

opinion

TELEGRAPH JOURNAL

New Brunswick's Newspaper, Founded in 1862

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NB Jobs Board

Mission far from accomplished

"This will help us ... find measurables and keep ourselves accountable when it comes to the successes or failures of growing the economy and creating jobs."

— Premier Brian Gallant, Sept. 30, 2014

IN ONE OF HIS FIRST PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS AFTER taking office, Premier Gallant unveiled the New Brunswick Jobs Board to co-ordinate provincial job creation efforts. It was supposed to succeed where countless similar job agencies had failed in the past.

A few weeks later, he made himself the minister responsible for the Board. It was a sign to the people who had just elected the Liberals that jobs were the No. 1 priority of the new government, so important that the premier put himself in charge of the effort.

Nearly two years later, Mr. Gallant has dropped responsibility for the NB Jobs Board, giving the job to Roger Melanson. This isn't a signal from the premier of 'Mission Accomplished'; rather, it appears to be 'Mission Abandoned'.

As the Liberals prepare to unveil a long-awaited economic growth plan this fall, the government has posted a poor record in job creation. After promising in the 2014 provincial election campaign to create 5,000 new jobs in his first year in office, Premier Gallant had qualified that promise by December, 2014 — he didn't mean 5,000 net new jobs.

The actual record is much worse. According to Statistics Canada, the provincial economy lost 3,400 jobs in 2015. The Conference Board of Canada forecast last month New Brunswick will likely lose another 3,000 positions this year.

Rather than grow the economy and create employment, the Liberals have overseen two years of employment decline.

Mr. Gallant is still in charge of the upcoming economic growth plan, which has been in draft form since late last year and won't be public until the mid-point of the Liberal four-year mandate. And he will continue to chair the powerful priorities committee of cabinet.

But the premier sends a negative message in leaving the Jobs Board position, with the job not just unfinished, but seemingly still a major challenge.

At the midpoint of his term, Premier Gallant can't walk away from leading the biggest job of governing. He and his cabinet have to double-down on job creation, creating a clear strategy with targets. They just can't shuffle the nameplates around the cabinet table.

housing market

Rebound bodes well for city economy

HOUSING SALES ARE ON THE RISE IN SAINT JOHN, A welcome sign that the region's economy is strengthening.

We shouldn't read too much into projections that Saint John is on its way to post its highest number of house sales since 2010. Some of the upswing is due to the local real estate market correcting itself after a long period of stagnant sales.

But real estate activity is a leading indicator of economic confidence. If this can be sustained, it will help build a foundation for broader business investment and growth. The key now is for public policy actions to build on this foundation.

The Saint John Real Estate Board reports the number of homes sold this year until the end of May is up by 17.7 per cent from the same period in 2015. Months of inventory — which calculates the number of months forecast to sell all current listings — and prices have also stabilized.

The onus is now on Saint John Common Council, the provincial government and MP Wayne Long to provide the leadership and create the circumstances to cultivate this nascent growth and confidence.

The city can lead by lowering taxes, cutting costs at city hall and executing on civic priorities, while the province and Ottawa can make strategic investments that unlock private sector dollars. Together, they can leverage a housing rebound to build sustainable community growth.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Monetary policy enslaving country

Despite all the election New Speak rhetoric about Canada getting back on the Utopian highway, the revelation of Justin Trudeau's budget reveals that the enslaving monetary policy adopted by his father's Liberal government in 1974 and carried on by successive Liberal and PC governments to date, will continue to needlessly hand over Canadians hard earned tax dollars to foreign bankers. In a previous letter, I noted that federal, provincial and municipal governments could make interest free loans from the Bank of Canada from 1938 to 1974.

The federal debt is rapidly expanding as is the interest paid to service that debt.

Most levels of government are struggling under budgetary constraints to maintain essential services as increasing amounts of taxation goes to service their debt.

Also, provincial and municipal governments, cut off from interest free loans, have had to resort to interest bearing loans adding to excessive debt. Hence, new tax increases such as the HST in New Brunswick this month.

The federal government has abdicated its constitutional duty to govern according to the Bank of Canada Act. Canadians should be outraged that they have been abandoned by their MPs, provincial legislatures and municipalities for failing to take successive federal governments to task on this issue. Never before, has so much, been taken from so many, by so few, without firing a shot!

Frank Brown
Upper Loch Lomond

Perfect lawns bring disdain, not envy

Can someone please explain the want and the need to have your lawn perfectly green without blemish or dandelion or weed or flower?

Is it to make others envious of your properties or to show off the "curb appeal" even though your houses could use a coat of paint or your shutters are hanging a little to the left? What is this all about? Have you been brainwashed by these chemical companies into thinking that these applications are safe?

The more I walk and bike around, the more frustrated and angry I become having to skirt around these red and white pesticide application signs that litter every second property within a five-mile radius. You can smell the strong scent of chemicals before you see the signs and to be honest, it sickens me both literally and figuratively.

SUBMISSIONS: Letters must bear the writer's name, address and daytime telephone number and be between 100 and 300 words in length. We prefer letters that respect the word count, are on a single subject currently in the news and contain no personal attacks. We will consider opinion articles on any subject. All submissions must be original, should not have been previously published other than in a Brunswick News

As a result, I will purposely walk/bike away from the property onto the roadway in order to avoid the smell and the contact, not to mention the fact that my best friend who accompanies me each and every day is subjected to a greater degree to these potentially cancer-causing agents.

Why are more and more people impervious to the consequences of their selfish actions? I guess we'll never truly understand.

So continue with your proverbial head in the sand and enjoy your beautiful, flawless, lush green lawns and your broken shutters. Marlie and I will continue to avoid your poisoned properties like the plague and will look upon them not with the admiration and envy you expect, but more so with the disdain and lack of respect you deserve.

Lisa Deighan
Fredericton

Make genocide education mandatory

The Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide in Schools applauds the Quebec Liberal government's initiative to address the issue of radicalization leading to violence through social cohesion and integration efforts announced June 27.

The organizations chosen to work with vulnerable youth are experienced in combating intolerance in matters of race, religion and sexuality, and will be of great benefit in preventing Islamophobia through dialogue and workshops. With this action plan in motion, the goal of our foundation is more timely than ever.

Mandatory genocide education in our high schools — case studies of past and present genocides, and the steps leading to violence that are common in all genocides — should play a key role in our government's efforts to encourage critical thinking about hate propaganda, and prevent extremism. Mandatory genocide education is another approach in the effort to "make a more just and inclusive society."

Heidi Berger
Founder, The Foundation for the Compulsory Study of Genocide in Schools

39 larger Set for Life prizes won in past year

A recent letter writer ("Scratch ticket secondary prizes aren't big enough," June 30) expressed disappointment in the prize payout on the Atlantic Lottery Set for Life Scratch'N Win game.

We thank the writer for his comments. We value his business and his input. Set for Life prizes range from \$4

to the top prize of \$1,000 a week for 25 years.

Over the past year Atlantic Lottery has awarded 39 Set for Life prizes between \$500 and \$20,000 and 12 top prizes.

More than 2.2 million individual prizes on Set for Life were awarded this past year.

All lottery winners of \$10,000 or more are posted on our website (<http://corp.alc.ca/Winners.aspx>).

It is searchable by game and by province.

To protect our players' privacy, names may only appear for one year. We also post winner stories to our social media sites.

While we'd love to publicize all of our winners in the media, the most interesting lies in stories about our top prize winners.

If we issued news releases on all our winners of \$500 or more, we could be issuing several releases daily!

As brand manager of Instant Tickets for Atlantic Lottery, I can assure that it's our job to deliver safe and enjoyable games to Atlantic Canadians and we appreciate receiving feedback. Comments such as the recent letter help us understand what our players are seeing, experiencing, and wanting when it comes to lottery.

Merrill Fullerton
Moncton

Sobeys' new location difficult to get to

Since I moved a little closer to Atlantic Super Store I found it inconvenient to shop at Sobeys in McAllister Place unless I happened to be in that mall and realized I could use something from a grocery store.

I also gave up my Costco membership as we do not have a car and getting there by bus and taxi was difficult and now more expensive. There isn't a bus stop really close to the new Sobeys for someone like me who is physically disabled. A relative picks up the couple of items I could only get at Costco when they go.

I found it amusing to read in the Telegraph-Journal a spokesman for Sobeys assumed Costco customers would shop for groceries at Costco then cross over to Sobeys to continue grocery shopping there. When I mentioned this to my relative and other Costco members they said, "Get real, no way!"

Albeit I will probably never shop in their new location, I hope they do well. They have had to hire extra staff for this larger store and that is good for Saint John. I will wish them well, just never in person.

Lyn Cato
Saint John

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