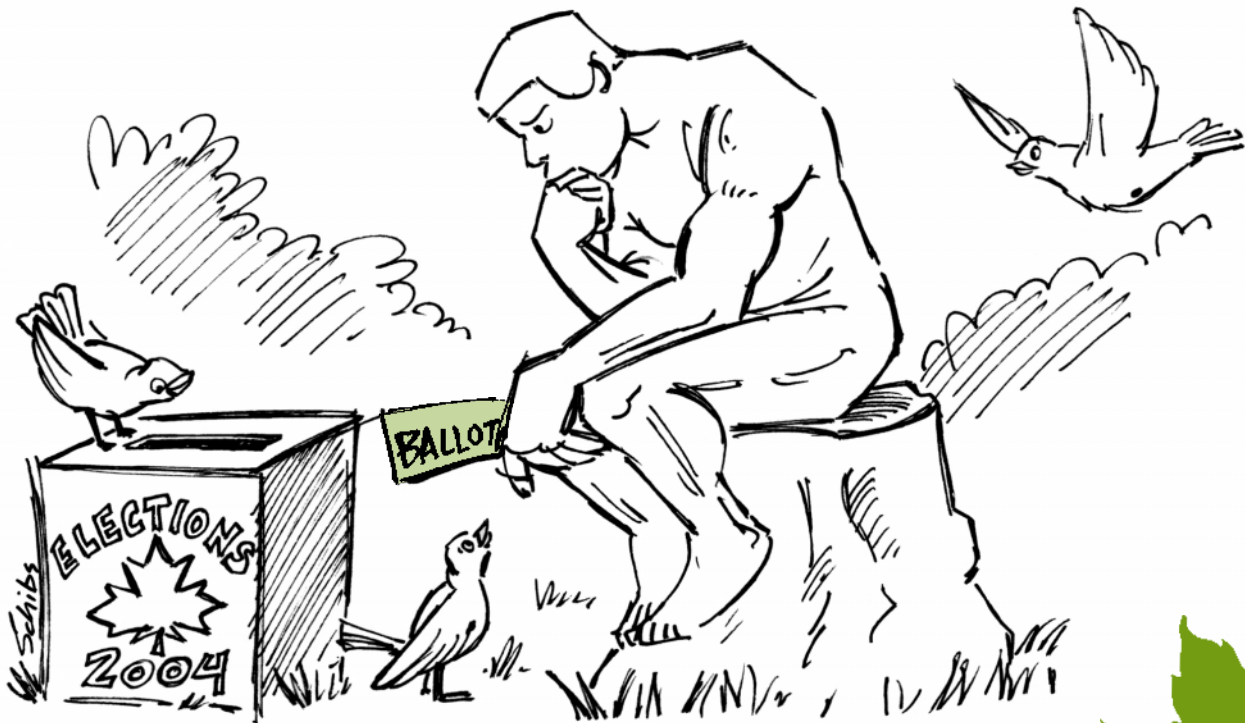


What's this about accountability?

JUNE 2004

A federal election bulletin of **CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE**

www.cpj.ca



SO WE CANADIANS are en route to a federal election. Eleven political parties will field candidates. At least 11 ways of answering questions we all need to wrestle with.

The questions themselves are more exciting than the parties. Here we are with the fate of an overstressed earth in our human hands, and with epoch-making challenges coming sharply at us from peoples once considered colonized and silenced. Here we are with science and technology opening doors we're not sure we should walk through. Here we are seeing new forms of affluence and painful old forms of poverty, the gap getting dangerously bigger. Here we are with the Internet and the global economy erasing all the borders we used to fight over. Here we are squandering chances at a new kind of peace, struggling to invent new structures of peace-making.

And here we are, holding to account our fellow citizens who have held public office or who are offering themselves for office. As electors, we seem to sit in judgement on all of them. But in the bigger picture we are all accountable. How are we meeting the great questions that face human communities in this exciting time? Do we live as citizens of justice-generating quality – citizens who by their generous attention to public life can evoke really good government?

This little bulletin is produced by a network of people who get excited at election time because we care all the time about public justice. The network is called Citizens for Public Justice. You can find out more about us on our website, www.cpj.ca. If you find our ideas helpful we invite you to join us. Or just use our ideas if you like them. But first, please read this bulletin. Then, best of all: please vote.

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ILLUSTRATION: Paul Schibli

If accountability is the tip, what's the iceberg?

A national morality play opened before the 2004 federal election. Remember?

A DRAMA LIKE THIS is no soap opera. Sheila Fraser re-stated a value that is indeed foundational for Western democracies: holders of public office must never use public resources in their own private interest or to advance their friends. They must lay aside private ambition and serve their country transparently and without favoritism. They must be *public servants*, concerned only for the common good.

That's a stunningly high ideal of political life. In some countries it's not even preached, let alone practised. Because of our adversarial party system and our scandal-loving media, Canadians probably underestimate the extent to which the ideal of unselfish public service still holds here. Of course the record is mixed. But more than you can tell from the headlines or from Question Period, what's going on among MPs and civil servants is hard work and reasonably honest effort to serve our common life.

How can we build on the core value of accountability so resoundingly re-affirmed in the Fraser/Martin drama? Accountability, after all, isn't just about accounting. It's not only about the transparent recording of how money was used. We – electors and elected together – are accountable to each other *for the well-being of all humanity and of creation as a whole.*

ACT ONE: Enter Auditor General Sheila Fraser, with proof that one sector of government spending was warped by concealment and cronyism. Her facts are an accountant's facts, but her outrage is the cry of a citizen-moralist proclaiming the violation of a public trust.

ACT TWO: Enter Paul Martin, newly elected as leader of the party in power, announcing that there is a whole new government now that he is Prime Minister. Outrage begets rage: Who has stained the fresh start? Public inquisition begins. One promise dominates the script: there will be zero cronyism, 100% transparency. Public resources will never be misdirected to reward loyalty to the party in power.

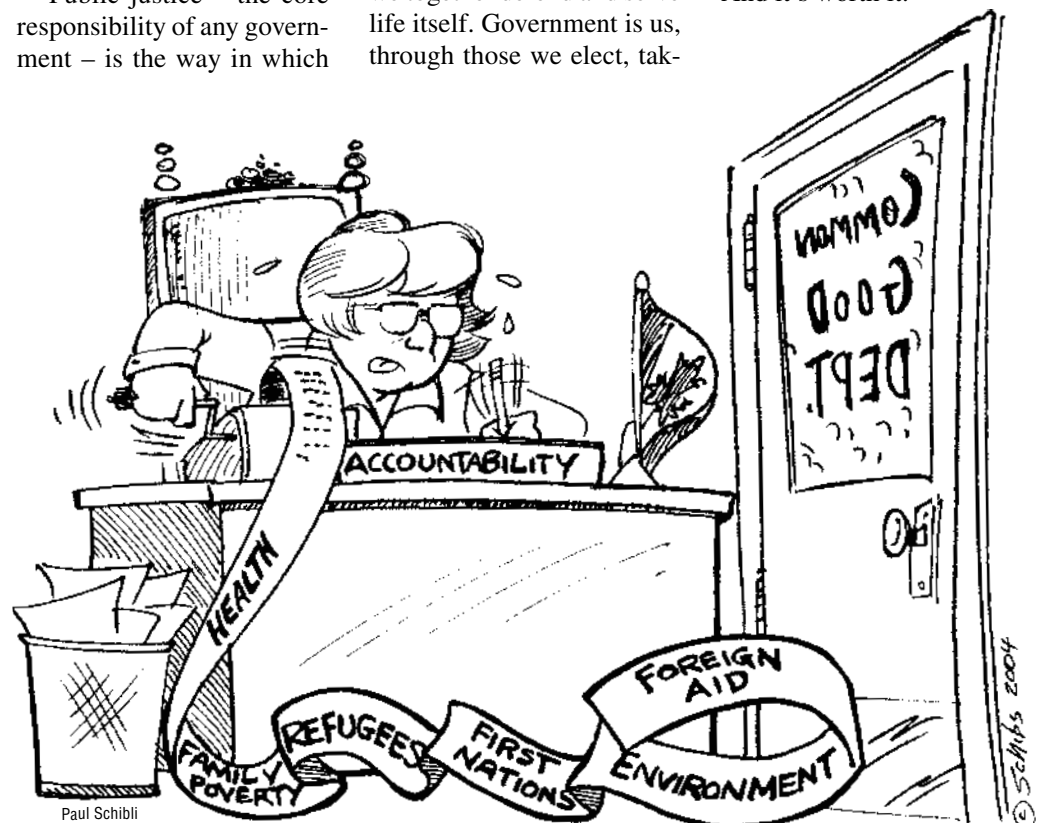
ACT THREE: The election, now unfolding. Will voters decide that atonement has been achieved and public trust restored? Or does a fresh start require a party not in power at the time of the stain?

Public justice – the core responsibility of any government – is the way in which we together defend and serve life itself. Government is us, through those we elect, tak-

ing responsibility for those rules and structures that protect and enhance human life in society and in the biosphere. As such, it's about everything that is shared and public. It's about how people and the planet are doing – not just about careful book-keeping.

Real accountability grows into a genuine dialogue among citizens and public servants, an opening of minds to each other. Such conversation for the common good involves a risky sharing of hope, of suffering, and of meaning – with a human community that's always bigger than what we're tempted to settle for.

It's exciting. It isn't easy. And it's worth it.



Ending child poverty in Canada is possible

REDUCING child poverty in Canada has been one of the top concerns for Canadians. Yet, despite the economic recovery of the late 1990s and the National Children's Agenda, the pattern of child poverty has changed little since the 1970s and 80s.

Is this just a problem that can't change much, no matter what policies governments put in place? Not so. In many European countries, child poverty rates are much lower than in Canada. How have they done it?

When you look across nations, there is no single policy tool for reducing child poverty rates. Rather, there is a mix. It includes income supports for families (child benefits and paid maternity/parental leave), strong labour markets with jobs that pay wages that keep full-time workers above the poverty line, quality early childhood education and care that is affordable for all families, and affordable housing.



Canadian governments have moved towards parts of this policy mix, but hesitantly. Often a step forward in one area has been undermined by two steps back in another.

Dealing with family poverty does not come cheap. Campaign 2000 – the national coalition working to eliminate child poverty in Canada – has estimated the cost of putting that full policy mix in place at about \$20 billion a year above what is currently spent.

An investment that large would have to be phased in over several years.

And remember, it's an *investment*, not merely an expense. Some of its good results won't show up until the children it has helped take their adult place as workers and citizens. But other results will help society right away. Public investments in housing and early childhood education, for example, will create jobs and generate tax revenue. Higher minimum wages start being good for local economies as soon as they reach wallets.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

European countries have child poverty rates that are half what we have in Canada. We know the policy mix in those countries includes affordable housing, child care, stronger child benefits and maternal/parental leave.

What will your party do to make better progress in eliminating child poverty in Canada? What will your party do to raise the revenue needed to make those investments?

Canada ranks second worst among rich countries in the number of poorly paid jobs. As a result, we have one of the highest child poverty rates in the industrialised world.

What will your party do to improve the wages and working conditions of low-paid workers?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

Campaign 2000 is the national "umbrella" coalition of non-governmental groups working to end child and family poverty in Canada. www.campaign2000.ca contains links to many partner organizations that support the same goals.

National Anti-Poverty Organization advocates and educates on behalf of low-income Canadians and their families. www.napo-onap.ca

The **Childcare Resource and Research Unit** sheds light on affordable child care as a family poverty issue: www.childcarecanada.org

The **Canadian Housing and Renewal Association** has good info on affordable housing: www.chra-achru.ca

For quotable papers on how government transfers and tax credits affect families, visit the research section of www.publicjustice.ca, the website of the **Public Justice Resource Centre**.

ILLUSTRATION: Kelley Aitken

“Children are kept in poverty not by a padlock to which there is a single key but by a combination lock that requires an alignment of factors if it is to be released.”

— *Child Poverty in Rich Nations*, UNICEF, June 2000

Paying for the Common Good – some good ideas

If it will cost about \$20 billion a year to implement the mix of policies that will dramatically reduce child poverty in Canada, how could we pay for it?

- ✓ Starting with what we already have: economic analysts project that *federal surpluses* will be in the \$4-5 billion range annually, with present fiscal arrangements. Some say it's closer to \$10 billion; the government consistently understates its fiscal capacity.
- ✓ The Conference Board of Canada has estimated that a *one-percent increase in the GST* would generate about \$4 billion a year in revenue. The burden for low-income households could be eased by increasing the GST credit.
- ✓ The Public Justice Resource Centre estimates that *converting the deduction* on RRSP and Registered Pension Plan contributions *into a credit* (as Canada/Quebec Pension Plan contributions are treated) would save about \$3 billion annually in lost tax revenue.
- ✓ Campaign 2000 reports that a *one-percent increase in current income tax rates* would raise about \$5 billion a year.
- ✓ The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has calculated that adding *two additional income tax brackets* for high incomes could recover about \$2 billion in revenue.

These are just a few ways to pay the costs of a national strategy to eliminate child poverty. Yes, it's a serious effort. But without it, we can expect child poverty rates to remain stuck in the 12%-to-15% range over the course of the next economic cycle.

Good questions to ask the candidates ...



ILLUSTRATIONS: Canadian Association of Labour Media

How can we stop overstressing the earth?

Canada ratified the Kyoto Protocol in December 2002. Our country is thus committed to reducing “greenhouse gas” emissions, but the effort to change seems to be stalled at the starting gate.

Where does your party stand on Kyoto and on the danger of climate change? What concrete steps would your party take to reduce harmful emissions from automobiles and from industry? What positive opportunities do you see the Kyoto challenge opening up for Canadian entrepreneurs, workers and ordinary citizens?

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, transportation is responsible for over 27% of Canada’s total greenhouse gas emissions.

How would your party deal with improving fuel economy standards for vehicles? Would your party support significantly increased and sustained federal funding for public transit?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

The **David Suzuki Foundation** has a website (www.davidsuzuki.org) bursting with information and action tips on climate change. Type in “Kyoto” on the website’s search line.

THE WEEKS BEFORE AN ELECTION are a time when political parties are listening especially carefully to voters’ issues. That’s why a thoughtful voter prepares to question candidates in various settings; it gets your concern on the record at a sensitive time. Asking questions when candidates come to your door lets them know your priorities. Raising questions in a public forum, such as an all-candidates meeting, puts the issue in the minds of other voters as well. Asking even the candidates you know you’re not going to support puts the question in their ears.

A brief pamphlet like this one can’t come close to naming all the questions burning in voters’ minds as a federal election draws near. *What about all the other issues? Where will you put your own focus?*

Personal life-experience, and convictions growing out of life in a community of faith or vision, give to each citizen a particular set of insights and starting points. We encourage you to raise for candidates, and for other voters, the issues that engage you most deeply. But don’t be a one-issue wonder. Listen and learn while you lobby, so that your special focus can locate itself within a constantly broadening frame of reference: the perspective of public justice as a whole.

Another lively source is **The Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy** (www.cielap.org), providing research results, analysis and action tips on sustainability.

How can the future be better for First Nations communities throughout Canada?

The 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples challenged Canadians to see the justice of recognizing and implementing Aboriginal land and resource rights as a foundation stone in building a far more hopeful future. The Government of Canada didn’t pay much attention to that central dimension of the RCAP report. But Canada still needs to answer the challenging questions RCAP raised.

What is your party’s position on the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and its major recommendations?

More specifically: the current legislation for dealing with First Nations specific land claims is considered by First Nations

and others to be inadequate and unfair.

How does your party propose to address this problem? How would you provide a swifter and more just process for resolving specific claims? How will you take into account the huge backlog of cases?

The federal Comprehensive Land Claims Policy applies to those First Nations that have not signed treaties with Canada. The policy still requires that for a settlement to be reached, Aboriginal rights in the territory under discussion must be extinguished. This aspect of the policy is abhorrent to many First Nations, and it has been criticized internationally.

Does your party see Aboriginal land rights as something perennial and permanent, or as something that needs to be buried in the course of finalizing a modern treaty?

According to the 2001 census, half of Canada’s Aboriginal population now lives in urban areas, in many cases below the poverty line.

How does your party propose to improve the situation of urban Aboriginal people?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) has a website with good resources in its Aboriginal Rights section. The section includes links to many of the major Aboriginal organizations, from which you can learn how First Nations elected leadership views some of the current policy issues: www.kairosCanada.org

For access to the **Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**, visit the website of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap

What about Ballistic Missile Defence?

The Ballistic Missile Defence plan now being promoted by the Pentagon points in a direction sharply opposed to Canada's years of effort in multilateral negotiations towards a global ban on all nuclear weapons. Critics point out that the proposed BMD system would fuel a new arms race more surely than it would shield North Americans.

What is your party's position on whether Canada should support or participate in Washington's BMD project?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

Project Ploughshares is a "think tank" on peace and conflict studies associated with the Canadian Council of Churches. Its website offers briefings, press releases, a major report called "Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence," and links to other initiatives: www.ploughshares.ca

What's the best future for Canada's publicly funded health care system?

In his November 2002 Royal Commission report on the future of health care ("Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada"), Commissioner Roy Romanow said that Canadians view health care as a shared moral commitment, not as a business opportunity. He cited research indicating that for-profit solutions do not deliver better or cheaper care.

What is your party's position on the delivery of direct health care services such as medical, diagnostic

or surgical care by private for-profit organizations?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

The Health Canada website has the full text of the **Final Report of the Romanow Commission**: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/care/romanow/index1.html

How can Canada help shrink the global rich-poor gap?

In December 2000, the United Nations launched a project designed around eight Millennium Development Goals. Targets were set for reducing poverty, hunger, illiteracy, discrimination against women, and environmental degradation by 2015. In response, Canada agreed to increase its foreign aid by 8%. This increase still leaves Canada far short of the level that has historically been considered the norm for Canada's yearly overseas development aid allocations, namely 0.7% of Gross National Income.

What annual percentage of Gross National Income would your party set aside for overseas development aid? Does your party aim to reach the 0.7% level, and if so, when?

Donor countries often dilute the usefulness of international aid by "tying" their aid to a goal that is in the donor country's interest, but does little to change the lives of the neediest people in the receiving country. Since 9/11, Western countries are focusing on security, and are redirecting many resources towards the prevention of terrorist acts and other security concerns. This includes allotting aid money to security concerns.

Is your party committed to placing Canada's aid efforts squarely at the service of the poor majority in aid-receiving countries, with priority concern for food security, health, education and livelihoods?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

For information on aid, debt and trade, see the section on "global economic justice" in the website of **KAIROS** (Canadian Ecumenical

Justice Initiatives): www.kairosCanada.org

The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) hosts a broad grouping of Canadian non-governmental organizations with expertise on development issues at www.ccic.ca.

Municipalities: do they need a new deal?

Public authorities serving local communities of whatever size are facing serious challenges. One of their difficulties is related to Canada's tax and fiscal framework, which leaves municipalities with very restricted powers of taxation. Yet municipalities are responsible for crucial dimensions of infrastructure, transit, environment, housing and social welfare.

What would your party do to ensure municipalities will have sufficient resources to meet their public responsibilities?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

For the point of view of the cities, see "Seeking a New Deal" section on the web site of the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities**: www.fcm.ca

Why has voting lost its magnetism?

Canadians used to vote in much higher numbers than they do now. Polls show that young adults especially seem to feel alienated from voting, and cynical about government itself and the political life that shapes it.

What would your party do to engage younger Canadians in the political process? Does your party support electoral reform? Specifically, what is your position on proportional voting systems, recently recommended by the Law Commission of Canada?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

The **Law Commission of Canada** has recently released a report on electoral reform called "Voting Counts": www.lcc.gc.ca

For more on proportional representation, check out **Fair Vote Canada**, a multi-partisan citizens' campaign for reform in the voting system: www.fairvotecanada.org

... who seek your vote

What is
government
really for?

What is
the right
“size” for it?



Through the lens of a budget

IN A DEMOCRACY, it's crucial that citizens hone their ability to think, talk and care about public policy. So when Canadians put their minds to – for example, federal budgets – they are really asking: what is government for?

The 2004 federal budget, like others before it, seemed primarily to say: government should offer a clean, transparent, predictable fiscal framework so that energetic companies, families and individuals can gear up and work confidently in a financially encouraging atmosphere. That was how Finance Minister Goodale presented the reason for concentrating the federal surplus on reducing the federal debt, because “bringing down the debt-to-GDP ratio . . . means a stronger financial position overall, (which) is what helps to keep interest rates low.” That same theme resounds in briefs from business associations and lobby groups/think tanks that call for a reduced role for government.

But should the federal government focus only on its own debt load? There are other debt burdens that impact heavily on our life together. What about the debt load of post-secondary students, who have seen tuition costs double and triple in recent years? The resulting mountain of student debt dwarfs the getting-started grants like the new “learning bond” intended to help families save for their children’s post-secondary education.

And what about the debt load of municipalities? City leaders say there is a backlog of \$60 billion in infrastructure spending in Canada, and that it is growing by \$2 billion

a year. Municipal money-managers have far fewer levers for coping with investment and with debt than has the federal government. Has Ottawa met its responsibility if its debt is shrinking, but junior governments remain unable to meet their responsibilities? Returning GST to cities helps only a little; what more should be done, and when?

Infrastructure – roads, sewers, clean water – is not the only deficit cities deal with. There are also social urgencies. One that causes great suffering is the lack of affordable housing that afflicts people who aren’t well rewarded in the job market. Can we afford for Canada to be admired for its debt-to-GDP ratio while real children, women and men are racked with anxiety about keeping a decent roof over their heads?

It’s true that government can’t do everything. Nations, as well as families, have to live within their means. But national governments have an awesome responsibility that makes them, ethically speaking, very special. It’s this: government is the agency through which we strive for *public* justice. That’s justice for *everyone*. The *common* good.

The common good: it’s all of us, making room for everyone to live in peace, protected from each other’s murderous tendencies and in contact with each other’s diverse gifts. We never get there completely, but as a shared goal, seeking the *common good* is the supreme human adventure. No one excluded. Everyone’s contribution needed. That’s when life starts to sing. And good government, in some irreplaceable ways, conducts the choir.

PARTY SITES

Here is a list of all the Canadian political parties hoping to run at least 50 candidates in the federal election. To find out more about the parties and their positions, you could check out their websites.

Bloc Québécois

www.blocquebecois.org

Canadian Action Party

www.canadianactionparty.ca

Christian Heritage Party

www.chp.ca

Communist Party of Canada

www.comunist-party.ca

Conservative Party of Canada

www.conservative.ca

Green Party of Canada

www.greenparty.ca

Liberal Party of Canada

www.liberal.ca

Marijuana Party

www.marijuanaparty.com

Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada

www.cpcml.ca

New Democratic Party

www.ndp.ca

Progressive Canadian Party

no website as of May 2004

Refugees deserve a warmer welcome

MOST CANADIANS are under the impression that their country is exceptionally generous to refugees. Official Canada cultivates that impression. Ottawa has, in fact, signed all the relevant international conventions for the protection of refugees. Looking good?

Think again. In terms of numbers, Canada is a shrimp among refugee-hosting countries. Canada's annual acceptance rate for refugees measures a mere one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of its total population. With our vast land mass, low birth rate, and shrinking labour pool, you'd think it wouldn't be so hard to welcome more refugees.

Canadians used to like thinking of their country as a place of refuge and hope. Since September 11, 2001, it seems that most people would rather think of the whole North American space as safe and secure.

The onus on refugees to prove that they are neither terrorists nor criminals has almost doubled. The first eligibility screening includes fingerprinting, appraisal of documents, and check-backs with the country of origin for security angles or connections with crime. Only after those scrutinies does the Immigration and Refugee Board begin to decide whether to accept someone as a "protected person." From there, the road to permanent resident status can be long indeed, taking up to eight years, while the system repeats security and criminal-background checks all over again.

The real world is full of refugees. They need homes.

- ✓ There are about *20 million* refugees in the world right now, including "internally displaced persons" who have fled to a different part of their own country.
- ✓ Poor countries in Africa, South Asia and the Middle East host by far larger numbers of refugees than rich, developed countries like Canada and the USA. (Examples: Iran hosts 1.3 million refugees; Pakistan, 1.2 million; Tanzania, 690,000; Democratic Republic of Congo, 333,000; Sudan, 330,000.)
- ✓ Only two "rich" countries make it into the list of the top ten refugee-hosting countries. The two are: Germany, with 980,000, and USA with 485,000.
- ✓ In 2001 (the last year for which comparative figures are available), Canada ranked second in the world in number of refugees resettled (i.e., accepted as permanent residents). The actual number "landed" was 12,200 refugees ... out of 20 million seeking a new home!

People in refugee camps or other situations abroad who are selected by Canadian government screeners or sponsored by a private group don't have it much easier. Currently it takes three to five years before a privately sponsored refugee actually arrives in Canada. It's hard for sponsoring groups to stay focused that long.

Some agreements act like a Keep Out! sign nailed to our border. The "safe third country" protocol and direct-back policies authorize Canada to send a refugee claimant back to any "safe country" through which he or she might have crossed while trying to reach Canada. Well, from most parts of the world, it's hard to reach Canada without first touching land in the USA. This new protocol significantly shrinks our official willingness to deal with refugee claimants.

The refugee system is often accused of being a conduit for terrorists. But not one of the nineteen young men who took part in the airborne 9/11 massacre had entered the United States as a refugee. In a survey of two thousand "protected persons" waiting for more than five years in Canada to be "landed," only one was found to have any grounds for inadmissibility as a criminal.

Some helpful new policies have been adopted, but not implemented – at least, not yet. Canada's latest Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act provides for a right of appeal from the decision of a single IRB adjudicator, triggering a review by a Refugee Appeals Division. Unfortunately, the division exists, so far, only on paper.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

According to figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are about twenty million refugees in the world. Millions of them are finding minimum shelter in camps in very poor countries.

In view of this scale of human need, what changes would your party make in Canada's refugee policy and practices?



As things now stand, it takes years for refugee claimants in Canada to obtain their permanent resident status.

What policy and regulatory changes would your party introduce to shorten the delay for these "citizens in waiting"?

SOURCES TO EXPLORE:

The website of UNHCR – the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** – is a treasury of information on refugees, policies and problems. See its "basic facts" section for information on refugees worldwide. www.unhcr.ch

The **Canadian Council for Refugees** has an "Issues" section helpful for information on the Canadian refugee system, and for current issues facing refugees in Canada: www.web.net/~ccr

Our own website – **Citizens for Public Justice** – has a "refugees" section where you can learn, among other things, about a successful campaign on student loans for refugees. www.cpj.ca

ILLUSTRATION: Kelley Aitken

Faith and citizenship: can they dance together?

For some Canadians, the link between faith and public service – including politics – is essential. It's as urgent as the ancient command to love one's neighbour, as practical as the works of mercy described in the last 15 verses of Matthew 25. Other citizens have come to believe that religion is private and should have no role in the public life of a country.



PHOTO: Art Babych

In a speech before his recent retirement as Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, **Archbishop Michael G. Peers** offered a fresh approach to this prickly debate. The full text of the speech can be found by typing "Faith and Citizenship" into the search box of the website of the Anglican Church of Canada, www.anglican.ca

OVER THE COURSE of my lifetime, the public role of religion in Canada has steadily diminished. There are reasons for this.

For example, the emergence of a multicultural society and the corresponding recognition of the consequences of religious conflict in the past have led us to a kind of hesitant caution. We have treated religion as a dangerous commodity, likely to lead either to conflict or repression if allowed too much scope in public life ...

Over the course of the same lifetime, public discourse concerning citizenship has been degraded almost to the point of extinction, replaced by the language of "taxpayers" ... I believe that these two trends are connected, and that we will need the resources and imagination of Canada's religious traditions, and a renewed public role for those traditions, if we are to recover the practices of citizenship we need for the common good.

At the same time, I recognize – in fact, I celebrate – that such a renewal cannot succeed if it is pure nostalgia. The future we seek will not be served by a return to the old days, in which a distilled and nominal Christianity influenced and constrained public life...

What we are seeing in our society, where the concept of "citizen" has been narrowed to that part of citizenship that pays taxes, is a narrowing of discourse to such a degree that truth's wideness is lost ... In response to this narrowing, religious communities can serve the common good in three ways.

The first is that we can explore and then model new forms of relationship in which mutual hostility yields to shared responsibility. The second is that we can bring to public discourse the incredible and expansive wealth of images, possibilities, hopes and

warnings that are entrusted to us in our traditions, our rituals, our sacred writings, our histories. Finally, we can *offer* the spiritual resources of our traditions to persons, communities and societies, rather than *asserting* the unquestionable truth of those traditions or insisting that we be able to *impose* them.

... Religions, narrative, poetic and legal traditions shaped over thousands of years, create opportunities for human imagination – of the peaceable kingdom (Isaiah), of economic justice (Amos), of compassionate concern for the poor (Ruth, Leviticus), of the end of death's ultimate power (the resurrection narratives). They open up new grounds for what we mean when we say "human;" and because they offer witness that has stood the test of time, they belong in the public life of our country as we consider commitments and actions that will contribute to the common good ...

... Religious traditions invite us into the possibility that there is more to our humanity than meets the eye. We are more than consumers, more than players seeking a market advantage, more than taxpayers seeking to minimize our financial commitment to the common good, more than the fragmented version of our humanity that dominates public discourse and imagination today. It is the work of religious traditions to bring that "more" into focus, to illuminate it by the wisdom of ancestors, to dramatize it in ritual, to exercise it in service, to celebrate it in worship.

... Faith and citizenship can nourish one another, if faith will be modest in its certainties and committed to a common interest in the common good, and if citizenship will expand its vision beyond the narrow boundaries within which it is constrained.

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CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

is a non-partisan organization of Canadians from many Christian traditions and many political leanings, who share a desire for public justice. We analyze public policy and offer alternative proposals rooted in the biblical call for love, justice and stewardship.

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Your voice strengthens our voice!*



*Our research stands up.
Our advocacy has bite.*

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