

November 14, 2018

**CREATING CONSTRUCTIVE FUTURES:  
COLLABORATING, LISTENING & ACTION  
REMARKS TO THE KNOWLEDGE BUREAU, QUEBEC CITY**

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Thank you so much for the invitation to be with you during these deliberations! It is an honour. I applaud your theme, the *Changing Face of Relationships*. C'est un grand honneur d'être ici parmi vous aujourd'hui. Je vous remercie pour votre travail au présent et pour vos visions pour le futur.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Huron-Wendat people.

Nous sommes un peuple et un pays remarquable. L'innovation au Canada est forte, la créativité de notre pays inspire, et la nature est vraiment spectaculaire d'un océan, à l'autre, et à l'autre. Mais nous avons aussi les grands défis. Ensemble, nous pouvons les accomplir.

My subtitle *Creating Constructive Futures: Collaborating, Listening and Action* directly addresses changing relationships. In order to take positive *action* in dealing with societal problems and in developing a sustainable future, we must have strong, trusting, open relationships, individual to individual, organization to organization, and government to government.

I fear the concept of 'relationship' itself is radically changing in a time with more and more people working from home, often alone, with virtual teams at best, and with our teens spending far more time on their devices than engaging with each other, even when walking down the street together.

*Collaboration* is a key – but that is only possible through *listening*. Only then can collaboration bring real action, action to heal, action to innovate, to build and to ensure Canadians are strong and our country is a leader among others. We have much to do to make Canadians, men, women and children, and all regions of Canada, north, south, east and west, healthy financially, spiritually and physically – or as many dub it, 'to be self-sufficient'. A daunting task. We have many challenges which must be addressed.

I have just returned from the P20, the Speakers' Summit of the G20 where I represented our Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable George Furey. I have to say with pride, we are very much a global leader on so many issues BUT I want to ensure we lead in creating a truly sustainable future for all Canadians, including women.

Aujourd'hui les femmes canadiennes sont les médecins, juges, astronautes, pilotes - effectivement, elles constituent des nombres imposants dans tous les domaines. Elles possèdent beaucoup de petites et moyennes entreprises. Mais, elles n'ont toujours pas une représentation égale aux hauts échelons des grandes organisations. On peut demander pourquoi? Ne sont-elles

pas correctement formées ou manquent-elles de confiance? Oui, mais le plafond de verre de la société reste une barrière systémique.

Having travelled this country, north and south over many years, these past two, as a Senator, I want to highlight three issues in particular today – the challenges faced in the North, those for Canada's arts and artists, and those living below the poverty line, including the working poor and people unable to work for whatever reason. All need to be resolved in order for our country – its north and south – to be self-sufficient.

### **First the North –**

Forty percent of Canada is north of 60. Do Canadians in the south really understand northern issues, the riches of the north, or its unique, fragile ecology and centuries of Inuit, Dene and northern First Nations' traditions?

I believe the North IS Canada's future. The Senate Special Committee on the Arctic, of which I am Deputy Chair, is mandated to assess and address the complex, interrelated northern issues -- sovereignty, security, climate change, social realities, housing and health, digital infrastructure, education, mining, oil, language, culture and more.

In September this year we travelled to Kuujuaq, Iqaluit, Baker Lake, Meadow Bank, Cambridge Bay, Yellowknife, Inuvik and Whitehorse to understand how present realities and future opportunities and needs link so appropriate policies and actions can realize positive futures. The future must be made by the north, in the north and for the north, and the north must be reachable. Those living north of 60 obviously include the Inuit, and the Dene, Inuk, Cree, Metis and other First nations, as well as non-indigenous people.

Our Arctic Committee is looking at all peoples and all issues. Though some of our work may overlap with that of other senate committees, we are addressing the north with a comprehensive lens, not isolating any one issue, but assessing the intertwining of all issues and their consequences. We are committed to a 360 look, based on consequential strategies.

I often feel this is rather like our spice racks or spice cupboards – all neatly organized in separate sealed jars. It is only when we have decided on our recipe that we know their relationships. We must fully understand how the present crisis and issues, and future opportunities and needs tie together, so appropriate steps, both in policy and in action, can be taken to realize that future. As a committee we are only part way through our work, but I will say in all our formal hearings in Ottawa and those in each of the communities we visited, leaders, citizens, and organizations, have given us excellent information and much to consider.

The first step was the repair of Churchill's rail line and deep-sea port, cut off on May 17, 2017 due to the flooded railway. It was a proud day on October 31<sup>st</sup> when the first train arrived to the Gateway to the North! The Government's September 14, 2018, announcement of \$117Million supporting the acquisition and repair of this rail line by the Arctic Gateway Group was critically important. The new ownership group is unique, comprising Fairfax Financial Holdings, Regina-based AGT Limited Partnership and Missinippi Rail Limited Partnership, which includes the eight First Nations along the line and municipalities serviced by the line.

Churchill Mayor, Mike Spence said, “This is historic, I don’t think there’s another model out there in Canada that would fit into this equation. First Nations, Communities and Municipalities, and the private sector hand-in-hand with the Government of Canada. This will work, we are excited for the future.”

The rail bed and bridge repairs were essential for all, deliveries, tourism, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre’s ongoing research and the Churchill Marine Observatory. Churchill’s railway, deep sea port and airport, originally a military airstrip, can again serve the whole Arctic and, increasingly, global markets.

The Arctic Committee is addressing the Government’s Arctic Framework’s interlocking six topics: Comprehensive Arctic Infrastructure; Strong Arctic People and Communities; Strong, Sustainable and Diversified Arctic Economies; Arctic Science and Indigenous Knowledge; Protecting the Environment and Conserving Arctic Biodiversity; The Arctic in a Global Context. Climate change, mining, oil and gas exploration, and environmental concerns are especially complex.

Stewardship of northern resources is imperative, balancing extraction and sales with the environment. Financial gains should go to the north, not solely to international and southern corporations.

Short and long-term effects of rapid climate change, melting sea ice, and sea life are overarching. Marine species are being recorded further north than ever before. Mercury levels are rising with melting permafrost. The food chain is changing. What will result from rising sea levels and the projected demise of forty coastal communities?

Coastal communities in the south are in peril from the melting sea ice too – including New York and even Singapore, where they are already taking action to protect their island.

The opening of the Northwest Passage will increase international marine commercial traffic and tourism. Yet only one percent of Canada’s Arctic ocean coast is charted. Russia and China have better knowledge of our sea beds than we do.

Increasing numbers of cruise ships give rise to opportunity and challenge. However, ice breakers took several days to reach the grounded cruise ship this summer, rendering them unavailable to assist the once-a-year deliveries to remote communities like Cambridge Bay. In fact, three Arctic communities did not get their annual deliveries of goods – Can you imagine first having to plan for your community’s full year of needs of non-perishables, building supplies, mechanical needs and more and then not receiving them? Can you imagine the stress facing another winter, this one without? Now these supplies will have to be flown in – Can you imagine the cost?

As for the cruise ships? Do the communities benefit? I say no, or certainly not in a level commensurate with the risk. Expected ice can cancel a planned visit in a moment, and there are not deep-sea ports. Further, I am aware that passengers are told not to buy art or crafts as some materials cannot be taken into the US – without specifying which materials; and that passengers have been told not to buy food from restaurants as that will deplete supplies needed by the locals. So, what does constitute benefit from tourism? And this summer ice precluded the expected

arrival of several ships to some communities – communities where people had made special arts and crafts to sell. Their loss!

As I said in a recent op ed, compounding issues in the north include the lack of adequate housing; access to health care, mental health crises, substance abuse and suicide; employment and inequitable access to education and training. Education and training are prerequisites in solving all these issues.

Several A+ high school graduates revealed they were lost academically and tested at a grade 5 level when in southern post-secondary programs. The link to housing is obvious. How can one do homework in a small house with three or more generations, or keep up with only slow dial up or satellite technology? Further, extra-curricular sport and activity facilities are non-existent or insufficient.

As you know, distances between communities in Canada's north are vast. We have been told across all our hearings of the urgent need for fibre optics. A huge investment but fibre optics are critical for education, health care, business and more.

We must attend to these myriad concerns collaboratively, tying scientific and indigenous knowledge together and recognizing local residents' perspectives. Otherwise Canada will face serious regression. The gap between the 'have' south and the 'have-not' north will increase. All Canadians, north and south, will lose.

A key question? Is funding in the north on a per capita basis fair and sufficient? We have certainly heard a resounding no – Per Capita funding is NOT sufficient to do what needs to be done.

I think we have to look at how and where triple PPP partnerships can be developed to equalize opportunities. I cannot stress enough, that if situations regarding access and opportunity are not rectified the have/have not reality will only be augmented and everyone, north and south, will lose.

My late husband's mantra was, "We are all better off when we are all better off". I agree with him and I think this mantra must be taken seriously!

**Now, my second concern** – Canada's arts and Artists. In the 50s, 60s, 70s, and early 80s, Inuit art was the flagship for Canada – abroad and in the south. It sold in Europe, the US and across Canada. It was a key economic driver in Baker Lake, Cape Dorset, Holman Island, and Rankin Inlet. Are any of you old enough to remember the hype around the annual release of the year's Cape Dorset prints? What has happened since? In each of the communities we visited I asked about the artists' success rate in the recent Canada Council grant run; no one knew. Unless one has high speed internet it is impossible for many artists to apply for that financial assistance, as one has to apply on line, and send 20 high resolution digital images. For most artists north 60 the technology is just not there and communities are too far removed from each other for artists to travel to a larger center to access the technology. Also, to qualify for a Canada Council grant an artist must have had three solo exhibitions in a not-for-profit public gallery. Where can that happen in the north? Few and far between I say – Whitehorse, Yellowknife and the just opened Kenojuak Art Centre in Cape Dorset.

Society must realize that the arts are society's glue, north and south, affecting each of the eight key issues we deal with year in and year out. We must ensure that glue is strong. 'Silo-ing' the arts as has happened over the past few years does not work, and does not address our wider societal challenges. Sidelining or ghettoizing is absolutely counter-productive to creativity, innovation reality and growth. We must ensure the arts are in their rightful place, at the centre of civil society. Our metrics for measuring impacts and meaning of the arts are far too narrow, and looked at in far too short a timeframe.

My research, both empirical and anecdotal, over the past fifteen years and more has focused on societal concerns defined by politicians of all stripes and all levels of government and the role, of roles, the arts play in each. It has shown unequivocally that the arts are essential in solving, or even working on, each of these. As John Ralston Saul said: "Culture is the motor of any successful society."

I want to underline Donna Walker-Kuhne, author of 'An Invitation To The Party' statements that: "The arts are the best tool we have for social change ... and The arts cultivate non-violence, trust, solidarity, community and breadth of mind." So true, as has been proven around the world time and time again.

So, my eight octopus tentacles?

The first is Jobs and Job Creation: the arts are the third largest employer in Canada, 3.3% of our workforce, double the number of people in forestry, and more than double the number in banks. 609,000 work in the cultural sector; 135,000 in the automobile industry. The second tentacle is the economy where the arts industries contribute about 7.4% of the country's GDP, and in 2007 paid in taxes MORE THAN 3 times the \$7.9Billion governments paid directly on culture that year.

Did you know that in my province, Manitobans spend almost twice as much on live performing arts as live sports, and Manitobans spent \$930m on cultural goods & services in 2008 – about 3 times more than the \$320m spent on culture in MB by all levels of government in 2007-2008? Further, the GDP of Winnipeg arts and culture industries is almost \$1Billion, or 3.7% of Winnipeg's economic output.

People talk about 'grants' to the arts – I say no, it is a real investment as in Winnipeg every municipal \$ into arts & culture garnered \$18.23 more. And I thank our volunteers, 39,356 of whom give at least 1.6 million hours / year.

The third tentacle, health, is equally compelling – International studies have proven that people who engage in the live arts live longer – on average 2 years and with better health; They cost the health system less and tend to be discharged from hospital one or two days earlier after elective surgery. They also miss less work. When I started the Buhler Gallery, a public art gallery in Winnipeg's St Boniface Hospital, various Ministers of Health asked me what I was doing. My response? Assisting you with hallway medicine!

Regarding education, multiple studies have proven that the arts in school and extra curricularly improve educational outcomes at all levels.

Likewise, with crime prevention the statistics are overwhelming, particularly where professional artists work with youth. At the start of the STARS Program in Fort Myers, an early such program, 75% of the children were making less than a C average, and within the year 80% were making a C average or better. After the first few years of the program's inception, juvenile crime dropped 28% and for youth 11 and 12 the rate of recidivism has dropped 64%. Those are impressive numbers.

Why? As the report *Coming Up Taller* noted: "Art programs that allow youth to lead and accept responsibility is part of what makes these programs work. It is not learning to please some external thing. The kids are in charge of the project. These projects are brought out into the community for viewing and sharing...the kids are responsible for the success." Could this work in our communities and in the north? Yes – it takes a neutral space, supplies and professional artists – so here is a PPP partnership challenge! "New values only emerge through new experience, and the arts provide a unique laboratory where truth and possibility can be explored safely." Gina Browne's study clearly indicated that this program appeared to pay for itself through reduced use of health and social services, such as child psychology, social work, policing and probation. *A \$500. savings was attributed per family, not including the doubling of the exits from social assistance!*

Rural revival is my sixth tentacle where the arts have had a positive impact. One can cite many examples, like Powell River or Arora, where the arts have given new life and business to shrinking communities.

As for the environment, artists have drawn attention to issues of pollution, acid rain, desecration and more and have been and are actively engaged in these critical issues.

Lastly, but certainly equally important is cultural tourism where the contribution of the arts is truly significant. A \$62.7 billion industry in Canada, in Toronto it accounted for more than 22% of all hotel bookings in 2010 where 18.5 million tourists participated in arts & culture and 89% cited arts & culture as a key activity.

The ARTS are important to sustainability of community, of society, of economy – indeed our democracy, freedom of speech and independence. Our collective challenge? We need more voices to convey the reality of the place of the arts throughout society and of the importance of artists in every endeavour. But that is easier said than done.

In 2008, the Conference Board of Canada concluded:

*The health of that culture economy, and therefore the future economic health of Canada, depends on having a large and diverse pool of professional artists at the very heart of the economy.*

You can understand why I worry about the continuing downward trends of artists' income working conditions. Are you aware that:

- Canadian artists earn 39% less than the overall labour force average
- 15% of artists either have no earnings or lose money on their self-employment activities; 27% earn less than \$10,000, and 18% earn between \$10,000 and \$19,999.
- The number of Artists with a BA or higher is nearly double that of the whole workforce, 44% versus 25%, and on average, they earn 55% less than other workers with the same education level
- Women artists earn 31% less than their male counterparts.

By the way, the 2010 poverty line was measured at \$22,133. This is not a pretty picture of fairness and equality. We MUST, as a society, find a way for artists' work to be counted as regular employment with relevant benefits which will enable them to make even stronger contributions to our economy.

The issue of where our artists work is major. Having been in and out of studios in all parts of this country since 1970, I fear we are no further ahead than we were then. In fact, we may well be worse off given the cost of real-estate, rents and the gentrification of areas in our cities which once were 'studio districts'. Even well-known artists are forced to live in the studios where they work. With the threat of contravening permits and building codes, they continually watch out for 'the authorities' who might turf them out. To where? Often the most affordable spaces are in buildings slated for demolition. A number of eminent artists have told me that despite that, rents are increased without improved services.

Compounding these dubious working conditions and low-income levels are truly serious residual health issues. Many artists remain unaware of the dangers of their materials or work places, or if they are, do not have the means to address them, hazards such as styrene poisoning, lung disease from dust, working with chemicals for printmaking in kitchens used for meal preparation – the list goes on. We need to find ways to redress these situations.

**SO, what about my third issue? -- POVERTY, the working poor and the unemployed.** This too must be solved if we are going to be self-sufficient. I think we really need to look very seriously at a guaranteed minimum income, a thought I know may not be popular with all, but let's look at the evidence.

Poverty must be substituted with human dignity. Everyone needs to be a fulfilled contributing member of society, able to care for themselves and their families with pride and self-confidence. Everyone must have the ability and means to make their own decisions, according to their circumstances, needs and wants.

UK's Royal Society of the Arts' Inclusive Growth Commission, published their report, *Growing Together*, highlighted the need for "economic and social policy to move more closely together at all levels of government, as in Britain for the first time more than 50% of people living in poverty are in work", underlining the "importance of investment that builds social infrastructure on the same scale as physical infrastructure."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> RSA Journal, Issue 3, 2016

Canadian figures are similar – the majority of those in poverty ARE in work – precarious work, short-term, low paying contracts and sporadic seasonal work. And a serious societal shift is the widening gap between rich and poor.

Few disagree that everyone deserves an adequate standard of living. I was surprised to learn that \$37,500 is still considered the annual baseline income for a family of four. LIM, the Low-Income Measure, includes income, basic needs of food, housing, clothing, education, and entertainment. We know the current crisis of housing costs in Canada's large cities, and the myriad issues in the north –housing, insulation, water, the price of food with milk costing more than soft drinks and alcohol.

What would your priority be as a family of four living on \$37,500? Your rent or mortgage, food, your children's school books, seeing the dentist, taking medications as prescribed, clothes for your growing children, or the occasional movie? How would you juggle those core necessities? How do we create a fair playing field when our regional situations – north to south, large city to rural -- are so different?

In the 1970s Manitoba's Dauphin Mincom project, incomes were topped up to a minimum guaranteed level. Two findings particularly resonated with me. Health care costs, one of the most expensive issues governments face, were reduced by 8.5%, with an almost 10% reduction in hospitalization. High school completion rose from 80% to 100%, or, put another way, the drop-out rate fell from 20% to 0%. Both gains were lost when the study was truncated. By the way domestic violence was reduced as well during the Mincom experiment. What worked? Why were the gains not sustained?

The self-esteem and self-confidence garnered by ensuring a minimum income, and not facing penalties if they got a job, were critically important. Recipients felt respected human beings. They could make their own decisions, plan their expenses, without worrying each month whether it would be rent, healthy food, medications, or transportation or child-care expenses so they could work.

We all know a sense of feeling human, and pride, self-reliance and self-confidence are critically necessary for personal well-being.

Let me tell you the story of Big Bill. He had had a good career, but circumstances changed forcing him to live marginally. Homeless, he 'dumpster dived' for food. When found, he was virtually inarticulate. He then became a regular user of Winnipeg Harvest, always bringing his belongings with him. Personal cleanliness was an issue. No one commented. His situation was well understood. He was fed at Harvest, and given work to do. With proper nutrition, his intelligence became apparent. One day he arrived without his 'stuff'. He had a place to live -- a room in a Main Street hotel. His sense of well-being grew, until he was a victim of theft. Once again, he brought everything with him. One day he arrived well-dressed and clean. Staff were surprised; compliments reigned. His response? "I just had my birthday. I turned 65. I get OAS. Now I feel like a citizen, as good as everyone else." Thereafter he voted and took part in normal daily life. That security of a basic income was transformational.

In 2013, almost one of every five children in Canada, 1,334, 930, lived in poverty. That almost doubled for Indigenous children. More than one third of children in poverty lived in a household with at least one family member employed full time. One in seven Canadians using homeless shelters are children. We know those situations lead to higher rates of mental and physical health issues. Child poverty in Canada is a significant public health concern and the consequences are considerable. Suffice it to say, children deserve access to nutritious food; one cannot learn on an empty stomach.

Ces défis nous concernons tous – les enseignants avec des enfants scolarisés, des enfants en situations de pauvreté, les occupations de la santé, des agences sociales, des services de police, et beaucoup plus.

Pour que le changement se produise, il faudra une collaboration sociétale totale entre les gouvernements, les associations de bienfaisances, les écoles, le secteur privé, les bénévoles, et les secteurs communautaires. Il faut que nous trouvions des moyens constructifs de responsabiliser et de permettre des améliorations personnelles et communautaires durables. Il n'y a pas qu'un moyen de résoudre ce grand problème. Mais je pense qu'un programme de revenu minimum garanti, et non des distributions, se sont déjà révélés être les premières étapes critiques. Les gens veulent travailler; Nous tous et nous toutes voulons d'être autosuffisant et prendre nos propres décisions.

In pondering these imponderables, I equate a guaranteed income to equal access to all opportunities – food, housing, water, education, health and jobs, in the South, the North, in our urban and rural areas.

Let's shift perceptions away from the sense that those in poverty are a drain on society, costing taxpayers. With opportunity, they are real producers, societal assets, not liabilities. Their skills can move our economy forward. And, they will spend the money they earn.

Going forward, let's not pontificate – rather let's agree that we want everyone on the same platform of financial security, spiritual and physical well-being, and let's empower our regions and citizens to reach these goals. Let's create constructive futures – developed by listening, collaborating and taking real and positive considered action. We CAN positively affect our north. We can positively affect the lot of our arts and artists, and we can positively affect those living in poverty.

**We ARE all better off when we are ALL better off.**

Thank you! Merci!