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Inside this edition

- ◆ The Hybrid Virtual Parliament
- ◆ FPIInnovations
- ◆ Investing in local infrastructure
- ◆ Fighting youth homelessness
- ◆ Trees as carbon sinks
- ◆ Investing in public transit
- ◆ Mogile Technologies
- ◆ Flood mitigation and insurance
- ◆ Digital policy
- ◆ First Nations drinking water

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Dear Friends,

The past year has been a challenging one. It has been a year of tragic loss for many families. It has been a year of courageous and selfless service by frontline workers — from medical personnel in the trenches, to teachers and workers who have helped maintain supply chains. We also owe a debt of gratitude to our Canadian Armed Forces who, as always, responded to the call of duty in a national emergency.

As a country, we have displayed great solidarity. Governments have translated our Canadian ethic of support for each other in times of need into programs that, while not always perfect, provided essential backup to individuals, businesses and communities during the worst of the pandemic's economic impacts.

Like all major world-scale disruptions, the pandemic will give rise to transformational change. Microsoft founder Bill Gates boldly predicts that "innovation sparked by the coronavirus will better prepare the world for the next pandemic and could help eradicate global diseases in lower-income countries." Right here at home, scientists in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario are already developing catalogues of existing viruses and working on "universal" vaccines that could also be effective against still-unknown viruses.

In the past few decades, we have witnessed an almost unstoppable trend toward globalization. But the pandemic has shown the need to ensure domestic capacity to produce vital supplies. From the beginning of COVID-19, the federal government began investing in PPE by funding research centres like FPIInnovations and manufacturers like Medicom, both in Pointe-Claire. The federal government has also invested in vaccine-manufacturing capacity at the National Research Council (Montreal) and in vaccine development and production at Medicago (Quebec City), VIDO-InterVac (Saskatoon), Providence (Calgary), and Precision NanoSystems (Vancouver).

The experience of the pandemic will surely bring changes to healthcare, most urgently to seniors care. As a representative of the Canadian Nurses Association has told me, one can walk into any hospital emergency room in the country and encounter the same standard practices and procedures. This is not the case when entering a long-term care home. That's why the federal government has committed to work with the provinces and territories towards creating much-needed national standards for long-term care. The time has come.

The Hybrid Virtual Parliament

The pandemic has altered our lives in so many ways — in how we interact socially, at work and at school. It has also meant adjustments in how our democracy functions. The 154-member National Liberal Caucus, which normally meets in person on Parliament Hill, now meets on Zoom with Liberal M.P.s connecting from homes and offices across the country. The House of Commons operates with a minimum number of M.P.s present; the remaining M.P.s join the proceedings virtually on Zoom through two giant screens, one suspended on each side of the Speaker. Votes, at first also conducted on Zoom, now occur with M.P.s who are not physically present — the vast majority — using a mobile voting application.

FPInnovations

FPInnovations of Pointe-Claire is working with funding from Natural Resources Canada to develop a biodegradable disposable mask. Current single-use personal masks are made from petroleum-based plastics. The FP Innovations mask is made from a blend of hardwood and softwood from sustainably-managed Canadian forests. The development of this technology would allow Canada's pulp and paper industry to meet the country's mask procurement needs without having to make changes to production lines and would lead to significant export opportunities.

Investing in local infrastructure

In response to COVID-19, the government adapted the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to respond to the impacts of the pandemic. The program, delivered through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories, was adjusted to expand project eligibility and accelerate approvals. A new temporary envelope was created, using over \$3 billion in existing monies, to fund quick-start, short-term projects that might not otherwise be eligible under existing funding streams. A number of our local institutions have benefitted from a total \$4.9 million in project funding under this new accelerated stream: John Abbott College; Collège Gérald-Godin; Sainte-Anne's Hospital; and the Lakeshore General Hospital.

Fighting youth homelessness

The National Housing Strategy (NHS) is a 10-year \$70-billion-plus plan to create 125,000 new housing units, reduce housing need for 530,000 households, and repair and renew more than 300,000 housing units.

As part of the NHS, the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) is investing \$1 billion to create up to 3,000 new permanent housing units across the country. In January, the governments of Canada and Quebec announced an agreement under the RHI to support the rapid completion of 54 projects in the province. The Ricochet project is an initiative managed by Action Jeunesse de l'Ouest-de-l'Île (AJOI) aimed at offering shelter to young adults experiencing homeless in our community. Ricochet will receive \$1.5 million under the RHI to build a 14-unit emergency shelter for young people at risk of homelessness.

The Reaching Home initiative is also part of the NHS. This past winter, AJOI received \$154,000 under this initiative for a temporary 5-bed drop-in warming centre for at-risk youth.



Chairing a virtual meeting of the National Liberal Caucus



Celebrating Jean Merrifield's 104th birthday



Stopping by the *Neighbours 4 Neighbours* Food Drive



Remembrance Day at Kelso Park in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue

Trees as carbon sinks

The government has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Since emissions cannot be eliminated completely, offsets are also needed. The government is investing \$3.16 billion over the next 10 years to plant two billion trees from coast to coast to coast. Trees capture carbon dioxide (CO₂) and store it in their trunks, branches, leaves, and roots. By planting two billion trees, we can eliminate as many as 12 megatonnes (Mt) of carbon emissions by 2050.

Investing in public transit

Since 2015, our Liberal government has invested 13 times more for public transit projects than the previous government. Further, as part of its post-COVID economic recovery plan, the government has announced \$15 billion for public transit projects over the next eight years. This includes permanent funding of \$3 billion per year for Canadian communities beginning in 2026-27. The funding will help cities and communities plan for the future and support projects such as subway extensions, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths.

As part of its \$15-billion transit plan, the government has put aside \$2.75 billion to deliver on its commitment to helping put 5,000 zero-emission buses on the road over the next five years.

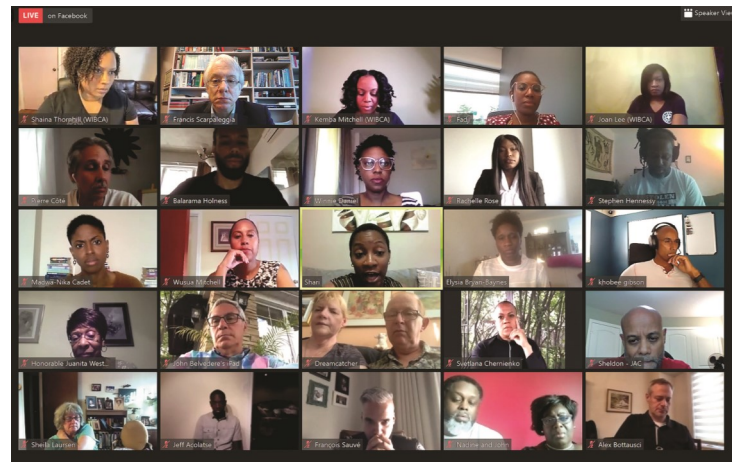
Mogile Technologies

The House of Commons environment committee recently completed its study on zero emission vehicles (ZEVs), recommending measures to accelerate uptake of these vehicles. The government is already providing subsidies to purchasers of ZEVs and full tax write-offs for businesses purchasing them. One obstacle to more rapid adoption of ZEVs is “range anxiety” resulting from, among other things, a lack of consumer information on charging options. Mogile Technologies of Pointe-Claire designs software to “increase the adoption of electric mobility.” The company’s flagship product, ChargeHub, is a “platform that helps people choose their electric vehicle, get set up with charging at home and find charging stations on the go. The federal government has invested \$23,689 in Mogile’s leading-edge software.

Flood mitigation and insurance

In February, the government announced \$34 million for the City of Montreal to rebuild eroded and threatened shoreline and help with flood mitigation in five major parks in the Montreal area, including at Cap-Saint-Jacques in Lac-Saint-Louis.

The 2019 Liberal platform committed to better protecting homeowners who do not have adequate flood-insurance protection through the creation of a low-cost national flood insurance program. The government recently created the Task Force on Flood Insurance and Relocation, comprised of experts from federal departments and agencies, provincial and territorial ministries, and representatives of the insurance industry. The Task Force will present its final report to the Deputy Minister of Public Safety and President of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.



Participating in a West Island Black Community Association (WIBCA) virtual town hall



Speaking at the inauguration of the *Angellstone* landscape sculpture in Angell Woods



Speaking in the Virtual Hybrid House of Commons



At the starting line of the *Maria Tutino Farewell Tour* parade through the streets of Baie d'Urfe

Digital policy

The digital revolution has brought enormous progress — e.g. virtual medicine and access to vast amounts of easily-accessible information — but it has also created new challenges. The government is addressing these challenges. *Bill C-10* is aimed at ensuring streaming services contribute their share to the creation of Canadian cultural content. The government is also developing legislation to address online hate, as well as legislation to compensate traditional media when online platforms like Facebook share news content. The government will also be making sure foreign digital giants pay their fair share of taxes. Finally, *Bill C-11, the Digital Charter Implementation Act* would significantly increase protections to Canadians' personal information.



Checking in with seniors by phone during the lockdown

First Nations drinking water

Budget 2016 included \$1.8 billion over five years toward upgrading First Nations drinking-water systems. It also included \$147.7 million over five years in new funding to Health Canada to improve drinking-water monitoring and testing in First Nations.

Budget 2018 provided another \$172.6 million over three years toward lifting drinking-water advisories. Both budgets (2016 and 2018) included funding for training on-reserve operators of water systems.

Budget 2019 invested \$739 million over five years to support ongoing efforts to eliminate and prevent long-term drinking-water advisories. This funding was directed to urgent repairs, local operator recruitment and training, and addressing the operator salary gap with off-reserve communities to improve operator retention. Annually, the federal government devotes about \$15 million to First Nations water-operator training.

The 2020 Fall Economic Statement announced an additional \$1.5 billion to improve First Nation drinking water. This funding will include \$553 million for new water infrastructure on reserve and \$616 million to support operations and maintenance of water infrastructure.



Chairing a virtual meeting of the House of Commons environment committee




Conducting a pre-budget consultation on Zoom with local stakeholders

Stay in touch

The number of avenues for communication between citizens and their elected representatives has greatly increased. This is a good thing; it is only through open dialogue that politicians can get to know their constituents' priorities and link these to the business of government. My Facebook page — and Twitter account — are important vehicles for obtaining your feedback on those issues that matter to you. They also allow me to keep you informed of my activities.

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