirement or defeat, the data finds that this remains rare. Just six per cent of respondents had previously served as school board trustees, further underscoring the absence of an established elected office talent pipeline.

These responses point to the importance of general civic engagement, rather than explicit political engagement. While some local politicians may have been involved in advocacy organizations, and a few in political parties, many more were members of local civic institutions like neighbourhood associations and service clubs.

Municipal politicians say they ran for office because of their commitment to their communities and their desire to make change, and their favourite parts of the job have a relationship to these altruistic motivations. One of the most attractive features of being a mayor or councillor is the ability to engage with and participate in one's community.

The second cluster of popular themes relate to the desire to make decisions and advance change. A third cluster of responses concern aspects of representation and advocacy on behalf of constituents or specific issues.

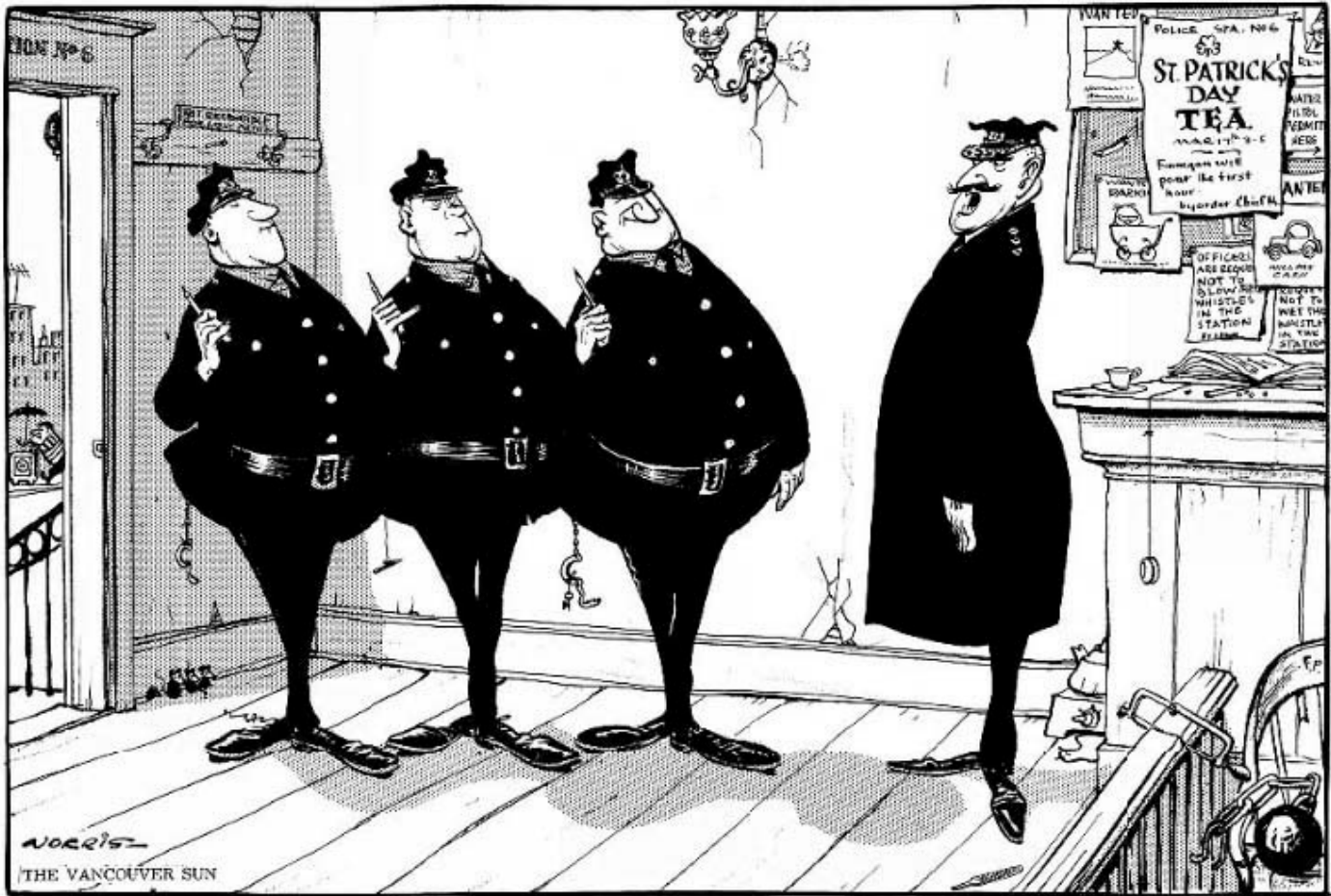
But the job brings significant costs, too. When local leaders describe their least favourite parts of the job, they are fairly consistent. Chief among the complaints is the nastiness and negativity that comes with occupying elected office. Local politicians feel they become lightning rods or whipping boys, attracting blame and criticism for things they feel are well beyond their control.

Community leaders should pay special attention to who is being invited, implicitly or explicitly, into local public life. Various forms of underrepresentation, for example of people of colour and women, are often even more pernicious and pronounced at the local level than federally and provincially. The Canadian Municipal Barometer survey also found that large sectors of the economy are largely unrepresented.

The survey reveals that more than an explicitly political path – say, participating in a political party, time as a school board trustee, or recruitment from existing politicians – many local leaders came via civil society organizations. Attracting a diverse and talented slate of local politicians, who broadly reflect the communities they seek to represent, may mean starting hyper-local – with more active recruitment within neighbourhood associations and service clubs, and ensuring equitable access to political power for community groups throughout a community.

To read the full study go to: <https://www.samaracanada.com/>.

# Len Norris



March 17, 1954

*"Finnegan, O'Hara, Callaghan ... today, as any other day, the nationality of the impaired will have no bearing on the charge ..."*

## 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 #200 - 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, B.C., V8N 1E2. 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](http://CanadaHelps) and the steps are:

- Go to [www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca](http://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](mailto:sneely@victoriafoundation.bc.ca)

# The times when racism was enshrined in law in BC

By Jim Hume  
The Old Islander

The bronze plaque tells a simple story: 50 Dallas Road, Historic Site of Victoria Immigration Building:

"Known simply as 'The Immigration Building,' the imposing red-brick building that once stood at this site was a symbol of hope, often a difficult hope, that new life in a new land would be better than in the old.

"The Immigration Building was opened in 1907, and until the late 1950s, any immigrant landing in Victoria had to pass through its doors. Depending on their country of origin, some immigrants were detained for a very long period of time, and many were forced to pay an entry tax. This monument acts as a reminder of the enormous courage it took to set off on a journey to an unfamiliar land. Although often entered with trepidation, the Immigration Building offered promise new; a chance to become a part of the vast mosaic called Canada."

The plaque does indeed mark a spot on Dallas Road where hope may once have sprung eternal but quickly died in a new nation consumed with the evil belief of white supremacy.

Called "the new Immigration Hospital" when it replaced the old centre, it was a two-storey structure with racially segregated wards, medical inspection areas and administrative offices. It was designed to accommodate 96 Hindus, 36 women, 24 Chinese, 48 Japanese, "and 16 others." Care had gone into the "facilities," with one administrator explaining the difficulty of "providing plumbing suitable for immigrants accustomed to washing themselves with water rather than using toilet paper." At the same time, he said he could "assure white people that care is taken that they shall not commingle with Orientals at any stage of their stay."

While the bulk of inhabitants at 50 Dallas Road would be Chinese or Hindus, it was clear from the outset that any white immigrants confined for whatever reasons would have "privileges."

In July 1908, more than 30,000 passengers from foreign ports were processed in Victoria by immigration officials and doctors. And that was at a time when massed arrivals of gold seekers and labourers to build the Canadian Pacific Railway were on the wane, and Victoria was no longer Canada's chief port of entry for immigrants or "travellers."



It had been the busiest immigration port in the early 1880s, first with the gold rush. That was followed by CPR hiring 17,000 Chinese labourers to blast and tunnel a railway track through the great mountain ranges blocking land routes from what was rapidly developing as a new country to be called Canada and the Pacific coast.

The railway workers were not the first Chinese imports. That distinction goes to a few brought out earlier to work in newly discovered coal fields. They had impressed mine owners with their skills, work ethic, the fact that they could be cheaply fed on a diet of fish and rice, and that they were happy to work for low wages. At least their employers were happy. It is doubtful if a Chinese worker immigrant was ever asked if he was happy with his dollar a day pay.

The cheap labour made Chinese workers welcome and desirable until November 7, 1885, when "the last spike" was driven at Craigellachie at 8:30 in the morning, and the vast number of Chinese labourers became redundant and far from welcome in the province where they had helped build a vital rail link. In BC, the disenchantment had been growing for a couple of years; mutterings about the "yellow peril" were rife.

In 1884, a Royal Commission was established "to make inquiry into and concerning all the facts and matters connected with the whole subject of Chinese immigration, its trade relations as well as the social and moral objections concerning the influx of Chinese people into Canada."

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BC was not the only province expressing fears about the growth of the Chinese immigrant community, but it was possibly most aware that immigration laws in the province were not well written. During the gold rush and the railway building years, it hadn't been too careful in framing sound legislation to welcome workers from other countries. It was estimated that Chinese workers with their low wages – roughly half a white man's pay – and the fact that Chinese workers had to provide their own food while the white crews were provided meals had reduced railway building costs between \$3 million and \$5 million.

The fact that an estimated 600 to 2,200 Chinese lost their lives didn't seem to enter the debate – possibly because no one has ever been able to come up with definitive records. It is a sad fact that Canadian attitudes at the time did not rate Chinese deaths as important as a white man's. Coal mining disasters were commonplace a hundred years ago. On Vancouver Island coal mine casualty lists, white men are often named with their birthplace noted. Chinese workers are just noted by a number. No names, no place of birth. Just a number.

So, in the year the last spike was driven, the Chinese Immigration Act explicitly designed to address the "Chinese problem" became law. The Royal Commission had recommended the imposition of a \$10 head tax on Chinese immigrants. In its wisdom, and probably encouraged by BC, the federal government upped the head tax to \$50 – a massive amount of money for a labourer to raise. The new law quickly became nicknamed the Chinese Exclusion Act because, although not as openly hostile as the USA "Exclusion Act" of 1882, which banned Chinese immigration entirely, the new Canadian law effectively excluded a class of immigrants for ethnic reasons. Their place of birth rather than their health or character decided their fate.

To make sure would-be Chinese immigrants understood, successive governments boosted the head tax from \$50 to \$100 in 1900 and then to \$500 in 1903.

And then, to make sure everyone understood which way Canada was leaning, in 1923 – the year I was born, so not yet a lifetime away – Ottawa passed a new Chinese Immigration Act. It was also appropriately tagged the Chinese Exclusion Act because that is precisely what it did – ban for the next 24 years the entry to Canada of anyone born in China. There were four exclusions:



Diplomats, students, merchants, and Canadian born Chinese returning from education in China.

A Canadian born Chinese was allowed two years for an educational stay in China. Failure to return to Canada on time would result in barred re-entry. There was one other penalty for every person of Chinese descent. On passage of the Act, whether a citizen of Chinese descent was born in Canada or was a legal immigrant accepted as a citizen years earlier, they would be required to register within 12 months for a photo identity card. Failure to register so would result in imprisonment or a fine of up to \$500. The Act was repealed in 1947 after the world saw the ultimate results of racism and genocide in the Second World War.

In the 1950s, Victoria's Immigration Centre became the target of many complaints about inmates' care. The building, too, was suffering from neglect. It was finally left empty and stood that way for 20 years, a haunted house, gaunt and falling apart until in 1978 the wreckers' ball finally ended its life.

That plaque reminds of a time when racism was acceptable, bigotry encouraged and at times protected as a "right" by law. We should have known better.