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Report from
PARLIAMENT HILL
By Mike Chong
MP Wellington/Halton Hills



Across the country, Canadians enjoy July 1 in many different ways, but Canada Day is, first and foremost, a day to celebrate the country that we all know and love. It is a day to reflect on our shared history and the many achievements that contributed to the united, strong, and free Canada of today.

In just four short years, on July 1, 2017, Canada will celebrate the 150th birthday of Confederation and the creation of the Dominion of Canada. As we approach this important historical milestone, it is important to note that studies have shown that Canadians lack knowledge of our history but desire to know more about it.

As co-founder of the Dominion Institute (now the Historica-Dominion Institute), an organization committed to raising Canadians' awareness of history, I have always supported connecting Can-

adians with their history, shared citizenship, and democratic institutions.

History plays an important part in understanding how Canada became the country it is today, and what direction we should take in the future.

Last week, the Government of Canada introduced a number of new measures to help promote Canadian history, including the first ever *Government of Canada History Awards*.

The new measures include the creation of the *Canada History Fund*, which will connect youth to their history through the first ever *Government of Canada History Awards* that honours outstanding students and teachers who show an interest in celebrating Canadian history.

The government is also partnering with the Historica-Dominion Institute to create two new "Heritage Minutes" per year between now and Canada's 150th birthday in 2017.

In addition, existing programs at the Department of Canadian Heritage will be strengthened to improve access to funding for local organizations that wish to promote Canadian history in their communities, including local museums and youth groups.

Starting this year, July 1 to 7 will become *Canada History Week*. This will provide an opportunity

for Canadians from coast to coast to coast to get actively involved in learning about our country's history.

These measures represent an investment of \$12-million annually, and will be funded from existing resources.

Canadians want to know more about our history, and these new measures will make our history more accessible to all Canadians, and in particular, Canadian youth.

To learn more about what the Government of Canada is doing to enhance Canadians' access to their history, visit www.canadianheritage.gc.ca

You are encouraged to contact me if you have any questions or comments. I can be reached by phone at 1-866-878-5556 or by email at michael.chong@parl.gc.ca

I hope to see many of you at local Canada Day events throughout our communities, and on behalf of my wife Carrie, and our three boys, William, Alistair and Cameron, we wish you a happy Canada Day.

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