

NEWS AND VIEWS

Summer 2010

GARRY BREITKREUZ, M.P.
YORKTON-MELVILLE



Canadian Wheat Board —

Changes will increase efficiency

On May 14, our Minister of Agriculture, Gerry Ritz, announced the introduction of Bill C-27, the *Canadian Wheat Board Payments and Election Reform Act*. The legislation, if passed, will serve two purposes: it will strengthen farmers' voices within the CWB and streamline the process required to deliver payments to producers.

The first part of the legislation will make sure board members are elected by producers who rely on grain production for their livelihood. Based on recommendations from the 2005 CWB Election Review Panel and the CWB itself, voting rights for grain farmers will be granted to those who either produce, or are entitled to the production of, a minimum of 40 tonnes of grain in the crop year in which the election occurs, or in either of the two previous crop years.

The second part of the legislation will eliminate a step in the process to pay producers for their grain. The current system requires analysis from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Finance, as well as Treasury Board approval before payments are delivered. The entire process can take eight to 10 weeks to complete. Under the new

legislation, Treasury Board approval will no longer be required. This could speed up the payment process by as much as three weeks.

This legislation, if passed, would apply to the approval process for:

- initial payments;
- adjustments to initial payments;
- interim payments;
- final payments;
- management of the CWB separate account;
- freight adjustment factors;
- grain inventory adjustment; and
- additional payments for producers who have grain delivered in a railway car.

While many of the major agriculture organizations – including the Canadian Wheat Board, the Western Barley Growers Association, Grain Growers of Canada, and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association – had issued statements in favour of the *Canadian Wheat Board Payments and Election Reform Act*, as of May 21, the Liberal and NDP had not agreed to support the legislation.

Public Services for Rural Canadians

The government has many programs to help Canadians of all ages, locations and walks of life. Sometimes it can be difficult to get familiar with all the relevant services and know how to access them.

This is why Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has published the *Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services*. This pocket directory lists all Government of Canada programs and services that have been put together particularly for Canadians in rural and

remote communities.

This directory can prove useful in linking rural Canadians with the services available to them, providing e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and web sites for each program.

This is just one aspect of Canada's Rural Partnership, a government initiative designed to reach people in rural and remote parts of the country and ensure they all have access to the public programs and services they need.

For your free copy of the *Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services*, please contact my office at (306) 782-3309 or toll-free at 1-800-667-6606.



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Doing more for Canadians this summer

Exploring Canada's national parks

This spring, Grade 8 students across Canada, including those within the riding of Yorkton-Melville, received very special passes to many of Canada's natural and historical treasures. The "My Parks Pass" is a Parks Canada program partnering initiative with Nature Canada and The Historica-Dominion Institute. The program will allow over 400,000 Grade 8 students to enter Canada's 27 national parks and 68 Parks Canada-administered national historic sites for free for the next year. The passes will also be accompanied by family discount coupons.

In addition to 12 months of free access to the parks, beginning this September, all new Grade 8 classes across Canada will be able to visit their national parks and Parks Canada-administered national historic sites for free when visiting as part of an organized school trip.

Saskatchewan is home to two National Parks, with Prince Albert National Park in the north-central region, and Grasslands National Park in the southwest. We also have a National Park in close proximity

to the east with Riding Mountain National Park, south of Dauphin, Man., and then of course there is Banff National Park to the west.

Even closer to home is the Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site near



Abernethy, Sask. The site was the homestead of William Richard Motherwell, who was one of the first settlers in the area. After settling on the land, Mr. Motherwell became Saskatchewan's first agriculture minister and eventually Canada's Minister of Agriculture. Today, his homestead plays

host to guided tours giving you a glimpse of life as it was for the pioneer farmer and politician.

A goal of Parks Canada is for all Canadian students to have an opportunity in their school careers to learn about the important stories and places that are represented by Canada's national historic sites and national parks. The My Parks Pass program provides an opportunity to connect youth to their natural and cultural heritage at an influential stage in their life and school. Research has shown that reaching youth with unique opportunities to learn and appreciate heritage can influence them in adulthood.

I encourage everyone to visit our national parks and historic sites to learn more about Canada's natural and cultural heritage and to use the special code on their pass to enter a contest.

Getting the most at the pumps

As many Canadian families set out on road trips this summer, they'll be looking to get the most out of the money they spend on gas. Unfortunately, faulty gas pumps often mean people do not get the amount they are paying for. On the whole, Canadians pay for \$20 million of gas they never receive.

This government thinks Canadians have



the right to expect the number on the pump is the amount going into their gas tank.

The *Fairness at the Pumps Act* is designed to protect consumers at the pumps and at other places where goods are measured, by increasing the number of mandatory inspections to protect people from overpaying. This will result in an increase of gas station inspections from 8,000 to 65,000 across the country. On average, every dollar spent on inspection results in an \$11 correction of inaccurate measurement, helping Canadians save their hard-earned money.

Inaccurate measuring devices do not only cause Canadians to lose at the pumps, they also affect those buying fruits and vegetables at the grocery store, and any other products paid for based on weight.

We will also be imposing severe fines and penalties on offenders caught using faulty pumps to gouge customers, deterring store owners from taking advantage of consumers and encouraging them to ensure their measuring devices are in proper working order.

In 2010, the average gas price in

Canada will be \$1.04 per litre, with 34 cents of this being paid in taxes. This means the average two-car family will pay approximately \$1,095 in gas taxes. Saskatchewan residents pay slightly below average with a mean pump price of \$1.01 per litre, 30 cents of which is taxes.

However, in Saskatchewan, just over 100 percent of the money raised through fuel taxes is put directly back into the province through road construction and repairs. This is a great improvement from 1998 when the Canadian Taxpayers Federation held its first Gas Tax Honesty Day and discovered a mere 18 percent of Saskatchewan's fuel taxes were being spent on our roads.

We are pleased to see this money directly benefitting the motorists of Saskatchewan and being used for what it was intended, and we plan to continue to work to ensure all Canadians get the most out of every dollar they spend at the pumps.

GARRY BREITKREUZ, M.P.

Looking out for you

Protecting our senior citizens

The segment of the Canadian population over the age of 60 is expanding rapidly. Our government is working with partners across all levels of government, the voluntary and not-for-profit sector, as well as with members of the National Seniors’ Council, to continue to advance awareness, understanding and support for the unique and evolving needs of Canadian senior citizens.

The recently announced Jobs and Growth Budget will provide \$10 million over two years to the New Horizons for Seniors Program. This money will go towards programs that focus on volunteering among seniors and raising awareness of financial exploitation of seniors.

This government takes its responsibility to protect the vulnerable sectors of our population very seriously. It is estimated between four and ten percent of Canadian seniors are victims of some type of abuse. This abuse is often overlooked, which is why we consider it a high priority to inform all Canadians of their right to live safely and securely, regardless of age.

The government’s national awareness campaign, Elder Abuse – It’s Time to Face the Reality, was launched in 2009 to help seniors and others recognize the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, and to provide valuable information on what support is available.

The Elder Abuse Awareness component of the government’s New Horizons for Seniors Program supports

non-profit organizations and coalitions in raising awareness of the abuse of elderly adults. These programs will provide new resources to help improve the quality of life, safety and security for seniors.

Senior citizens are not only vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual abuse, many also fall victim to financial exploitation. To help the retired segment of our population find financial security, the government has taken these steps:

- Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplements earnings exemption from \$500 to \$3,500;
- Dedicating \$400 million to the construction of new housing units for low-income seniors;
- Increasing the Age Credit by \$2,000 over three years;
- Doubling the pension income credit to \$2,000;
- Introducing pension income-splitting;
- Increasing the age limit for maturing pensions and Registered Retirement Savings Plans;
- Introducing Tax-Free Savings Accounts to help seniors save for their futures; and
- Reducing the minimum withdrawal amount for RRSPs by 25 percent.

We have implemented these and many other initiatives with the aim of protecting Canadian seniors and we will continue to fight for their right to enjoy the quality of life they’ve worked for years to achieve.

Be prepared when travelling abroad this summer

If you and your family plan on travelling abroad this summer, please prepare for the unexpected and keep the following tips in mind to ensure your safety:

- Carry a valid Canadian passport and leave a copy of all travel documents with a friend at home
- Make sure you have travel health insurance
- If you are travelling with children, carry documentation proving your right to accompany them
- Check travel reports for the countries you’re travelling to
- Sign up for the Registration of Canadians Abroad system
- Visit www.travel.gc.ca for more tips from Consular Services on preparing for the unexpected

We wish everyone in our riding a safe and relaxing summer, and remind you to travel smart and have fun.



CUT HERE

Have Your Say!

	YES	NO	UNDECIDED
1. Do you think improved road quality is worth the taxes you pay on gas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you plan to visit one of Canada’s National Historic Sites or parks this summer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you think notorious criminals deserve a second chance in the form of a pardon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do rural Canadians have trouble accessing public services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is elder abuse a problem in your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Protecting Canadians

Putting the rights of victims first

We believe those who commit serious crimes deserve to be held responsible for their actions and should face severe consequences. This is why Public Safety Minister, the Hon. Vic Toews, has introduced legislation to prevent criminals from receiving pardons.

The current pardons system implies that what the offender did is somehow okay, or is forgiven, or that the harm done has somehow disappeared. Our government knows that, for victims of serious crime and their families, the damage done can never truly be erased. This is why we have taken action to replace this system with one that puts the rights of victims and public safety first.

Canadians wants a justice system that puts the rights of victims and law-abiding citizens ahead of the rights of criminals, and we are committed to providing that.

Everyone deserves to trust that our country’s justice system will hold criminals accountable. By giving out pardons to notorious criminals, we are sending a message that their actions did not have serious consequences and that they deserve to be let off the hook and start over, while their victims must live with the pain for years to come.

We also aim to reform conditional sentencing, which is a sentence of imprisonment of less than two years that may be served in the community, such as through house arrest. Those sentenced for offenses for which the law prescribes a maximum sentence of imprisonment for 14 years or life and offenses prosecuted by indictment with a maximum sentence of 10 years of imprisonment will no longer qualify for conditional sentences.

The current legislation has not sufficiently restricted access to conditional sentences for offenders who commit serious and violence offences, including repeat offenders. Victims feel distress when they see offenders, not only those responsible for their own victimization, but also those who commit to other serious crimes, sentenced to house arrest. The proposed legislation would address some of these concerns by ensuring that house arrest is no longer used for offences that pose a significant risk to law-abiding citizens.

This government is committed to working to protect our citizens and discouraging crime by sending the message that those who choose to break the law at the expense of others will not get away with it.



Rose Valley School visits Parliament

On June 3, 2010, Senator Pamela Wallin and I were very pleased to have an opportunity to meet with a number of students and teachers from Rose Valley School who were visiting Ottawa on a SEVEC exchange program. SEVEC, with financial assistance from the Department of Canadian Heritage, as well as corporate and private donations, works to create youth programs that build self-confidence, leadership skills and most importantly respect and understanding of Canada’s diversity. These school exchanges help students across Canada recognize and appreciate Canada’s many diversities.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY / TOWN

PROVINCE

POSTAL CODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL

NO
POSTAGE
REQUIRED

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