

Opinion

A stay-the-course budget

The Trudeau government's second budget is all about managing expectations and counting on growth. For what it is it makes sense, but aspects should worry us. The first budget from Finance Minister Bill Morneau was a "change" budget.

Whether you liked the new direction or not, it was a natural extension of the Trudeau platform and campaign. Then, along came an international economic slowdown. And more importantly, along came Donald Trump. Now the government needs to make decisions recognizing the culture of instability and unpredictability in Washington.

Increasing corporate taxes might make sense, but surely not when it's expected Trump will slash U.S. corporate tax rates. If Congress lets him, which is far from certain. That uncertainty on a single issue is magnified many times across the economic spectrum. Morneau and Trudeau had no choice but to be circumspect. Banking on growth makes sense when there's evidence to support doing so. Retail, wholesale and manufacturing sales have all been stronger than expected, as have international trade and job creation. But crazy policy from Washington could change all that in a relative flash.

That sets the scene. What about the budget specifics? Most of the worst fears expressed by business didn't materialize. No major changes to capital gains tax. Almost all new spending is reined in — \$1.2 billion is actually new while much more is from the last budget and much of that has been pushed back for years.

There is some good news. Parents will get more flexible leave by taking lower employment insurance benefits over a longer period of time — up to 18 months. There's \$11 billion for affordable housing, but again, that's part of the \$93 billion announced in the last budget, and it falls short of what the Federation of Canadian Municipalities called for — \$12 billion.

There's \$7 billion over 10 years to create new child-care spaces — up to 40,000. But a go-slow approach on child care doesn't allow more women to enter or re-enter the workforce, which means the economic benefit from that won't be realized.

There's more deficit, for more years, which is the biggest worry. The government doesn't forecast a return to balance until after the next election, which hands opposition parties serious ammunition and goes against the grain for average Canadians who worry about future generations.

This is a hold-the-course budget, which even the government acknowledges. That may be necessary given global economic uncertainty and unpredictability in Washington. But if the budget doesn't fill you with confidence overall, you're in good company.

SNAPSHOT



SLY AS A FOX: *Champion* reader Lori Waters snapped this photo of a fox in her Chambers Place backyard. Do you have a unique, interesting, fun or cute photo taken in Milton that you would like to submit to be considered for Snapshot? Send submissions (minimum 600 KB resolution) to editor@miltoncanadianchampion.com or use the hashtag #MiltonChampion on Instagram. Please include the name of the photographer (for publication) and a description of the photo including the location where it was taken.

Up Front

Find your good news here

I've heard of people giving up all kinds of things for Lent.

Most notable among them are drinking, swearing and — in the case of goofy youth like I once was — homework.

But giving up the news?

While on the treadmill at the gym recently, a brief news clip mentioned how a young woman in the U.S. is currently cutting herself off from current events during the Christian period of solemn religious observance.

Giving all the death, destruction and disasters that had flashed before my eyes just a few moments earlier via CP24, I could understand the mindset behind



Steve LeBlanc
News/Sports Editor

her action.

With international happenings so much more accessible these days, it's easy to see how some people can get overwhelmed by all the bad news out there.

The evil and despair no doubt cripples many into depression or a sea of negativity. That's why I'm so grateful to have spent the last 20 years — and hopefully many more — at a community newspaper.

Plenty of good news can still be found on the pages of the *Champion*, where you can read about the heart-warming efforts of your fellow Miltonians.

Recent examples that I was fortunate enough to profile include a woman's life-line donation to the impoverished community of Attawapiskat and a hockey team's honorary inclusion of a physically challenged resident of Darling Home for Kids.

Believe it or not folks, the news can still be positive and uplifting. You just have to know where to look.

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