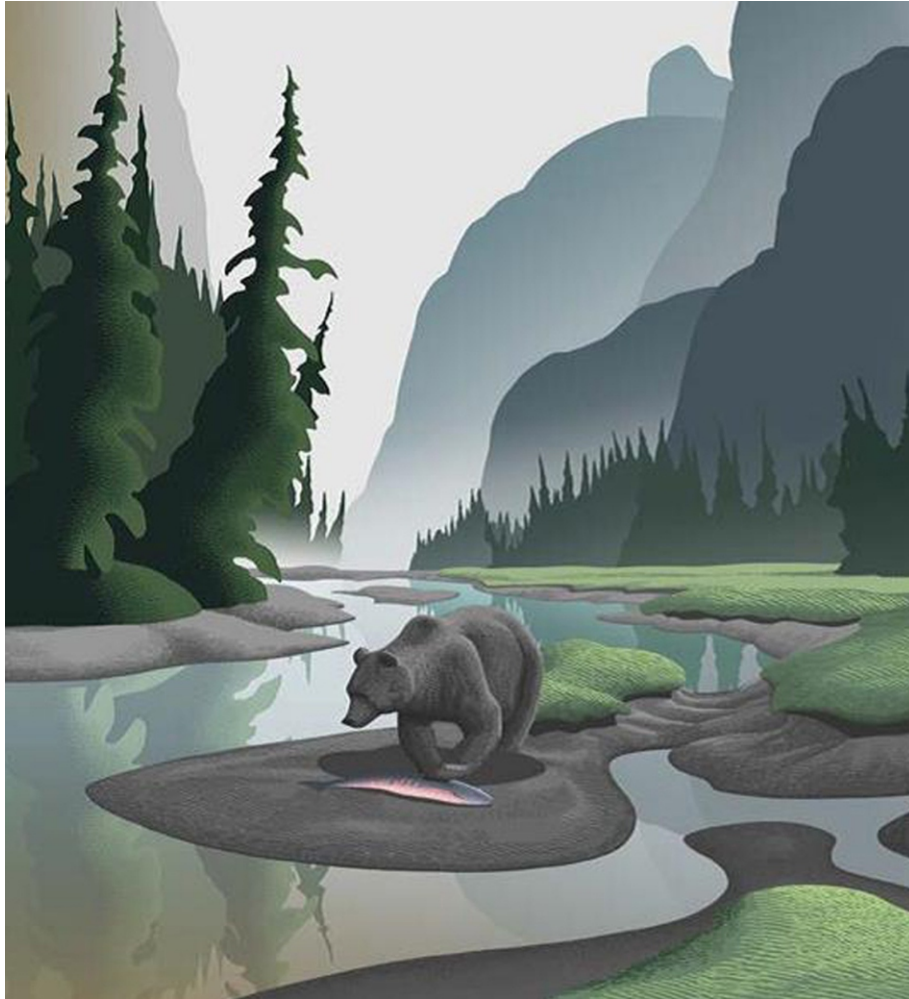


Prince Philip's BC legacy

The grizzlies of the “Khutz” lose their shining knight



By Bruce Strachan

In April, when Prince Philip was laid to rest it was just another day of freedom and foraging for the grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen. How could they know their shining knight and protector was gone.

By way of background, Prince Philip had a long-standing interest in environmental issues. He was no latter-day “save-the-planet” activist, rather a leader in supporting well-thought-out plans to avoid degradation of species habitat. In 1970, the Prince was one of the founders of The 1001 Club, a Nature Trust endowment fund in aid of the World Wildlife Fund. Prince Philip also served as president of the World Wildlife Fund from 1981 to 1996.

Fast forward to British Columbia 1987 when a plan was being formulated to log in the Khutzeymateen Valley. The application was from a small logging company and the plan called for a small cut. However, the implications were anything but small and were heard around the world.

continued on Page 12

Her Honour

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia

Thank You and Miscellany

Thank you to those of you who, when sending in your Member dues or subscription renewals, added a donation to help cover production costs for the newsletter.

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From the Editor's Desk

Contributions from members to this issue of OOTD have been so gratifying this month. I have said this before, one of my ongoing challenges is finding ways to reach members and encourage them to share their experiences. On the recent Zoom board meeting, our production guru Rob Lee said it well: Just take a moment to tell us what's happening in your world; nothing is insignificant ... a move across town, a summer experience, a recollection. It can be a letter to the editor or something more ambitious. We want to share your ideas and memories.

Someone commented that AFMLABC members may sometimes be reluctant to commit words to print for fear of editorial embarrassment. Nonsense. In the five years I have been doing this I have never received a submission that was not worthy of sharing.

Our appreciation starts with Bruce Strachan ... a fine MLA in his time, a stage-worthy manipulator of the ivories and, as it turns out, not a bad wordsmith to boot. His piece on Prince Philip's profound influence on BC and the preservation of our natural resources and wildlife is a reminder that there was substance under the privilege and fancy cloth of the Queen's Consort. Rounding out our tributes to the Prince, our thanks go to Bruce Hallsor, a friend of the AFMLABC and a celebrated Victoria monarchist and to AFMLABC director Ken Jones who cycled beside the Royals in 1951.

Next up is former MLA Duane Crandall who delivers a home-spun trip down memory lane, taking us back to a time when commitment to community was delivered with hard earned effort. His Oddfellows weren't odd fellows at all, they were salt of the earth.

And, thanks to David Mitchell ... former MLA and a historian with a knack for putting past events in political context.

Finally, a nod to Joan Barton, former Legislature librarian and OOTD editorial committee member, who helps us better understand how the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund works to support BC Youth Parliament members living in the hinterland.

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.

The President's Report

On Page 13 of this month's Orders of the Day, we sadly pay tribute to Dave Mercier who died in April. Dave was a dedicated community leader in Burnaby where he served as chamber of commerce president, city councillor starting in 1968, then mayor from 1979 to 1981 and Burnaby-Edmonds MLA from 1986 to 1991. He also volunteered for many non-profit societies and community organizations.

The sudden passing of our association's President Ian Waddell on March 15th was a shock. I spoke with Ian only a week prior to his death. He was in high spirits and feeling energized by all of the projects he was working on and his personal health regime. He spoke passionately about his association projects and his pleasure working with his personal fitness trainer, along with his enjoyment of playing golf and skiing.

Recovering from minor heart surgery, he was eager to embrace new challenges. For me, his life experience and sudden passing remind us that we cannot take life for granted and must make every effort to appreciate each moment and live life to the fullest.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our past presidents, executives, directors, Brian Kieran, Rob Lee and all the current and past elected individuals, Legislative Assembly staff, media and community members who paid tribute to Ian and helped contribute to an excellent April newsletter.

After the sad news, it was requested by the board that I step into the president's role given my role as vice-president since 2018. On April 10th, we held an AFMLABC directors' Zoom meeting. We unanimously appointed former MLAs John Les as our new vice-president, Bruce Strachan as secretary and Ida Chong as a director. With deep gratitude, I thank all members of the AFMLABC team who continue to support the work envisioned by Ian and our board.

April has also proven to bring more sad news with the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. With respect and admiration for all his work, leadership, and devotion to the thousands of young people in Canada that he has inspired through the Duke of Edinburgh awards and his commitment to Canada, I send my deepest condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and to all the members of the Royal Family. I recall meeting Prince Philip and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on October 7th, 2002 at GM Place in Vancouver. In our brief chat, I was struck by his statement acknowledging that he was also an immigrant, born in Greece. He lived a life of service.

Lastly, at this critical juncture of the COVID-19 pandemic, with BC coping with rising infections due to more virulent variants, I encourage you to be vaccinated as soon as possible with your physician's approval. I was fortunate to receive the first AstraZeneca shot at my local pharmacy by just calling. I implore each of you to do what you can to help others understand the importance of being vaccinated, not just for yourself, but for the protection of others through herd immunity. It pains me to see our people dying of COVID-19.

Families are being torn through the loss of relatives, mental health issues arising from isolation, the inability to visit loved ones in hospital, and the collateral damage of delayed elective surgeries and tests not being done. Please join me in helping people through this difficult time by giving the mental health support needed through simple conversations, and directing community members to resources that you know exist to help them.

Dave Hayer,
AFMLABC President



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HELPING WHEN LIFE CHANGES



Thoughts on the passing of Her Majesty's Consort, Prince Philip

By Bruce Hallsor, QC

Most members of this association will have had more than a passing familiarity themselves with the tedium of ribbon cuttings, award presentations, facility tours and ceremonial inspections. While these events are generally positive experiences, they are also often dry. Even politicians are supposed to check their partisanship at the door of these events and make only bland remarks. So much more circumspection is expected of Royals. And yet, for more than 70 years, as Consort to Her Majesty, Prince Philip performed these duties, several times a day, often with an irreverent manner that helped put everyone instantly at ease.

Many members of this association have had personal experience with the Prince. In his 12 visits to British Columbia, and 70 total visits to Canada, he occasionally raised eyebrows, but always entertained. His penchant for quick jokes and grand personal gestures are part of the remembrance stories that have circulated widely in the days following His Royal Highness's demise.

And yet, despite all the constraints of his role and the enormous amount of time he devoted to his ceremonial duties, Prince Philip leaves a remarkable legacy. While the Queen devoted herself to her awesome constitutional duties, Prince Philip made it his life project to manage the institution of the Monarchy.

It was Prince Philip who drove the enormous technical project to televise the coronation. It was Prince Philip who devised a plan to bring television cameras into Buckingham Palace and present details of Royal life that had previously been kept strictly shrouded from public view.

It was Prince Philip who expanded the use of Royal patronages to take an active role in the development of initiatives that brought a direct connection between the Royal family and many service organizations and initiatives.

It was Prince Philip again who gave public license for republicans to debate the usefulness of the Monarchy, when he famously told Canadians that he would have no problem if Canadians wished to abolish the monarchy. They were willing to serve. Whether they did serve was entirely up to us.

Prince Philip was well aware that the institution of Monarchy is seen by many as an anachronism of a past age. Born a Greek Prince, as a young boy he saw many centuries-old Royal houses come to an end. In 1952, as the world mourned the passing of King George VI and an untested 25 year old ascended to the throne, it was not hard to imagine that the same fate could come to the House of Windsor.

The end of the Empire, the loss of Britain's place as a pre-eminent world power, the discrediting of nationalism and the rise of globalism, the rise of television and popular media, the rise of democratic socialism into mainstream European political thinking, huge demographic shifts, and even the demise of religious



Prince Philip made 70 visits to Canada, 12 to BC

observance ... all could have threatened the survival of this curious institution. And yet, 70 years later, while the rest of the world has changed tremendously, the Monarchy has survived and indeed deepened its relevance to the lives of ordinary people throughout the Commonwealth.

If one thinks back to what the world was like in 1952, we see the most social change by far in history. The central role that churches used to play in our society has all but disappeared. The role that class and race played in both official and unofficial social and economic hierarchies has been almost entirely swept away. The expectations of government and the way that our democratic institutions function, have seen fundamental change. Even the institution of marriage has been redefined, along with the expected roles of gender, and the very idea of gender itself.

Most of the changes we have gradually adopted would have been unthinkable to most Canadians in 1952, who were after all, over 95 per cent white, over 50 per cent British, and over 90 per cent Christian. All this change around us can only highlight the remarkable achievement of the House of Windsor in surviving and adapting to the modern world.

Perhaps the Monarchy was important to people as something familiar to hold as the world was changing around them. Perhaps people have needed the Monarchy to provide a framework for stability during these turbulent decades. That may provide part of the explanation, but I think it is fair to say that if the Monarchy had remained aloof and traditional, it would have struggled to stay relevant. Like all things, a flexible and evolving institution is usually better able to withstand pressure.

As we reflect on the life of a man who was Prince Consort for nearly half of British Columbia's history as a province, we must pay tribute to this naval captain's expert navigation through troubled waters. Only time will tell how a grieving Queen will do without his wise counsel, and whether the next generations of the Royal family will be able to continue with the direction in which Prince Philip steered the Crown.

(Bruce Hallsor is vice chair of the Victoria Branch of the Monarchist League.)

Ken Jones takes an Alberni bike ride beside Prince Philip

By Ken Jones

I was 12 in 1951, with a CCM bicycle that would take me everywhere in the Alberni Valley.

We heard that Princess Elizabeth and her new husband, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, were coming to Port Alberni on October 25th. They were going to drive down our main street, Third Avenue, to the uptown centre where all the stores, restaurants, banks, and Post Office were. Everybody was lining both sides of Third, so I decided to cycle over to see the Royals.

Somehow, I ended up riding beside the black convertible with the top up. Prince Philip was driving with Elizabeth in the passenger seat. I was riding beside her on the right. Suddenly, instead of going straight south into the business district, where the crowds were all lined up, Philip turned right onto Argyle Street, and I followed him. He went down a block, then left on Second Avenue with me about five feet off the passenger door.

The Prince wasn't driving very fast so I could keep up with them. There was no one on the block; everyone was on the parade route of Third Avenue. That's when Philip made some comment about me being able to keep up with them. I continued beside the car as it returned to Third via Angus Street and headed back north to the cheers of the crowd. The Prince and Princess were casual and friendly.



Prince Philip had a special relationship with the military

The Royal couple overnighted at Eaglecrest in Qualicum Beach, with another parade in Qualicum and Parksville the next day. My parents took my brother, sister and me to see them again.

I saw Prince Philip and the Queen up close on two other occasions: In 1983, they came off the Royal Yacht Britannia at CPR Pier C to pull the lever to start the construction of Canada Place, to kick off the start of EXPO '86 in Vancouver; and in 1994 at the Legislature and at Beacon Hill Park when I was the Official Opposition Critic for the Commonwealth Games in Victoria.

(Ken Jones was the MLA for Surrey-Cloverdale from 1991 to 1996. He currently serves as a director on the board of the AFMLABC.)

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BC's Oddfellows – good folks helping communities – fade to black

By Duane Crandall

There are not many skyscrapers in Golden. Just two. Both are three stories high.

I know that three stories wouldn't make a 'skyscraper' in many people's minds, and it certainly doesn't in terms of some of the buildings in the cities in our province as far as number of stories is concerned. But in terms of history, one of our buildings has more than most of any height.

Here's my tale. I spent the first 10 years of my life on a farm in central Alberta followed by four years in the town of Ponoka, just north of Red Deer. In the '40s and '50s there wasn't much in the way of babysitting so if parents went somewhere they usually just took the kids along. I went to lots of receptions and reunions in lots of community venues.

Legion Halls, Elks Halls, Moose Halls and another one called the I.O.O.F. Hall. That last one was pronounced, in the vernacular of the day, the "I Double O. F. Hall" ... the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Now a kid of six or 10 doesn't really keep a record of the names of community halls, but it's like having a fellow named 'Ebenezer' living next to you, there's nothing wrong with the name but it's a name you can't forget. I Double O. F. Hall, it sticks with you.

When we moved to Golden in 1974 and I went to the office supply store, as I often did, I saw the words "I.O.O.F. Hall Upstairs" painted by hand on the side of the building. There were those letters again, I.O.O.F., the same ones that I had heard years before.

I didn't think all that much of it for about 40 years. You know how it is, there are businesses to look after, kids to raise, dishes to do, elections to win or lose. But, about five or six years ago I started to wonder about the I.O.O.F. in Golden. The words that had been scrawled on the side of the building had long since been sided over. I started asking people, old-timers who had lived in Golden for years, several all of their lives.

Most didn't remember a thing. But, retired rancher Orm Braisher was rich with memory. "You bet I remember. In those days there were two lodges in town, one was the rich man's lodge, the other was the poor man's lodge, and my Dad belonged to both of them. The Masons were the rich man's lodge and the Oddfellows were the poor man's lodge. And when he broke his leg in the '20s, the Oddfellows gave us 30 bucks a month and we survived on that. You bet I remember the Oddfellows!"



I.O.O.F. yesteryear

So, who are the Oddfellows? Why were they here? When were they here? And where did they go?

I discovered the I.O.O.F. had a presence in our town for at least 50 years and had a building, which included their hall on its third floor. Then, membership must have declined so the lodge folded. The same thing happened in dozens of small towns in our province, maybe yours.

The Oddfellows were not only in Golden. They were everywhere. There were Oddfellows Lodges in Greenwood, Prince Rupert, Trout Lake (north of Nakusp), Penticton, Enderby, Sandon (near New Denver) and Duncan. Not only was there one in Trail, but another in Rossland. Not only one in Cranbrook, but one in Kimberley and one in between Kimberley and Cranbrook in the rural district of Wycliffe.

Some had interesting names such as Pittitko Lodge #13 in Merritt, Enterprise Lodge #43 in Trail and Harmony Lodge #6 in Ladysmith.

Now, they're all gone from those small towns and, worse yet, forgotten.

So, who were the Oddfellows, that they would be active in so many BC communities for so long and then disappear? Why are they worth remembering?

For the record, I am not an Oddfellow, nor was my father or any member of my family. The point of the story is they are worth remembering because they were a significant part of the fabric of our small communities and many in those communities today have no idea that the Oddfellows were ever there.

continued next page

The Oddfellows is a men's fraternal organization whose purpose is "to improve and elevate the character of mankind." Its three-ringed logo highlights the three principles of friendship, love and truth. It also has a women's affiliate known as the Rebekahs, and those two groups contributed in tandem to a vast number of projects that helped make our towns better, primarily in the years from 1900 to 1970.

If a group in a town that had an I.O.O.F. lodge was working on a community project and were trying to raise money, the Oddfellows would have been on their prospective donor list. Think of early fire halls, hospitals, parks and cemeteries, community halls, churches, kids' hockey and baseball teams. Think of the rodeo and fair grounds and May Queen contests. Just like now, and perhaps more so, community projects always needed money.

The Oddfellows were there for their communities on most occasions. They were even there for the other lodges. In fact, they shared (rented) their hall in Golden to the Masonic Lodge from 1903 to 1928.

The Oddfellows knew then what governments learned later, that they could be popular if they offered people assistance with things such as doctor bills.

As in Orm Braisher's case, medical problems, unemployment, plain financial need and even funeral expenses were provided for dues-paying members. In so doing, the lodge would have attracted many members and been a crucial assistance in times of crisis. Sustained support was part of their mission, part of their reason for existence, and especially so at that time and place in our history, in the start up of many of our fledgling communities.

Why are the Oddfellows gone? What happened? If an organization played a significant role in building communities, how could it disappear? How could a community let them fade away?

The years between 1900 and 1930 were the heyday of the I.O.O.F. in small towns in Canada, including BC. It had a meaningful role to play. But, when the Great Depression arrived in '29 it took a toll. As members often found themselves out of work and the dues were not great enough to support large numbers with its programs, financial solvency became an issue.



I.O.O.F. today

In addition, many members had begun to join the lodge only for the benefits of the protection programs rather than because of a real interest in the lodge. So, the drop in membership that started in the '30s continued until every lodge in our small towns had closed.

The I.O.O.F. still exists in many of our larger cities and towns, although probably somewhere in the '50s or '60s they closed in Ashcroft, Agassiz, Salmon Arm and Slokan.

In Golden, Oddfellows Lodge #34 hasn't met on the third floor for more than 50 years, but it could meet again tomorrow. The meeting hall is still the same. The wooden logo still hangs from the ceiling. The peep holes are still in the entrance doors and the ceiling embellishment is still there above the presiding location of the Noble Grand, the member who ran the meetings. Raised floors still line the perimeter of the hall.

The skyscraper in Golden, built in 1902, still stands. A retail store on the first floor, storage on the second and history on the third, with a story that is no longer told to a citizenry that no longer remembers.

(Duane Crandall served in the Legislative Assembly from 1987 to 1991 as the Social Credit member for the constituency of Columbia River.)

COVID-19: Third wave drives a surge of criticism

Early hope for a spring season that would have marked the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic has in many parts of the country given way to an all-out fight against rapidly spreading variants.

So far, the variants appear to be winning as their virulence outpaces any reduction in spread from Canada's vaccination program.

This third wave of the pandemic has brought new rounds of restrictions on travel and businesses in some of Canada's most populous provinces and has spurred near equal intensity between those who want to see their communities lock down even harder, and those fatigued by an inability to resume their pre-pandemic lives.

As provinces adjust to rising daily case counts and the logistical challenges of mass inoculation, new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians increasingly disappointed in their provincial leaders. At least half in Saskatchewan (50 per cent), Manitoba (59 per cent), Ontario (65 per cent), and Alberta (75 per cent) now say that their premier is doing a poor job handling the pandemic.

BC continues to have a measure of faith in Premier John Horgan with 55 per cent saying he is doing a good job.

The reasons for these opinions, however, are varied. In Ontario, the sense that the government took too long to implement new restrictions drives negative views. Indeed, 61 per cent of Ontarians called for tougher restrictions in their province while this public opinion survey was being conducted. Notably, the government introduced a new stay-at-home order just as the survey finished.

But, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney has a different problem to solve. Nearly half (45 per cent) of his constituents say the regulations in place already go too far – the highest number saying this in the country – while close to the same number (42 per cent) say that they don't go far enough.

Overall, half of Canadians (48 per cent) say that their communities need tighter restrictions to stem rising infections, while 28 per cent disagree. One-quarter (24 per cent) say their community has found the right balance.

The first quarter of 2021 began with optimism on some fronts in the battle against COVID-19. Concern over becoming sick with the virus began to dissipate slightly. Now, as multiple, and highly infectious, variants of the virus have begun to spread, concern has returned closer to peak levels. Two-thirds (66 per cent) of Canadians now say that they are concerned about becoming sick themselves.



Notably, the proportion of the population that is very concerned for themselves has increased. This is driven in large part by a spike in anxiety levels among younger Canadians. This group, 18 to 34 years of age, have been far less likely to have had access to vaccination and are far more at risk from COVID variants of concern. Their personal concern levels now reach one-in-five for the first time, contrasted against a low of less than five per cent last summer.

Thirteen months of sickness, death, job insecurity, an inability to plan for the future, and the stop-and-start nature of restrictions are taking a toll on Canadians' mental health.

Asked to assess their own mental health, one-in-three Canadians say that their mental health is not good or terrible. A staggering 47 per cent of those under the age of 35 feel this way, with one-in-10 (nine per cent) saying they are barely getting by. The most profound negative effects are being felt by young women.

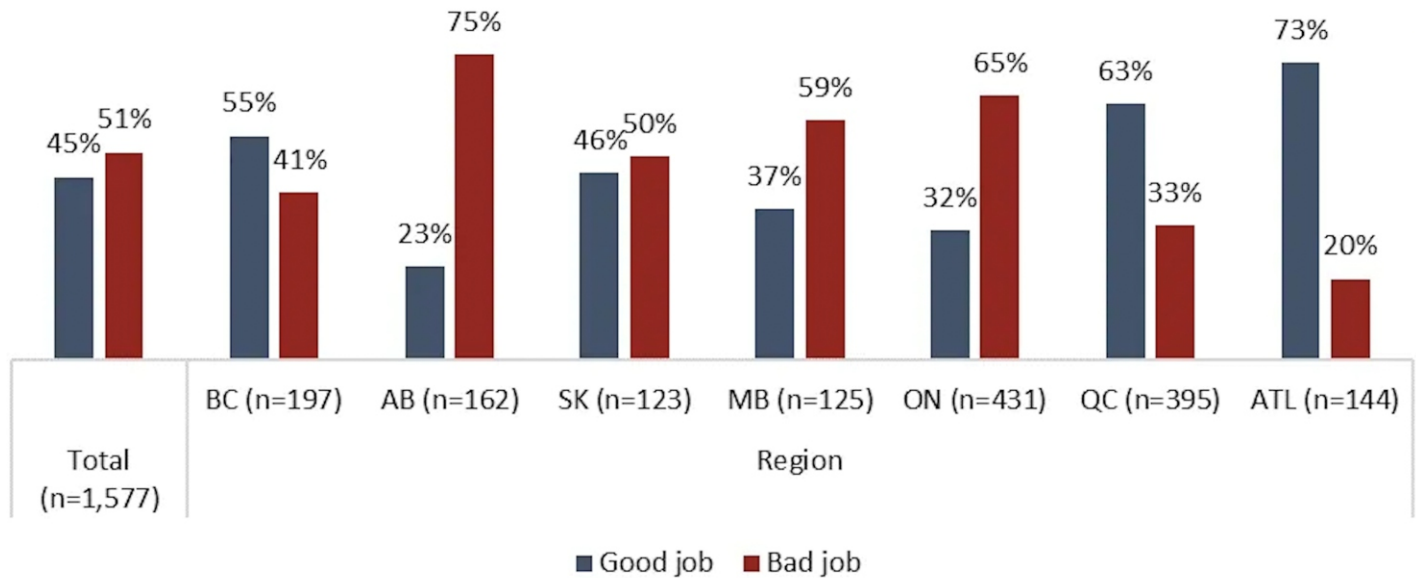
Another measure finds Canadians showing more signs of fatigue. Asked to rate their own sense of optimism, just two-in-five (43 per cent) say that they feel good about the near future. One-quarter (24 per cent) overall, rising to three-in-ten in Alberta (32 per cent) and Ontario (30 per cent), say they feel poor or very poor. On this question too, young women fare worst.

While the timeline for vaccinations is being accelerated across the country, the more immediate challenge for public health officials is the rise in cases of COVID-19. After dropping precipitously between early January and early March, cases have more than doubled from their early March nadir. This has prompted several provinces to re-initiate lockdowns and restrictions. For many, this is the right policy approach. Half (48 per cent) say that current restrictions do not go far enough.

There are two populations most polarized on this question. In Alberta, where Premier Jason Kenney is facing a de-facto caucus revolt – 16 of his own UCP MLAs are publicly opposing the recent re-implementation of restrictions – nearly half the province (45 per cent) say measures go too

continued next page

Do you think your provincial premier is doing a good or bad job handling the Covid-19 pandemic overall? (All respondents)



far. That said, nearly the same number (42 per cent) disagree and say that restrictions should go further.

In Ontario, where new stay-at-home orders have taken effect, three-in-five said restrictions needed to be tighter. This suggests a high level of frustration with the provincial government's timing in implementing new measures. The same sentiment is felt in British Columbia.

On the west coast, twice as many people say restrictions have been too lax (55 per cent) as say they are about right (27 per cent). BC recently broke an all-time record in new infections and shut down indoor dining, indoor exercise classes and other activities. (Further essential travel protocols were announced April 19.)

Notably, Canadians' opinions on current restrictions remain fairly consistent regardless of whether they have been struggling with their mental health during to the pandemic. While those that report poor mental health are slightly more likely to say restrictions go too far (32 per cent compared to 26 per cent among those with good mental health), fully half of this group say restrictions do not go far enough:

Assessments of the performance of provincial governments vary from coast to coast. As has been the case for most of the pandemic, the Atlantic provinces are seen by people in their region as handling the pandemic best. In Quebec and British Columbia, premiers Francois Legault and John Horgan each earn majority praise too. But

Ontario's Doug Ford and Alberta's Jason Kenney are now seen to be doing a poor job by at least two-thirds of their constituents.

Trendline data for this question is significant across all regions, with most of the country growing far more critical of their provincial leaders as the pandemic wears on. The negative trend is particularly profound in Alberta. Last April, 86 per cent of Albertans said Premier Kenney was doing a good job handling the pandemic. In November, 70 per cent felt this way. Now, just 23 per cent feel Kenney is performing well on this file, a near four-fold decline from a year ago. Positive assessments of Ford's performance are at less than one-third, a 46-point plunge in 12 months. Similarly dramatic decreases are also noted everywhere but in Atlantic Canada.

The good news for public health officials is that the top doctors in each province continue to outpace their respective premiers in terms of public approval. In Alberta, Dr. Deena Hinshaw receives twice the level of praise as Jason Kenney, though she, alongside Ontario's Dr. David Williams, receive lower levels than their peers elsewhere in the country.

Meantime, as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reinforces to Canadians that the country is facing a "very serious" third wave of the virus, Canadians continue to reinforce that they do not perceive an improvement in his handling of this file. Opinions of Trudeau's performance on COVID-19 are unchanged from last month. Fewer than half (43 per cent) say he is doing a good job while 52 per cent disagree.

Lessons learned from BC's recall and initiative law

By David Mitchell

As Alberta implements recall and initiative legislation, the historical reference point is in the neighbouring province of British Columbia, where in 1991 a referendum on these elements of populist ideology was tied to a provincial election.

The governing Social Credit Party had become so mired in scandal and controversy under the former premier, Bill Vander Zalm, that a last-ditch appeal was being made to voters along the following lines: "We know we've been an awful government, but please give us another chance. And if we screw up again, you'll be able to recall us with these new tools of direct democracy."

It turned out to be more than a bit too clever. After years of embarrassment in provincial politics, British Columbians had an appetite for more accountability, with more than 80 per cent voting yes to the referendum questions. Regardless, the long-dominant Social Credit Party was swept from office.

The NDP won a large and impressive majority. During the election campaign, they had refused to be tricked into opposing the referendum questions. In spite of deep concerns about grafting these American features of democracy onto the parliamentary system, New Democrats promised to abide by the referendum results. After all, how could anyone defy the will of the people?

The new government followed through, without enthusiasm, and after further study and plenty of time, passed into law the Recall and Initiative Act. This legislation established almost impossibly high hurdles for approving the recall of an MLA or a citizens' initiative.

Of course, it shouldn't be easy to effectively fire an elected representative; however, if a law provides for such an outcome, it should at least be a possibility. Alas, this hasn't been the case in BC. In fact, the process has only served to frustrate the largely partisan impulses to recall MLAs. After more than two dozen attempts, no recall petitions have been successful – although in one or two cases, MLAs have resigned under the threat of recall.

Despite several efforts, BC can count only a single successful initiative petition when in 2010 an extraordinary campaign to scrap the HST received the requisite support for a referendum. Ironically, the campaign was led in part by former premier Bill Vander Zalm, triggering an anti-tax movement that would later result in the resignation of Liberal Premier Gordon Campbell.

BC serves as a political laboratory in Canada, the only jurisdiction – other than Alberta – to experiment with these tools of direct democracy. Despite lessons learned, the Alberta government has now adopted its neighbouring province's model for recall and initiative. When passed into law, the same mountain-high thresholds will be required to recall an MLA or to advance a citizen-based initiative. This is likely to result in a small flurry of political activity with little or nothing to show for it. In this sense, the Alberta law is largely symbolic, fulfilling the UCP government's election pledge.

The innovation included in the prospective new Alberta law is that it goes further by including mayors, municipal councillors and school board trustees. But, this could simply result in more frustration at the local government level where the threshold to recall is even higher than for MLAs.

Why is all of this necessary? Some American states experimenting with direct democracy seem to be engaged in perpetual election campaigns, with recall petitions frequently circulating and election ballots as thick as old-fashioned telephone directories with numerous complicated initiatives to be voted upon.

The urge to hold our elected representatives and governments accountable is certainly understandable. And citizen engagement in many forms needs to be encouraged. But, the ultimate democratic tool at our disposal remains the tried and true general election, when we can elect – or recall – our representatives. To paraphrase Winston Churchill: It's the worst system, except for all the others.



(David Mitchell is an author, historian and former BC MLA. This opinion piece appeared in the *Calgary Herald*.)



Letters

Dear Editor:

Three comments from my Kelowna sundeck on a not-so-sunny day.

First, a nice tribute to Rita Johnston in the April OOTD. As noted, Rita and I were friends. Rita had served as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Highways and had a good handle and knowledge of the BC Interior, the part of BC we Hinterland MLAs called “The BC beyond Hope.”

She understood the regional divisions in a province as large and diverse as ours and this understanding no doubt played a significant role in her election as party leader and premier. The last time we met – as noted – her memory was failing, but in spite of that she was lively and engaged. I hope and trust the rest of her days will be peaceful and comfortable.

Rita was a formidable and notable slice of BC political history. As a side note, Rita was the only person I ever knew who consistently beat Jim Chabot at the poker table.

Second, my thoughts are with the family of Lorne Nicholson. Although we sat on opposite sides of the House, Lorne and I got along well. There was a kinship amongst MLAs from the Interior. Lorne had a superb, yet subtle, sense of humour and even in the hottest of debates he delivered his best with a smile. In the 1980s there was a lot of partisan tension in the House, yet Lorne could set it aside with polish and well thought out debate.

Finally, I can't help but admire the consistently good columns by Jim Hume. The article on Site C and maybe D was forward-thinking to say the least. Jim opined about the increasing use of electricity caused by “built-in security systems, blinds and curtains ... and hand-held miracle gadgets.” Well, here's one to ponder Jim – and OOTD readers. During the Site C discussions of 2017 an engineer buddy of mine calculated that if every car in BC was electric we would need two more Site Cs. So, although “The Old Islander” says he won't be around in 2025, I bet his OOTD advice will.

Bruce Strachan
Kelowna

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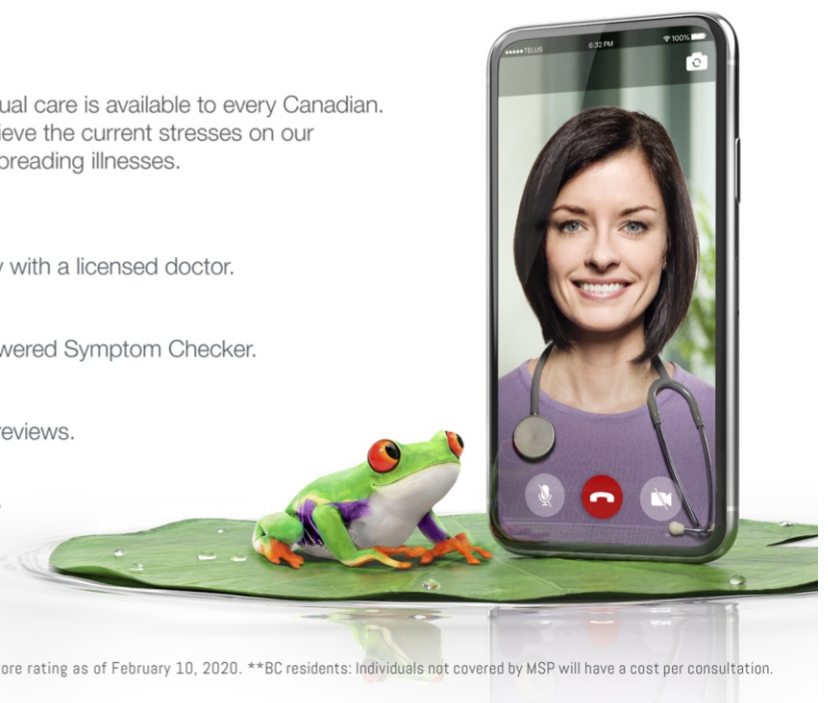
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Continued from Page 1

Prince Philip's legacy

First, the Khutzemateen was prime grizzly bear habitat considered among the best in the world. Mild climate, abundant feed including salmon in the fall when grizzlies have to fatten up for winter. The other important factor is that grizzlies do not adapt at all to human presence or activity. Interesting, the only animal in North America that could live anywhere it wants, prefers privacy and is uncomfortable with the presence of humans.

The Khutzamateen logging plan was brought to the Prince's attention and during a 1987 visit to British Columbia, he made a public comment about the intrusion of logging in such a sensitive wildlife area. This resulted in a lively cabinet discussion, but with the Prince on the side of the grizzlies the Ministry of Environment had a strong ally. The logging plan was sidelined.

In the summer of 1988, I had the opportunity to visit the Khutz as we called it. A great trip, organized by Dan Culver. Culver was an adventurer and ecologist and true wilderness lover. Sadly, Culver died in a fall after climbing to K2. On the Khutz trip I also had the good fortune to meet a number of biologists who held a strong opinion of the valley as prime grizzly habitat.

We were dropped at the entrance to the valley and spent the next three days cruising the river, fishing, observing grizzlies and learning to appreciate the wilderness and wildlife value of the Khutzemateen.

Guiding us on this segment was Wayne McCrory. Wayne brought along an encyclopedic knowledge of grizzlies, a great sense of humour and a 12-gauge shotgun. Grizzlies can be temperamental at times. It was a great cruise and study of the area. The nice thing about the environment ministry is you can fish and be at work at the same time.

In 1989, the ministry instigated a thorough study of the Khutzemateen grizzlies. The study lasted until 1991. Bears were radio-collared and monitored over the three years of the study. It was an intense and thorough look at the bears and their relationship to the Khutz. The study examined movements, food habits, reproduction, mortality and denning. The study's technology included remote camera sites, while aerial and ground telemetry methods were used to determine habitat use and what areas were selected and preferred by grizzly bears on a seasonal basis.



Prince Philip, president emeritus WWF Fund

On August 15, 1994, the provincial government established the Khutzemateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary as a Class A Park. In 2008, the Khutzemateen Inlet Conservancy was established to further enhance grizzly bear and habitat protection.

It's a long way from the Prince's first serious interest in wildlife that began in the 1970s, but it shows us the value of influential opinions and how a genuine concern and knowledge over an issue can affect the way we manage important habitat.

The Prince lived a good long life, he served the monarchy and the Commonwealth well. He was ahead of his time in environmental awareness and for that we can be thankful.

RIP Prince Philip.

(Bruce Strachan serves as secretary on the AFMLABC board of directors. He was the Social Credit MLA for Prince George South from 1979 to 1991. He served as Minister of State for the Cariboo; Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and Minister of Environment and Parks.)

Dave Mercier loses his brave battle with Parkinson's

Former Burnaby mayor, Social Credit MLA and party president, Dave Mercier died in April at 81 after a brave battle with Parkinson's.

Dave, a chartered accountant, served as mayor from 1979 to 1981 before entering provincial politics to represent Burnaby-Edmonds from 1986 to 1991. He was also leader of the British Columbia Conservative Party between 1997 until 2001. In addition to his public service, Dave supported a number of charitable organizations and was a founding donor of Minerva BC in tribute to his mother Kathleen.

At Burnaby City Council in April, Mayor Mike Hurley said: "I have some sad news to share tonight. Dave Mercier has passed away. He was 81 years old. Dave represented the people of Burnaby for more than 30 years. Those who served with Dave knew him as an intelligent and dedicated public servant.

"As mayor, he was a champion of public transit, and oversaw the approval of Burnaby's comprehensive transportation plan. He prioritized the natural beauty of Burnaby's major parks and advocated for the preservation of Deer Lake Park as an area of quiet tranquility.

"And, he believed that Burnaby's increasingly diverse population was a great thing for our community.

"Though he stepped down after one term as mayor, it wouldn't be long until he stepped back into public life on behalf of Burnaby residents. As a member of the Social Credit Party, Dave represented Burnaby-Edmonds as MLA ... Dave believed in our community and dedicated so much of his life to the people of Burnaby. We are grateful for everything he did for this community," the mayor said.

Dave's journey with Social Credit was not smooth. In October 1989, he resigned from caucus citing five byelection losses in a row, dissatisfaction with the leader, a decline in public support when the economy was booming and the inability of caucus to focus on its problems. He rejoined caucus in February 1990. However, in August 1991 then serving as environment minister – with Conflict of Interest Commissioner Ted Hughes dogging him over his resource holdings – he announced that he would not be running again. Instead, he would seek the presidency of the party.



Dave was born in Vancouver on July 20, 1939. After a brief foray with the RCAF – that ended after the Avro Arrow jet program was cancelled in 1959 – Dave set his sights on the high-flying world of accounting. He articulated with Griffiths and Griffiths, qualified as a chartered accountant and became a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of BC. He was a renaissance man when it came to business, with interests in oil and gas, real estate, and various other entrepreneurial endeavors that took him all over the world.

A natural athlete, David enjoyed rugby, running, golf, and skiing well into his twilight years. Some of his happiest memories were from his many rugby tours, family vacations, and time spent at the cabin in Point Roberts.

The family says, true to form, Dave put up a good fight until the end. He will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered. Special thanks to the incredible nurses and doctors at Vancouver General Hospital. Given this time of COVID-19 restrictions, no funeral will be held. A celebration of Dave's life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the BC Parkinson Society (parkinson.bc.ca/donate/) in his name.

Dave is survived by his loving and devoted wife Tina, and his beloved children Justin, Suzanne, Jacqueline and Caroline, grandchildren Madeleine and Alexander, siblings Gloria (Stewart) Cooper, Jim (Carol) Mercier and Fran (Adam) Rozyskie and cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Potential EI reform could include 'savings accounts'

By Steven Globberman and Jake Fuss
Fraser Institute

Notwithstanding the long history of unemployment insurance programs in Canada, as well as substantial modifications to the programs over time, employers, researchers, and even the current federal government continue to express concerns about the existing Employment Insurance (EI) system. Indeed, in the fall Throne Speech, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the need for a “21st century system,” including coverage for the self-employed and those in the “gig economy.”

The current EI system is funded through a payroll tax imposed on employers and employees. EI benefits are a function of the magnitude and duration of unemployment. In this regard, the COVID-19 crisis can be expected to increase required benefit payments while also harming the economic base for the payroll tax.

Specifically, it is reasonable to expect that unemployment rates in Canada will remain relatively high for the foreseeable future, while businesses in hard-hit sectors

such as tourism, hospitality, and transportation will continue to experience financial distress. Hence, the EI system will face financial pressures in the future, especially with the expiration of special funding programs put in place by the federal government to deal with the economic contraction caused by the pandemic.

The anticipated EI funding challenges amplify calls for implementing design changes to the existing EI system. Specifically, they intensify the need for policies that make the EI system both more efficient and more equitable. In this context, greater efficiency means reducing the magnitude and duration of unemployment associated with what economists refer to as moral hazard. Moral hazard encompasses situations in which individuals or organizations that enjoy financial protection against unfavourable outcomes engage more intensively in behaviour that increases the likelihood of those outcomes.

In the case of EI, the concern is that incentives to remain employed or to become reemployed will be mitigated by having access to insurance benefits. Simply put, making it easier to qualify for EI benefits and increasing the generosity of those benefits exacerbates the risk of moral hazard with consequent increases in the unemployment rate and the average duration of unemployment. The empirical evidence for Canada suggests that pre-COVID, the EI system erred on the side of encouraging labour market inefficiencies by encouraging and sustaining seasonal employment and repeated episodes of unemployment, particularly in Atlantic Canada. The system also indirectly subsidizes firms to use inefficient ratios of labour to capital by providing those firms with ready access to a continuing available pool of temporary workers who can afford to work in temporary jobs because they receive unemployment benefits.

By calibrating eligibility for EI benefits and the generosity of those benefits to regional unemployment rates, the EI system also creates significant inequities. In particular, individuals who were formerly employed in the same occupations prior to becoming unemployed are treated differently depending upon where they reside. Canada's EI system could be made more efficient and arguably more equitable by making it more of an experience-rated system. Moving in this direction would involve calibrating EI premiums paid by employers and employees so as to reflect more closely historical claims made for EI benefits. Any such design change could be supplemented by initiatives to lengthen the working period required to file for EI benefits and to “front load” benefit payments.



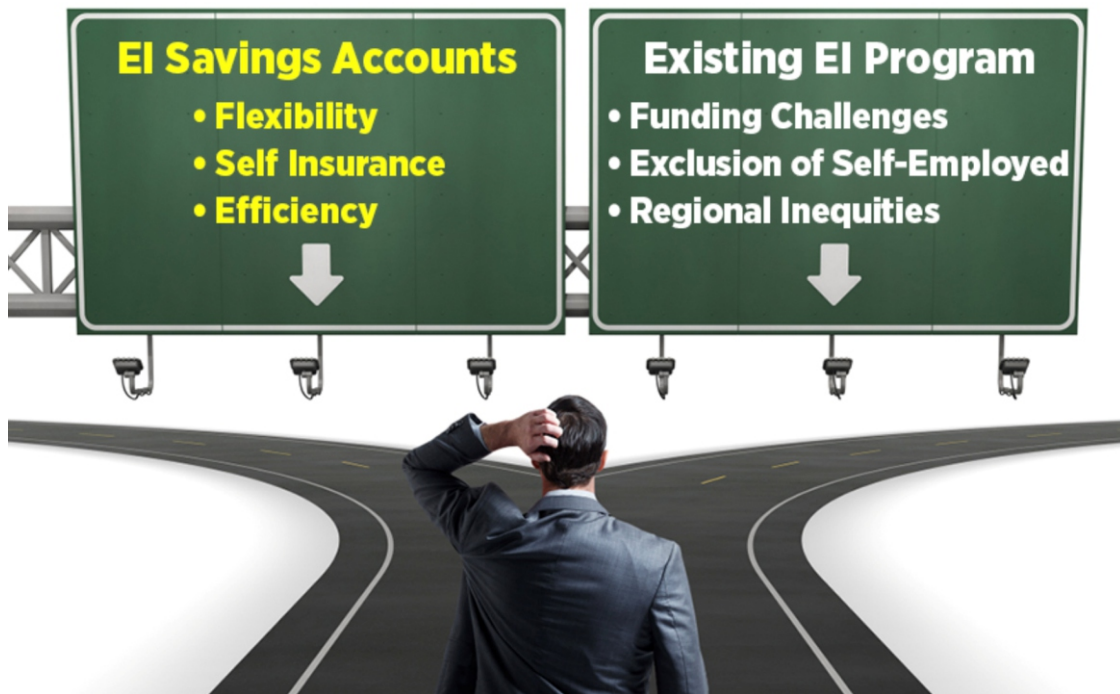
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Employment Insurance in a Post-COVID World



Such changes would promote reduced unemployment and shorten the average duration of unemployment by discouraging moral hazard in labour markets. It must be acknowledged, however, that this redesign of the EI system might impose socially unacceptable hardships on lower-income individuals and families who experience unemployment. This latter concern might argue for a separate income-support program funded from general tax revenue that supplements EI benefits. In this regard, arguments can be made that special benefits currently funded by the EI program, such as parental leave, should also be funded by general tax revenues, especially if the EI program is made more of an experience-rated system of insurance.

The implementation of Unemployment Insurance Savings Accounts (UISAs) would be a substantial redesign of the EI program and could address the moral hazard problem confronting the program. UISAs are mandatory personal savings accounts into which employers and employees make payroll tax contributions. The contributions are the personal assets of the account holders. The funds accumulated through payroll taxes and deposited in individual savings accounts are invested in a diversified portfolio with interest and capital gains reinvested in the accounts. The management of savings account portfolios can be delegated to one or more qualified wealth management companies. Employees can withdraw funds from the accounts during periods of unemployment.

Since positive balances in a UISA account are personal assets (even including to the extent that they can be passed on to one's heirs at one's death), individuals should be motivated to remain employed and, if laid off, to engage in efficient search behaviour and thereby avoid extended periods of unemployment. An important issue would arise in the case of unemployed individuals with insufficient balances in their UISAs to support themselves adequately during periods of unemployment. One way to address this issue is to have a parallel program funded by general tax revenues from which benefits are paid to unemployed individuals with insufficient balances in their accounts.

An alternative approach is to make low-interest loans to those individuals from the publicly funded program with loans repaid as individuals reaccumulate positive balances in their personal accounts. Projections using relatively conservative forecasts of future investment returns suggest that the average Canadian worker would accumulate a positive balance in their UISA after five years of employment that would provide essentially the equivalent insurance coverage available under the existing EI program.

While there are complicated implementation issues associated with any such substantial redesign of the EI program, Canada could be guided by the experiences of a number of countries that have implemented UISAs. Personal savings accounts would enable most Canadian workers to self-insure against unemployment and represent a feasible and arguably a more efficient alternative to the current EI system.

85 years of giving

The Victoria Foundation: An AFMLABC partner helping youth

By Joan Barton

Talk about a partnership: Let's have a look at the AFMLABC's Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund and its grants to the BC Youth Parliament through the Victoria Foundation.

The Victoria Foundation provides stewardship for the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund that was established by the AFMLABC to honour Hugh Curtis, a founding member of the Association. The Victoria Foundation administers the fund by performing administrative functions on behalf of the Association. The Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund is its fund which is created by gifts from the many.

The Victoria Foundation now has about \$421 million in assets under its administration. The benefits to the AFMLABC is that this partnership removes the burden of administering the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund and invests the small Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund (currently at \$28,000) with larger funds and so guarantees a good return on investment, even in poor economic times.

The present fund generally provides an annual interest that covers the \$1,000 needed to fund the grants for two members of the BC Youth Parliament – one male and one female living outside the Lower Mainland/Greater Victoria area – to attend meetings in the Parliament Buildings in December each year. The grants cover travel and living expenses for the two students and ensure that the BC Youth Parliament remains a provincial entity rather than a youth organization for southern British Columbia only.

The AFMLABC is the donor-advisor of the Hugh Curtis Memorial and advises the Victoria Foundation on the grants each

year. The Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund is a significant benefit to the BC Youth Parliament and the AFMLABC encourages everyone to contribute generously so that it will grow into a large, sustaining fund at the Victoria Foundation.

The AFMLABC is proud of this affiliation with the Victoria Foundation, one of the oldest philanthropic organizations in Canada. For more than 85 years the Victoria Foundation's donors and partner organizations have touched the lives of British Columbians, strengthening individuals, families and the community at large.

In its early days the Victoria Foundation met in the Sunshine Inn, Victoria's only soup kitchen during the Great Depression. The Foundation was established by an Act of the BC Legislature in 1936 when its founder, Burges Gadsden, had his vision of a community foundation come to fruition with the first donation of \$20 from his mother, Fannie. The Foundation at the Sunshine Inn served two meals a day – breakfast and supper – to anybody in need.

The Foundation grew slowly, and by 1969, with assets of just over \$22,000, it was able to make its first grants that totalled \$7,000. Over the following decades, through its connections with the charitable sector, the Victoria Foundation has become the go-to resource centre for community philanthropy.

With the Victoria Foundation's commitment to "connecting people who care with causes that matter," the AFMLABC can be justly proud of its association with a philanthropic body that mirrors its own values of leadership and giving back to the community.

Please donate to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund

The Association of Former MLAs of BC looks forward to your donations to the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund to assist members of the Youth Parliament of BC. The fund is managed by the Victoria Foundation.

- **By phone:** Call 250-381-5532 to make a donation by credit card directly.
- **By cheque:** To the Victoria Foundation, #200 - 703 Broughton Street, Victoria, B.C., V8N 1E2. Cheque payable to The Victoria Foundation. Note the name of the fund in the memo line or in a cover letter.
- **Online:** Go to www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca. Click on "Giving" in the navigation bar and then on "Make a Donation." After that just follow the prompts to find the Hugh Curtis Memorial Fund.

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