



From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

Public Service in the Digital Age

Welcome to our special issue on the public service in the Digital Age, which we are publishing in partnership with the Public Policy Forum, one of Canada's leading independent think-tanks. Several of the articles in the cover package are drawn or adapted from papers or presentations for the PPF's work on the public service in Canada, at both the federal and provincial levels of government.

Contributing Writer Kevin Lynch, a former Clerk of the Privy Council, sets out the daunting challenges facing the public service in the "new global normal" of change. He enumerates five global trends that are re-shaping our world: Globalization, technology, energy, demographics and governing/governance. "The bottom line," he writes, "is that change is the new constant, adaptation the new necessity, and short-termism the new risk."

University of Toronto's Mel Cappe, also a former Clerk of the Privy Council, writes of supply and demand for ideas and evidence in public policy. "Quality public policy," he concludes, "requires a fine understanding of the nature of the problems that afflict us, of the impacts of alternative policies and analytic basis for informing public policy."

PPF President and CEO David Mitchell looks at re-branding the public service and asks how it can become an employer of choice for a new generation of Canadians. The PPF's Sara Caverley gives us a Top 10 List for leadership in the public service.

Don Lenihan of Canada 2020 has spent the better part of his career working on public engagement in the public policy process. He was appointed by Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to chair a panel to make On-

tario "the most open and transparent government in the country." Lenihan writes that "citizens and stakeholders can bring all kinds of knowledge and experience to the table that can greatly enhance a government's ability to make decisions."

Sandra Papatello, now a senior executive at PwC in Toronto, sat at the Ontario cabinet table for 10 years, including as industry and trade minister, which gave her a window on global markets. Papatello references a PwC-PPF report *Agile government: Responding to citizens changing needs*. An overwhelming majority of public servants participating in the survey thought government could be more agile and less risk-averse.

Terry Stuart, head of innovation at Deloitte Canada, considers the challenges of disruptive innovation. As he writes: "The development and application of advanced technology is accelerating at such an exponential rate that people have difficulty coming to grips with the sheer pace of change."

Madelaine Drohan, Canada correspondent for *The Economist* and Prime Ministers of Canada Fellow at the PPF, writes of the explosion of social media and Internet platforms in the news media. The 24/7 news beast has revolutionized the media business, particularly with regard to public policy. But the problem, she writes, "is not too little journalistic output but too much, and the seeming impossibility of being able to sort through it all."

Dale Eisler, senior fellow at University of Regina's Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy, offers a case study of First Nations and public policy, citing a legacy of failure with blame shared all around. "It is abundantly obvious," Eisler writes, "that public policy

has failed not only First Nations and aboriginal people, but by extension Canadian society at large."

In a Guest Column, former TD Bank Group CEO Ed Clark, recently chair of an Ontario task force on crown corporations, writes that governments "face harder choices in this age of austerity." And in a Verbatim, Caisse de Dépôt CEO Michael Sabia asks, "what sets people apart as leaders, in government and in the private sector?"

In our *Canada and the World* section, our lead political writer, Robin Sears, looks at Alberta after the political earthquake. Alberta voters returned a stunning NDP majority government led by Rachel Notley, whose optimism and common sense won voters over, and whose debate performance proved to be a big moment. While she had a lot of help from Conservative stumbles, Notley won the election on her own. "Notley has another asset that is almost unheard of in Canadian politics," Sears writes. "She owes no one anything. This is her victory; not the party's." Now for the hard part—governing.

From London, Contributing Writer Andrew MacDougall considers another stunning political outcome—the majority victory of David Cameron's Conservative government. But now, he writes, Cameron faces two big issues—Scotland and devolution as well as Europe and whether the UK should remain in the EU.

Finally, on the important issue of rail safety, Railway Association of Canada President Michael Bourque recommends that rail safety oversight legislation be amended so that railways can install video and voice systems in locomotive cabins to improve safety.

Enjoy your summer reading on the dock. See you in September. **P**