

COMMENTARY



Crude oil unloaded at the Canaport terminal in Saint John is piped into the Irving Oil Refinery, which produces over 300,000 barrels of finished energy products a day. Alberta Premier Redford and New Brunswick Premier Alward took a tour of the facilities by helicopter as they discussed a west-east pipeline and Canada's national energy strategy. PHOTO: TOPHER SEGUIN/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

The East wants in

ERIC POIRIER
COMMENTARY

On Friday, the West came East. It was a great moment for Saint John when Alberta Premier Alison Redford stood in front of an attentive crowd and declared she wanted to do business here.

Saint John is an integral part of what has become a national conversation about the development of a west-east pipeline from Alberta's oil production to Saint John's Irving Oil refinery, and beyond into the export markets each can reach.

The federal cabinet has identified the pipeline as an important piece of infrastructure to enhance Canada's energy security and our ability to reach markets in Europe, South America, and Asia, which has a growing energy demand.

To help make that happen, Saint John offers two significant pieces of existing infrastructure: the Irving Oil refinery, Canada's largest; and Canaport in the Port of Saint John, Eastern Canada's largest deep water port.

Saint John has something of value to offer and the Saint John Board of Trade was proud to be a part of presenting our community's story to Premier Redford.

As one of Canada's first business organizations – we celebrate our 194th anniversary in 2014 – the Saint John Board of Trade has long taken a leadership role around issues of significant public interest.

In our city's early history, members of the Board of Trade were prominent advocates for a municipal water system and police force – both Canadian firsts.

In the 1920s, the Maritimes Rights

movement took root around our boardroom table and at the turn of the last century, our members championed free trade and technology innovations.

Now, it is time to talk about energy and the economic impact it offers to our region; it is time for us to lead.

As the new chair of this long-standing community institution I feel both humbled and privileged to follow in the footsteps of our past leaders and I invite the over 30,000 people who work for one of our 650 business network members to join this important conversation.

We share a goal to have Saint John recognized as the most desirable place in

2. Promote a positive business environment.

In the past month I've celebrated the opening of two new restaurants in the Uptown, the presence of four Saint John entrepreneurs on Atlantic Business Magazine's Top 50 CEOs list and the arrival of an entrepreneurial co-location space in Saint John.

It's important to celebrate our successes but not just because it makes us feel good; stories like these build community pride and that's important for a city determined to sell itself and its products to the world.

3. Speak with one collective voice. We must work together to bring a west-

seeks to leverage our deep business and personal connections to drive growth.

The Saint John Board of Trade's role is to support entrepreneurial activity and overall business growth and we see great potential for both through the pipeline project.

5. Achieve operational excellence.

It's what we encourage our members to do and it is what we will expect of the pipeline proponents.

It's what any community expects; that any major industrial project will meet community expectations around employment, investment and environmental performance.

Irving Oil has a proven track record of environmental performance as the first oil company in North America to receive the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Excellence Award. The company's history of long-term partnerships includes 40 years of support for Ducks Unlimited, resulting in thousands of acres of preserved wetlands and over a decade of education and protection efforts for the endangered North Atlantic right whale.

Saint John is at an important point in its history.

We have a strong municipal council, a galvanized business community and a new regional development plan.

Premier Redford heard our story and as she returns to Alberta, she takes with her a very important message: the East wants in.

Now let's go get it.

Eric Poirier is Saint John Board of Trade chairman and Bell Aliant Regional Manager, southwestern New Brunswick.

SAINT JOHN IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF WHAT HAS BECOME A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WEST-EAST PIPELINE FROM ALBERTA'S OIL PRODUCTION TO SAINT JOHN'S IRVING OIL REFINERY, AND BEYOND INTO THE EXPORT MARKETS EACH CAN REACH.

Canada to start, run and grow a business. To accomplish that we have identified five action items.

1. Focus on small business.

Over 80 per cent of our members are small businesses; it's why our board has committed to support local entrepreneurs by exploring ways our members can participate directly in major industrial projects, such as the pipeline, or indirectly by seizing opportunities that develop in its wake.

Small business in Saint John has a role to play and will benefit from the development of a west-east pipeline and the growth it brings.

east pipeline to Saint John. As Premier David Alward reiterated on Friday, the pipeline is a priority for the Province of New Brunswick. Saint John Mayor Mel Norton has also publicly endorsed the project and earlier this year they both travelled to Alberta to campaign on our behalf.

The executive of the Saint John Board of Trade is happy to add their support to the project and local efforts to ensure the pipeline has a positive impact on our economic and social development.

4. Support True Growth 2.0.

It's all about the network. Saint John's new regional development action plan

INTEGRITY DIVIDES FEDERAL MPS



TIM HARPER
COMMENTARY

We have morphed into what we once mocked." With those eight well-chosen words, a heretofore largely anonymous 48-year-old backbench Conservative MP named Brent Rathgeber accomplished many things.

He burst into the national political consciousness by, for all intents and purposes, leaving it.

Unless he is the first over the wall in a large-scale Conservative jail break, Mr. Rathgeber's decision to resign from Stephen Harper's caucus and sit as an independent, means he will likely become a short-term political novelty, a dissident whose voice will be silenced as the political circus moves into another ring.

But before that happens, Mr. Rathgeber has proved himself to be other things much beyond novelty.

He has proven to be a sturdy political barometer of voter discontent with federal politics

And by pinning his departure on his government's repudiation of transparency and accountability, the Conservatives' Mr. Rathgeber has diagnosed the body politic and put himself on the right side of an issue at precisely the right time.

His resignation is just the latest political flame sparked by a suddenly torrid demand for accountability and transparency in Ottawa, a genie propelled from the bottle by the one and, thankfully, only Mike Duffy.

Any elected official, of any party, would be well-advised not to buck that voter headwind.

We are at a classic tipping point when it comes to the secret squandering of Canadian tax dollars.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau will have his MPs and senators publicly post their travel and hospitality expenses online, is proposing regular audits of the Senate and the House of Commons every three years and is pushing to open the secretive Board of Internal Economy which oversees MPs spending and administration of their office.

How big a leap is that? In the last parliament, when Toronto Liberal MP Michelle Simson began posting her expenses online, the party took away her speaking privileges in the Commons and then-leader Michael Ignatieff told her she was creating a problem for the caucus.

In 2013, Mr. Trudeau's proposal forced Treasury Board president Tony Clement to scamp for the microphones to throw government support behind proactive MP expenses disclosure and the opening up the internal economy meetings.

Earlier in the week, Conservative MP John Williamson, a former national director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, introduced a private member's bill which would revoke the pension of any parliamentarian found guilty of a crime which carries a two-year maximum penalty.

He would make the bill retroactive to the day he introduced it.

Against this momentum, it was his Conservative colleagues, acting on PMO orders, who gutted Mr. Rathgeber's bill, which would have revealed the salaries of top federal bureaucrats, along the lines of Ontario's sunshine list.

The return to darkness was enough for Mr. Rathgeber

Perceptive Conservatives know this move toward openness will have to be legitimately addressed.

New Democrats claim they don't want to lose the focus on the Nigel Wright-Duffy affair, but they are tap dancing when they should be sprinting to the head of the parade.

The train is leaving the station, and New Democrats should jump aboard, not block the tracks.

Tim Harper is a syndicated columnist for the Toronto Star.

HOW CAN WE NURTURE OUR FRAGILE BILINGUALISM?



JEAN-MARIE NADEAU
COMMENTARY

Last week, Statistics Canada handed in its most recent report on the state of bilingualism in Canada based on the 2011 Census. With the exception of a few anti-bilingual dinosaurs in the province and the country, few could be happy with these statistics at first glance. Although, it will require further investigation before we have a clear picture of the scope and evolution of this issue.

We mustn't forget that the 2011 Census was used to introduce the new federal data collection approach for the first time. It was decided that all would be given a short form instead of the long, targeted form. This change in methodology can lead to distortions in the way the data is interpreted, particularly if we compare it to the data of past censuses. The introduction of this new method sparked well-founded, virulent protest when it was implemented, including objections by linguistic

minorities. In exchange, at least we gained a clear linguistic question in the short form.

In short, we found ourselves in a stagnation in terms of bilingualism's evolution in several regards, and in others we have completely fallen behind. Dropping from 17.7 per cent to 17.5 per cent, there are .2 per cent fewer bilinguals in Canada. Canada has 5.8 million English-French bilinguals. Forty-four

THE FEWER THE ANGLOPHONES WHO SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S FRANCOPHONE REALITY, THE MORE FRAGILE THE STATE OF BILINGUALISM.

percent of Francophones are bilingual, whereas just 8 per cent of Anglo-Canadians speak French. Regarding this, we can only but agree with Professor Michel Doucet, who bemoans the fact that the fewer the Anglophones who share in the country's francophone reality, the more fragile the state of bilingualism.

However, it must be said that - with over 250,000 immigrants coming to Canada every year, the linguistic map is constantly evolving. It is suggested that the proportion of bilingual, established Canadians has continued to increase. But, here again, the data must be examined in greater detail.

We have always criticized Americans for being too narrow-minded when it comes to learning other languages, which remains true for many Americans. This is why I was surprised to

learn recently from the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques that over 11 million Americans also speak French and are therefore bilingual. Perhaps it changes nothing of the bilingualism situation in Canada, but it remains a bit of a consolation prize for the state of French in North America. And, as it has already been pointed out, 20 per cent of the population of Great Britain is French-English bilingual, compared

to the meagre 8 per cent of Canada's Anglophones. It seems to me that it's food for thought for Anglo-Canadians.

As a province, we would have hoped to have been spared from this decline in bilingualism, but the percentage of bilinguals dropped from 34.2 per cent to 33.2 per cent at the provincial level, which appears unacceptable and discouraging. But we do not yet have the data to determine if this drop is due to an increase in francophone assimilation, or rather the exodus of the past decade that has seen the province's Francophones moving out west. But statisticians are few and far between, and it will take awhile before we have a clearer view of the situation. Thankfully, certain research centres will be able to provide us with an update soon.

Moreover, if there is a province that could take the lead and breathe new

life into bilingualism in this country, it is most certainly ours. But, to do so, greater numbers of Anglophones will need to take the issue more seriously. We are currently in the middle of an Official Languages Act review. But it isn't with a coward's report (an expression that the late Pierre-Elliott Trudeau liked to use) – like the one proposed by the parliamentary committee – that we are going to get there. We must remember that members from the two key parties sat on this committee. We will not build true linguistic equality by accepting generalities and red herrings.

Fifty years ago, the province saw extraordinary advances in terms of linguistic equality. But the key question is the following: are these gains enough to stop the erosion of the French language that is spreading? It seems to me that, up until now, the Acadian community has used reasonable methods for promoting its language and fostering dialogue in an effort to ensure its vitality. The 2011 Census forces us to realize the harsh reality of growing as Francophones in this province and country. We must ask ourselves if we shouldn't change some of our methods, in order to better tackle the challenges of our growth in the future... unless Anglophones accept to also review their current methods and approach.

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