

We Interrupt This Program . . .

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COVID-19 has gripped our attention like nothing else in recent years. Hockey games are cancelled, foreign flights reduced to a trickle. Children are riding their bikes or binge-watching videos instead of congregating in classrooms. Some businesses are conducting their business online or have either shut down or reduced public access. Even many churches are temporarily shuttered. Some are streaming their services instead of gathering in their sanctuaries.

The House of Commons has suspended its session for now; legislation that was hanging in the balance is still hanging. In at least two cases, the pause in House debates is welcome. Bill C-7 (broadening the criteria for assisted suicide) and Bill C-8 (banning—in vague terms—any type of “conversion therapy”) are two terrible pieces of proposed legislation; the fact that they are on pause is a welcome respite from the Liberals’ relentless social agenda. More on that later.

All of us are getting a painful lesson in sudden change. Truly the shift in attitudes and behaviour over the past three weeks is nothing short of mind-boggling. As people have come to grips with efforts to limit the spread of the virus, they have become willing to give up luxuries, activities, cherished plans and personal goals. We all hope that some of these adjustments will be temporary. We expect the NHL to have another season, for grocery store shelves to be full again, for cruises and tourism to resume at some as-yet-undefined moment. Of course, we look forward to church services and social gatherings to once again become the norm.

But nobody knows when. Nobody knows what restrictions on travel and social gatherings may linger or for how long. Will the handshake and the hug return as universal signs of greeting and goodwill or will elbow-bumping become a permanent fixture? When office workers get used to working at home, will businesses of the future ever go back to board rooms?

Perhaps all this will pass sooner than anticipated and society will return to business as usual in the next few weeks. At this point it seems unlikely, but storms can break out or come to an end very quickly. However long it takes for this storm to pass, COVID-19 will have left some indelible tracks in its wake.

For one thing, the extraordinary measures required to limit the spread (or “flatten the curve”) have already imposed heavy financial penalties on families and on national resources. In the US, politicians are talking of trillions of dollars in losses and compensation. In Canada, our Prime Minister has committed to financial relief amounting to \$82 billion, including \$27 billion in direct aid and the remainder in temporary tax deferrals.¹ Here’s an explanation of how this amount could have been greatly reduced under the CHP’s PISA program.²

We support the concept of helping Canadian families and Canadian businesses weather the storm, although the details of this relief program—both its size and implementation—may prove troubling. The dimensions of this crisis do call for unusual levels of government action. How much better prepared we

would have been if we had entered this time of crisis without an existing federal debt of \$700 billion! If this government and previous ones had paid down the debt during economic growth years, rather than buying votes with borrowed money, Canada could have taken on this emergency spending with far fewer worries about the economic impact for future generations.

As of last year, Canada was spending about \$70 million EVERY DAY on the interest payments alone of our accumulated deficits. And that is at our historically-low interest rates. The COVID-19 crisis was not the first economic hit for Canada in 2020. It was preceded by and overlapped the rail blockades of January and February that caused considerable economic loss and supply disruption. The reluctance of our PM to address that issue in a timely and meaningful way set the stage for a very fragile economy when the virus demanded a strong response.

CHP Canada has long called for mandatory balanced budgets³ which would only be relaxed in times of national emergency. CHP proposes a PISA (Personal Income Security Account)⁴ that would give Canadians more control over their pension and emergency resources. The CHP's Fair Tax⁵ would automatically keep more money in Canadians' pockets and savings accounts, since it would be based on spending, not income. But those are programs for the future; today we must deal with the situation that exists.

On the good side, as mentioned above, the Liberals' plans to kill more Canadians under MAiD⁶ and to restrict the ability for unhappy victims of "transitioning" to seek sensitive professional counselling⁷ are both on hold. It is a good time for citizens to educate themselves on these issues and to bring their concerns to the attention of their MPs. It would also be a great time to get behind Cathay Wagantall's private members bill, C-233, the Sex-Selective Abortion Act⁸ and help her gain the support of as many MPs as possible. The vast majority of Canadians oppose the killing of pre-born girls just because they're girls.

The restrictions on normal activities and the guidelines telling people to stay home as much as possible have meant more time to read, reflect and engage public opinion digitally. Let's make good use of the time we've been given to help bring common-sense solutions to Canadians.

Footnotes

¹ business.financialpost.com/news/economy/trudeau-expects-to-unveil-fiscal-stimulus-package-on-wednesday

² www.chp.ca/commentary/a-timely-lesson

³ www.chp.ca/platform/category/economy/debt-deficit-and-stimulus/

⁴ www.chp.ca/platform/category/economy/canada-pension-plan/

⁵ www.chp.ca/platform/category/economy/taxation/

⁶ citizengo.org/en/177328-reject-bill-c-7

⁷ www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-trudeau-govt-introduces-bill-to-criminalize-therapy-for-those-with-unwanted-lgbt-identity

⁸ www.cathaywagantall.ca/mp_wagantall_tables_the_sex_selective_abortion_act

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