



OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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I'm baffled by Canada's poor immigration policies

The United Nations recently ranked Canada among the top places in the world to live, and according to this week's Maclean's magazine survey, more than 90 per cent of Canadians, Quebecois included, agreed that Canada was the best country in the world.

Meanwhile, our immigration minister Sergio Marchi, Argentinian by birth and of Italian descent, is running around the country trying to forge a consensus on what it is to be a Canadian.

We're 127 years old and we've still got an identity crisis.

While Mr. Marchi and his fellow travellers navel-gaze in search of identity, one unfortunate Canadian hallmark pervades the country as a lamentable theme. Thousands of convicted criminals previously ordered deported walk our streets.

I'm sure most of us would devote more scrutiny to people we invite into our living rooms than the federal immigration department has apparently focussed on many of these individuals.

Why are our politicians so out of touch with the public mood? On a purely practical level, this negligence endangers law-abiding citizens (to say nothing of police officers).

During the last federal election campaign, I asked our current Oakville-Milton MP, Bonnie Brown, why we are spending substantial sums to harbour non-Canadians convicted of crimes in our jails. I felt we should buy them one-way tickets back where they came from. She told the audience at the all-candidates' meeting she was

View Point

with PATRICK KELLY



offended by my remarks; but later she apologized to me personally and said she had misunderstood the question.

Progressive Conservative candidate Ann Mulvale, the Mayor of Oakville, thought my reasoning was simplistic. The forgettable NDP candidate, Willie Lambert, who the Toronto Sun characterized as "roadkill" to sum up his chances at the polls, launched an oration about human rights. Reform's Richard Malboeuf had some sympathy with my position.

The election is history but the part I remember most was that when it came to immigration issues, many Liberal and Progressive Conservative supporters disagreed with the responses their candidates put forward, but they voted for them anyway.

We have a responsibility to build up this country, not to allow it to be torn down piecemeal by slipshod policy and blundering enforcement (lack of it, really) when it comes to immigration policing.

Think of the country as a pot luck dinner. You have to bring something to the table, and you have to be prepared to help clean up. Otherwise, you're not welcome.

Your children will mimic your bad habits

In the early part of this century, people often died of infectious diseases.

Now they are being killed by their own lifestyles. Worse yet, they're not only doing themselves in, they're taking their children with them.

We know, for example, that the risk of premature death doubles for people who smoke, are above 50 percent heavier than their normal weight, or have Type A personalities.

In fact, in three long-term studies, Dr. Joseph Matarazzo, a U.S. health psychologist, found seven healthy behaviours that decrease the risk of premature death. They are sleeping seven to eight hours a night, eating breakfast regularly, not eating between meals, being near your prescribed weight, not smoking, not having more than four drinks (alcohol) at one time, and exercising.

Take the test. Give yourself one point for each good behaviour and be honest. Men who score four or five have a mortality rate almost four times lower than men with a score of zero to three. Women with a four or five have a mortality rate twice as low as those who scored lower.

The picture is clear. There are good habits and bad habits; the bad habits will kill you.

And it's not just you that it kills, it's your children, too. In obvious and rather subtle ways, we influence the health of our children and generations to come.

Eighty per cent of children are overweight if



Psychology in the '90s

with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

both parents are overweight, about 50 per cent when one parent is overweight. If parents don't eat breakfast, they're less likely to make it for children, to make it a well-balanced meal, or to insist that it's eaten before the kids traipse off to school.

Kids are much more likely to smoke if their parents smoke, to drink if their parents drink. Kids are less likely to value exercise if their parents don't exercise; in fact parents may inadvertently extinguish exercise habits in kids by not going to the playground with them, not signing them up for dance or soccer classes, not being impressed when their child does well in sports.

Last but not least, it is a virtual certainty that kids will eat between meals along with their parents, and continue to do so when the parents are not around.

In short, these bad habits are transmitted to children just like any other behaviours, from humour and hugging to arguing and lying.



Ill wind buffets marketplace

Quebec chill. Get used to it. It's blowing strong and cold through the financial world right now as people dive for cover from what many think is a nightmare in the making.

Fears of the coming Quebec election, of a separatist victory, of a referendum and political uncertainty, have Japanese investors on the run, bond-rating agencies spooked and the rest of us paying the highest interest rates in the civilized world.

On one day recently, bond traders stared into their computer screens and watched the premium for living in this country rise. Canadian bonds normally have a yield of about 1 per cent higher than U.S. bonds. That has now more than doubled — because investors are demanding higher rates to hold our debt.

And Quebec bonds are yielding another full percentage point, because of the increased risk. With inflation now running in negative numbers (minus two-tenths of a per cent last month), Quebec bonds are paying more than

You & Your Money

with GARTH TURNER



10 per cent — a rate of return never surpassed in the history of Canada.

As the rhetoric between separatists and federalists rises, so does the price of borrowing money. Recently the prime popped to above 7 per cent, a five-year mortgage crept near 10 per cent and a major trust company was dishing out 8.5 per cent GICs.

This is not what a fragile economy needs. And Quebec chill could be the virus giving the whole country pneumonia.

Wood Gundy is now forecasting an 8 per cent prime rate within a couple of months and a 70-cent dollar. Others say the battered loonie will surely fall through its historic low of 69.1 cents, hit almost a decade ago.

There's little reason to believe the sell-off of our foreign debt will stop. We owe the Japanese alone more than \$54 billion. And about half that much to the Germans, whose major commercial bank last month recommended that Canadian debt be aggressively sold. But there aren't many buyers.

So, pity Finance Minister Paul Martin. This rapid run-up in interest rates is blowing holes through federal deficit projections. The feds had planned on enjoying the low-rate, low-inflation environment they inherited after the election last October. And it was based on those projections that the finance minister did his calculations.

Now, it's academic. The deficit target will not be reached without massive federal spending cuts. And that's unlikely for a man who actually increased spending in his February budget.

A swelling deficit will probably scare off more people who once thought Canada was a great place to invest — stable politically and careful financially.

Now we face an uncertain short-term future, higher borrowing costs, more debt, a declining currency and a loss of confidence in those who once believed in Canada.

Are you having fun yet, Lucien Bouchard? Garth Turner is a former Halton-Peel MP and Minister of National Revenue. He is currently on-air business editor with Baton Broadcasting television. Write him at 1000 Wellington St., London, Ont., N6A 3T2.