

BUDGET DOES NOT ADDRESS CANADA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

NO PLAN IN PLACE TO BALANCE THE BUDGET, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

In April, the federal government introduced its 2021 budget — the first in two years. The budget adds to the enormous debt racked up over the last year and proposes another \$100 billion in new programs.

The Canadian economy was in trouble before the pandemic began. Business investment and productivity, the only long-term basis of prosperity, had been lag-

ging for years.

In the quarters before the pandemic, per capita GDP was flat, if not declining. Canadian households had some of the highest debt levels and highest housing prices in the world. The pandemic has only made things worse. Unfortunately, this budget does not secure the Canadian economy. There is no plan to increase business investment and productivity. There are no measures to cool the housing market.

The government plans on running massive deficits for years to come — with no plan to balance the budget. In fact, because of these massive deficits, interest costs on the debt are expected to double over the next five years alone.

David Dodge, the former deputy minister of finance and governor of the Bank of Canada under former prime minister Chrétien stated, "My policy criticism of the budget is that it really

does not focus on growth."

Robert Asselin, the former policy and budget director for Finance Minister Bill Morneau stated, "After doubling our federal debt in only six years, and spending close to a trillion dollars, not moving the needle on long-term growth would be the worst possible legacy of this budget."

The budget also fails to address the most important task at hand: delivering vaccines to provinces so we can reopen the economy. To improve the Canadian economy, Conservatives are proposing the Canada Recovery Plan.

The plan secures Canadians' personal finances by recovering millions of jobs in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, helping those who have suffered the most, including women, seniors and young people. We need to get the economy back on track. We need to restore our way of life, secure the future and ensure no Canadian gets left behind.

Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills, and the shadow minister of foreign affairs for the official opposition. He can be reached at michael.chong.a3@parl.gc.ca.



Your turn is coming soon.

FOOTBALL OFFICIALS NEEDED FOR UPCOMING SEASON

HERB GARBUTT
hgARBUTT@metroland.com

While players are getting ready to get back on the football field, there's something else needed before the games can resume.

The Lakeshore Football Officials Association is looking for new officials. With many officials retiring during the pandemic, the association — which officiates high school and minor football games in the region — is in need of new officials. "We are reaching out to

women and men, teens and adults who may be interested and have a passion for football," said referee-in-chief Murray Drinkwalter. "If you bring that passion, you will be mentored by some of the best football officials in the country."

The association includes several current and former CFL and Canadian university officials to offer guidance and offers clinics on rules and positioning.

The association is looking for officials who have the availability to offi-

ciate high school football games from September to November. Games are played Tuesday to Friday with most doubleheaders starting between noon and 2:30 p.m.

All new officials must complete a Level 1 Football Canada officials' certification program, which has yet to be scheduled.

Drinkwalter said officiating provides a way to stay involved in and give back to the sport, make extra money, stay active and learn skills such as teamwork, independent thinking.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a football official can visit www.lfoa.ca or email info@lfoa.ca.

Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine plan is helping to stop the spread and save lives. Thousands of people across the province are getting vaccinated every day.

As vaccinations continue, we need to stay the course to protect those we love. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Keep your distance.

Find out when, where and how to get vaccinated at ontario.ca/covidvaccineplan or call 1-888-999-6488 for assistance in more than 300 languages.

Paid for by the Government of Ontario

