

N.B. editorial: Turn around troubled fiscal ship

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The New Brunswick legislature.

Photo: Daily Gleaner Archives

Let's think about children born in New Brunswick today.

On one hand, they will be joining a society with strong social values, in a highly-developed country, in a time of peace. They will grow up in a beautiful province, with a unique culture, that hundreds of thousands are proud to call home.

On the other hand, there are many problems here that will put them behind compared to other Canadians and, ultimately, make it more difficult to stay here when they grow up.

This is a province of great inequalities. Some communities are highly educated and wealthy. Other communities are very poor. Overall, New Brunswick has the lowest median income in Canada – \$59,347 in the last census compared to a national average of \$70,336. It's as sure a sign as any that the province is falling behind the rest.

The province also struggles with literacy: With about half of adults being functionally illiterate, many of these children may be born into households where one or both parents cannot read or write well. This will put their families at an economic disadvantage; and unfortunately, it's no guarantee children will attain reading and math proficiency in public school.

To boot, they will inherit a significant burden of debt accumulated by previous generations. From 1998 to 2017, the province's net debt increased 68 per cent, even adjusting for inflation. If the same trend continues, the provincial debt will be more than \$23 billion when they reach adulthood.

This matters because the state of the province's finances has a direct impact on the standard of living. If the population stagnates, as expected, each person's share of the amount owing increases. If debt increases, as expected, the cost of just servicing it will rise. And if interest rates move closer to their historical average, servicing costs would increase even if debt levels were constant.

The more money the province has to spend on interest for previous borrowing, the less that can go to health care, education, roads, recreational facilities and parks. This will make them worse off.

Most importantly, as the province struggles with economic growth, it will become more difficult to keep pace with a stronger economy elsewhere in Canada. Barring significant changes to our fortunes, it is likely we will continue to bleed young talent to other provinces.

This situation isn't just being preached from on high. New Brunswickers know their province is experiencing great challenges. According to a Nanos poll commissioned by Brunswick News earlier this month, four-in-10 respondents said the next generation would have a worse standard of living than their parents.

New Brunswick remains a great place to live and a province residents are rightly proud of. But it also has major financial, social and policy challenges. To make New Brunswick truly prosper, the government must get its financial house in order.

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 **LEO GILLIS** • 6 days ago

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"What shall we do with the drunken sailor " is an old tune that works well in a sing-a-long type of party...but when we look at our lives here in NB that are being led by a youthful Premier with what appears to be little or no common sense when it comes to spending OUR tax monies, it is relatively simple to poke fun at the Premiere as "spending like a drunken sailor"! Now, as NB voters, the tune takes on new meaning for the vote on Monday. Make your vote count to keep NB away from the fiscal cliff. Interest rates will be on the rise and when they do, do we really want a reckless spender in charge?

4 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



TODD STEPHEN • 6 days ago

I'm a little disappointed in the TJ. And by a little I mean a lot. After 4 years of disagreeing with the current government's lack of direction and profligate spending, today's paper is basically built to endorse them. Pass on repeating your rhetoric for the next 4 years if you're going to abandon NBers at the 11th hour.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



ANDREW HOWARTH → TODD STEPHEN • 6 days ago

Are you referring to the blatant lack of judgement by the TJ management in allowing a political party to buy the front page for an ad in the last issue before an election, the incumbents at that. Many less smart readers would take that as an endorsement of the Liberals.

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Raymond Bungay → ANDREW HOWARTH

• 5 days ago

I was cleaning out our freezer yesterday and used that cover portion to wrap old fish in before putting in the bin! was perfect for it. Used the trailer one a few weeks ago to wrap old garden clippings in. In other words I am not impressed with those cover sections but especially that one you refer to Andrew!!!

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



DIANNE MACPHERSON → ANDREW HOWARTH

• 6 days ago

You aren't SERIOUS ???/

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



ANDREW HOWARTH → DIANNE

MACPHERSON • 5 days ago

Absolutely, as an ex newspaper exec, selling the front page for an ad was never on the

the front page for an ad was never on the cards until I saw this group do it, no real newspaper would ever condone such sacrilege. Did your paper have it? By having the masthead at the top of the ad it looks like an endorsement.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



DIANNE MACPHERSON → ANDREW HOWARTH • 5 days ago

I'd say that EVERY newspaper had that same format .

It makes me wonder WHAT we are really dealing with here !!!!

Anyone can buy an Ad but this particular one is to say the least.....scandalous !!!!

Voters should first and foremost think back to ALL

the mismanagement suffered in EVERY Dept. of the Liberal Govt.....those things are still there !!!! The people of NB are swimming in a tank full of sharks.....BEWARE !!!!!

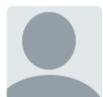
3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Raymond Bungay → DIANNE MACPHERSON • 5 days ago

I subscribe to about 15 Canadian and US papers via purchased app and never say this on any of them. Brunswick News sides with which ever party du jour they agree with to gain readership in the failing print media world!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



ALEXANDER NOBLE • 4 days ago

No mater which party you support the problem is likely to be much the same.

Perhaps one party is better than the other but it is we the people that are to blame.

We are demanding this service or that service with out knowing or caring the cost.

Yes the French language is a costly option and if we want it that is fine.

Yes it cold be deployed in a more efficient manner but we do not

know what it costs or what the cost benefit is for one method of deployment or the other.

French is not the only issue where we could provide a more cost effective way of deploying services.

The rural hospitals or rather the smaller hospitals we hear more and more outcries that this or that service should be in the smaller hospitals because it is inconvenient or uncomfortable to travel to the larger centers.

The charging of tolls on bridges and highways has been seen as

[see more](#)

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



COLIN SEELEY • 6 days ago

- | v

They have all called on a change being required if we are ever to right the ship. I do not see any serious attempt to bring about such change - thus we will get more of the same

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



DIANNE MACPHERSON → COLIN SEELEY • 4 days ago

- | v

We won't see 'change' until the voter realizes....
YOUR VOTE COUNTS !!!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



ANDREW HOWARTH • 6 days ago

- | v

Editorials, experts and others with a brain have been saying the same thing ad infinitum for a long time. What will it take for our politicians to get it?

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Raymond Bungay • 6 days ago

- | v

Will not happen anytime soon as Gallant's boss Trudeau told him this summer to keep on spending and so he has. He is learning from one of the ?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



SHELDON BIGGS → Raymond Bungay • 6 days ago

- | v

I believe the government both at the provincial and federal levels should be operated like a household. You have e a budget based on the money you are bringing in and you spend wisely. There should be some way to penalize a politician if he votes yes to spending without justification. Perhaps a discount on their future pension would make them think twice before going ahead. In a democracy you should have the right to vote against certain spending without being penalized by your party. When it comes to

major spending perhaps there should be an independent party that would assess any large expenditures and determine if it is wise and feasible to go ahead based on the