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Canada wavers on foreign aid

WELL, this is embarrassing. Canada has just had its wrist slapped by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development for failing to restore foreign aid spending to where it was — wait for it — under the Harper government.

This country's official development aid has, in fact, declined to 0.26 per cent of GDP from the level of 0.31 per cent it was at in 2012, when Stephen Harper was prime minister.

Worse, it is only half of the 0.5 per cent Canada spent on aid a generation ago under prime ministers Pierre Trudeau and Brian Mulroney. Even then, it fell well short of the goal established by the United Nations (0.7 per cent goal of GDP) that some OECD countries already meet.

It's time for Canada to stop the downward drift in foreign aid spending. There's a yawning gap between the rhetoric of the Trudeau government (playing a more active role on the world stage, doing the right thing, etc.) and its actions.

The need is great. Indeed, just last year the UN warned that the world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the organization was founded in 1945, with more than 20 million people in four countries — Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria — facing starvation.

Canada stepped up with more humanitarian aid for specific regions in the face of that crisis. But it has not increased overall spending on aid to help prevent catastrophes, such as famines and the mass migrations that follow them, from occurring in the first place.

Nor does spending reflect what Canada is capable of doing in this area. As the OECD noted, Canada is currently enjoying "robust economic growth."

The contrast between words and actions in this area is stark.

First, during the 2015 election campaign the Liberals pledged to "reverse the decline" in foreign aid spending that took place under the Harper government. In fact, they let it get worse.

Second, the Trudeau government has made much of Canada "being back" on the international stage as part of its campaign to secure a temporary seat on the UN Security Council. But that bid is less credible while Canada's commitment to foreign aid is allowed to wither.

None of this is to take away from the positive steps the Trudeau government has taken on aid.

Indeed, it is wisely spending the dollars it has allocated to promote gender equality. As International Development Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau noted when the policy was adopted in 2017, "this is the most effective approach to reducing poverty and building a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world."

The World Bank, among others, has long made the case that countries where girls are educated, for example, have faster-growing economies, healthier populations and less government corruption. So kudos for putting the money where it will be most effective.

But now the government must start to close the gap between rhetoric and reality.

To do that it could follow a 2016 report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. The MPs recommended the government increase its official development assistance to 0.35 per cent of GDP by 2020, and commit to meeting the UN's goal of 0.70 per cent by 2030.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is right to aspire to play a leadership role on the world stage. Canada has much to offer. But if his aspirations are to be taken seriously, his government must back them up with the financial commitments needed to make the world a more equitable place.

— An editorial from the Toronto Star

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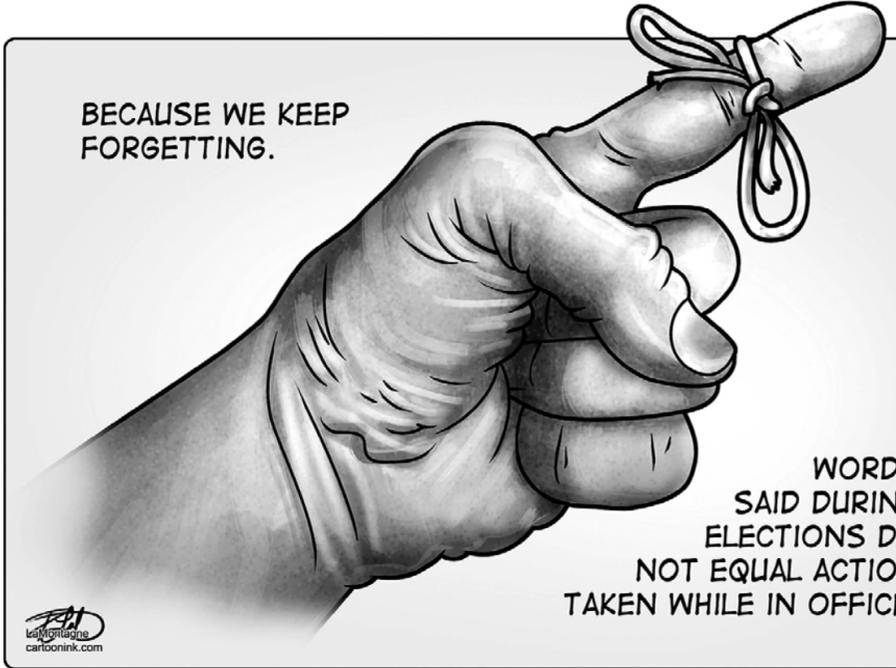
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BECAUSE WE KEEP FORGETTING.



WORDS SAID DURING ELECTIONS DO NOT EQUAL ACTION TAKEN WHILE IN OFFICE.

We should all feel at home

BY DREENI GEER

WHEN I think back to my early understandings of race, I recall being five years old and passing some older boys who spat on me and called me "paki." I ran home crying and asked my mother as she cleaned my coat, "What's a paki? Why don't people like them?"

She explained to me that this silly word was given by ignorant people to those with brown skin. She taught me the correct word, Pakistani, with reassurances that there was nothing wrong with being brown, or Pakistani.

As I grew I realized that my identity as an Indo-Guyanese, which I was taught by my family, did not work in Ontario circa 1980. Despite what I called myself, bullies, the media, my teachers, registration forms, and the government would all have different names for me.

Throughout my life I would be named East Indian, visible minority, non-white, coloured, ethnic, immigrant, person of colour, various slurs and my all-time favourite: other. Each of these names grouped me outside of the normative race of white or European descent.

Names are important. Not only did each one of these words make me reflect on myself a little differently, they also told me about the person or system naming me. When friends in the school yard called me coloured, I understood that they did not have many friends of different backgrounds. When the government called me a "visible minority" I realized that they see me as different on first glance. When I had to tick off the "other" box, I learned that systems could only recognize black and Chinese.

But misnamed Indo-Guyanese were not alone.

Persisting racialized experiences affect sense of belonging for many



ONE CITY, MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

Multitudes of ethnicities and Indigenous peoples did not see themselves in the mainstream, and had a common experience of otherness. From name-calling to physical violence, or being rendered invisible, those who did not look like the normative, experienced the continuum of racism. As outsiders, they were given a race, while the insiders of European ancestry, were considered the norm.

This nomenclature of race is in fact a social construct and not a biological one. What is considered, a "visible minority" today, was not the definition of yesterday. What is considered non-white in one country, is not the same as another country.

A clear example of this social construct can be seen in the history of Canadian immigration. While Anglo-Saxon has always been the normative, groups such as southern and eastern Europeans or creed minorities such as Jewish were considered lower races.

In the United States, one drop of African blood deems a person black,

but that same person would be considered "coloured" in South Africa which has higher race privilege.

Racialization still occurs today and has been concisely defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission as "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."

Names are powerful and who does the naming fields that power. As communities in Canada gain voice, they are asserting the names they choose to be called. Although this has been dismissed and mocked by the normative as "politically correct" they are only half right. Racialized is the correct word to describe my experience of race in Canada.

During my childhood, in the protective and inclusive domicile of my family, I had no race. My parents taught me the words to describe our heritage and identity. Stepping out of the house, society named me and changed that name as it felt fit. I wonder if European Canadians feel that Canada is like a large family home, where they are included and protected and have no race. I look forward to a future when I feel that again.

Dreeni Geer is the director of human rights and equity at Lakehead University. A lawyer by education, she has supported human rights realization in Canada and internationally for more than 20 years. She writes this in her personal capacity. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Magic money spent as taxpayers hit their limit

YES, Bill Baziuk has it correct when he writes "citizens should pressure our governments" to cut spending (Fixed-Income Seniors Burdened By Gov'ts — letter, Sept. 20). Start with MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) which has caused a lot of problems for seniors on fixed income.

I attended a campaign rally this spring in Thunder Bay and talked to Doug Ford about MPAC. I showed him my statement and explained the burden this will cause seniors on fixed income. First, he could not believe the assessment was from Northwestern Ontario and said, if elected, they would be looking into what can be done for seniors on fixed income.

I am 67 and the only way for me to keep my house is go back to work. Since June, more than \$5,000 has been deducted from my pay for federal and provincial tax.

Doug Ford gets it. The tax burden is too high for everyone. Finally, a politician who is not afraid to act and start to do something to save taxpayers money. Uncovering \$15 billion Liberal deficits is a start to correct the mistakes of the Wynne government.

I worry about when I am really too tired to work.

There's no question in my mind that I will not be able to pay the bills or the tax burdens. This should worry all governments — federal, provincial, and municipal. The tax revenue stream has hit the upper ceiling. You can see this any way you want to look at demographics — aging population, high-wage earners, etc.

Politician who look left or right still do not get it. The taxpayer's wallet is empty.

Doug Ford is tasking his government to find all ways to address this problem now, and not waiting until just before the next election. Hard choices must be made. This is not the time for fringe areas of society to take up all the oxygen. When government can return to sound management, fiscally responsible government will remain for the people.

Does that sound hard? Maybe so. But let's be clear, government money is not magic money. It comes from somewhere and when taxpayers can no longer pay, we will know their is no magic left.

Chuck Hutterli
NIPIGON

Trade negotiation hurdles all about supply management

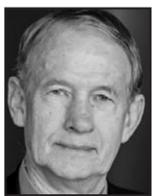
BY STEVEN GLOBERMAN AND GARY HUFFBAUER

AS NORTH American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks continue, much remains undecided. The United States and Mexico have already reached an agreement in principle on a new free-trade arrangement. But in light of Trump's complaints about Canadian dairy tariffs, the highest hurdle for Canada will be our supply management programs.

The U.S.-Mexico deal, while still light on details, means Canada faces a threat of trade and investment diversion if Mexican producers have tariff-free access to the U.S. while Canadian producers don't.

That means NAFTA — or, if U.S. President Donald Trump gets his way, USMC talks (for a U.S., Mexico and Canada pact) — is in jeopardy.

Post-NAFTA, Canadians may dream they can rely on the Canada-United States Free Trade Agree-



GUEST COLUMN

ment, established in 1987. But Trump has demonstrated his disdain for trade commitments. Canadian negotiators therefore have less leverage in bargaining with U.S. negotiators than they did before the U.S.-Mexico deal.

For example, Canada is worried about U.S. insistence on a sunset clause, which would force Canada to recommit every five years to the trade pact or watch it automatically end. In bilateral talks with the U.S., Mexico successfully sidestepped the sunset clause, although their agree-

ment includes a "review" every six years, with the spectre of termination if problems can't be resolved.

But in reality, the Trump administration will invoke new tariffs whenever it suits its political purposes. A six-year review period rather than a sunset clause will likely not convince investors that there will be a stable long-run trade regime between the U.S. and Mexico. In this circumstance, Canadian negotiators have no strategic reason to object to the same six-year review.

Another non-negotiable for Canada was eliminating the trade dispute resolution process. As the full text has yet to be revealed, it's not clear whether, or in what form, the U.S.-Mexico agreement preserves the process.

However, like the sunset clause, a NAFTA dispute resolution process is only meaningful to Mexico or Canada if the U.S. is a good-faith participant. The willingness of the Trump administration to take unilateral

trade actions, while anticipating retaliatory actions from trade partners, essentially proves that the dispute resolution process has lost much of its relevance.

Mexican trade negotiators have likely accepted this reality. In bilateral talks with the U.S., Canadian negotiators can perhaps keep a ghost of the original dispute resolution process on the books to avoid a complete surrender.

The higher domestic content rule, which requires that 75 per cent (up from 62.5 per cent) of the parts in any car sold in North America be produced in the U.S. or Mexico, presents no real problem for Canada to adopt in a similar agreement with the U.S. Nor does the requirement that 40 per cent to 45 per cent of auto parts in cars sold be made by workers earning at least US\$16 per hour.

But Mexico's apparent commitment to increase imports of U.S. agricultural products brings front and centre the main challenge facing

Canada's government. Again, maintaining Canada's supply management system is likely a deal breaker, from Washington's perspective. It's the one outstanding issue the Trump administration can't resolve unilaterally.

While the Canadian government has rejected Trump administration criticisms of Canada's high tariffs on dairy products, it has not explicitly stated that supply management — now a hot button issue on Canada's political scene — is non-negotiable.

The time is coming when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his cabinet need to say whether Canada will walk away from a bilateral agreement with the U.S. to protect domestic dairy farmers.

Steven Globerman is a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute. Gary Huffbauer is a non-resident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Column courtesy www.troymedia.com.