

Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of State Governments – Eastern Regional Conference: 47th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum

Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Quebec, Quebec August 12-15, 2007

Report

From 12-15 August 2007, members of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group attended the 47th Annual Meeting and Regional Economic Forum of the Council of State Governments – Eastern Regional Conference in Québec City, Quebec. This report summarizes the major points made at the plenary and selected concurrent sessions.

KEYNOTE LUNCHEON ADDRESS

Honourable Raymond Bachand, Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade, Legislative Assembly of Quebec

- people have to meet other people in order to make things happen
- demographic change will lead to labour force challenges
- a "good" education does not teach you things; instead, it teaches you how to think
- during the global transition, the manufacturing economy is being reduced, although manufacturing exports are increasing as a result of productivity growth
- an openness to the world is key to the Quebec economy; companies in Quebec are becoming more specialized and more globally competitive
- > the world is changing and is becoming increasingly globalized
- Quebec wants to create a new "economic space" with Europe
- Quebecers have a great deal of affection for Americans and share the same values, including security
- Quebec is working with the New England states in order to consolidate markets
- Quebec is attempting to make a tangible contribution to the trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership
- Quebec understands the priority of security, but believes that the focus should be security and trade rather than security or trade
- trade corridors are a key priority of the Quebec government
- Quebec believes in the existence of technology that will allow both security and trade

- the New England states have a network of great universities and research centres
- regarding bilateral trade in softwood lumber, the industry has suffered in recent years, and will continue to suffer, in part because of developments in the U.S. housing market; Quebec thinks that its producers have not violated the agreement reached between Canada and the U.S. in respect of softwood lumber
- key challenges for the future include:
 - trade and security
 - environmental leadership

NORTHEASTERN STATES/EASTERN CANADIAN PROVINCES COMMITTEE: Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative and the Washington State-British Columbia Enhanced Drivers Licence Initiative

Earl Eisenhart, Government Relations Services

- when the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) was first introduced in 2004, there appeared to be little flexibility regarding of alternative documents; since then, some flexibility has occurred and a variety of Congressional efforts exist
- according to the June 2007 notice of proposed rule-making, enhanced drivers licences may be an acceptable document for purposes of the WHTI
- regarding the enhanced drivers licence initiative between British Columbia and Washington State, there are a variety of issues, including those related to privacy, bilateral system compatibility and federal-provincial/state jurisdiction

David Sarrisan, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- at present, there is no database to assist officers in verifying identity and immigration status when individuals cross the shared border using a drivers licence
- radio frequency identification (RFID) technology is important
- according to the June 2007 notice of proposed rule-making, documents meeting the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative may include NEXUS, Free and Secure Trade (FAST) and an enhanced drivers licence

Ann Barrett, U.S. Department of State

- the enhanced drivers licence initiative will help security, and will also facilitate travel, trade and tourism
- in the United States, there are a record number of passport applications being received, and a record number of passports are being issued; the U.S. has expanded its capacity to accept and process passport applications
- since the traditional passport is not user-friendly for everyone, the PASS card which will be adjudicated to the same standard as a passport has been developed for land and sea use with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative
- the PASS card will be less costly than a conventional passport, and will include radio frequency identification technology to enable linkage to a secure government database
- the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative should be implemented on a rational, intelligent basis

Robert Strayer, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs

- with both the U.S. Senate and House of Representative appropriations bills in respect for the Department of Homeland Security containing measures that would effectively delay implementation of the land and sea aspects of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, these measures are likely to be contained in the bill that emerges from the conference process and that goes to President Bush for his signature
- ➤ the PASS card may not be available on a timely basis if the land and sea aspects of the Initiative are implemented in summer 2008
- following the six-month enhanced drivers licence project between Washington State and British Columbia, it is hoped that other states and provinces will be able to learn some lessons
- many people crossing the border at this time are doing so on a one-time-only basis

Antonio Ginatta, Officer of Governor Gregoire, Washington State

regarding the enhanced drivers licence initiative between Washington State and British Columbia, the level of confidence in the licence must equal that which exists in respect of passports

- radio frequency identification (RFID) technology will facilitate crossing at the border and will make counterfeiting more difficult
- > the RFID technology will facilitate a link being made to a secure database
- an enhanced drivers licence will be a voluntary choice
- the June 2007 notice of proposed rule-making in respect of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative suggested other enhanced drivers licence projects

NORTHEASTERN STATES/EASTERN CANADIAN PROVINCES COMMITTEE: Short Sea Shipping

Mary Brooks, Dalhousie University

- short sea shipping is needed for a variety of reasons, including to reduce congestion on the I-95
- efforts should be made to move goods off trucks and highways
- shippers need an incentive to use short sea shipping; incentives might include a lower cost or improved transit time
- shippers appear to be relatively more concerned with cost than with transit time
- the U.S. harbour maintenance tax is a disincentive to short sea shipping
- there are three short sea shipping bills in the U.S House of Representatives

Marc Gagnon, St. Lawrence Economic Development Council

- trade is growing at a fast pace, and there is a strong increase in trade with Asia
- it is projected that there will be a 40% increase in trade on the St. Lawrence Seaway over the 2003-2015 period
- there are three hubs on the St. Lawrence Seaway: Montreal, Québec City and Sept-lles
- over the next several years, close to 100 new container loading berths will be built in China
- Canada and the United States are not increasing capacity to any significant extent
- ➤ Europe represents 24% of the world's economy, while North America represents 22%; the St. Lawrence Great-Lakes Trade Gateway could be the link between Europe and the North American Free Trade Agreement countries

- although marine transportation has environmental and other benefits, some negative attributes must be considered, including:
 - invasive species
 - emissions of sulphur into the air
 - social impacts associated with ports, including noise and odours
- short sea shipping, which is a viable solution to a number of problems, has a number of positive attributes:
 - environmental benefits
 - safety
 - reduction in congestion
 - reduction in the construction and maintenance costs of roads

Richard Armstrong, Massachusetts Seaport Advisory Council

- short sea shipping represents a return to the past, when things were moved up and down the coast
- hurdles to short sea shipping include:
 - access to small terminals
 - harbour maintenance tax
 - cabotage laws
 - capital construction fund limitations
- key questions include: what moves? and at what cost?
- back-haul options exist, and are needed in order to make short sea shipping feasible
- distances of at least 400-500 miles are needed
- a critical mass is needed in order to support an acceptable frequency of service
- flexible, efficient terminals as well as flexible labour contracts are needed
- short sea shipping leaves deep ports free for international traffic

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE: 2007 Farm Bill

Fran Boyd, Meyers & Associates

prior to the 2002 Farm Bill, the focus in the Northeast region was dairy production; this situation has changed

- > since the 2002 Farm Bill expires on 30 September 2007, a short extension to the Farm Bill is expected
- ➤ Representative Peterson, who chairs the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives, is pro-producer
- Senator Harkin, who chairs the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry in the U.S. Senate, is also supportive of agricultural producers
- commodity groups and the American Farm Bureau were advocating an extension to the 2002 Farm Bill, feeling that an extension of existing provisions was "as good as it was going to get"
- although Chairman Peterson initially was talking about an extension to the 2002 Farm Bill, he subsequently instructed his staff to draft a new farm bill
- the draft 2007 Farm Bill, about which deliberations in the Committee on Agriculture and its sub-committees were focussed on funding and were sometimes acrimonious, passed the Committee on Agriculture and the House of Representatives; with a "pay-go" system, increased funding for programs in one area had to be accommodated – or off-set – through reduced funding for other programs
- when the draft 2007 Farm Bill was sent to the Committee on Ways and Means in the U.S. House of Representatives, a "loophole" in respect of U.S. affiliates was found, the consequence of which is additional funding, although some see the measure as a new tax
- at present, there is no draft farm bill in the U.S. Senate, although Chairman Harkin is expected to draft a Farm Bill in 2007
- → it is hoped that a 2007 Farm Bill will be sent to President Bush prior to the fall adjournment, although in the view of some this timeline is too ambitious; President Bush has said that he will veto the 2007 Farm Bill along with a number of other bills
- in the 2007 Farm Bill passed by the House of Representatives, the largest funding increase occurs in respect of rural development, and a new title for specialty and organic crops has been added; funding for this bill is significantly less than that for the 2002 Farm Bill

OPENING SESSION: Climate Change and the Northeast: Forging Creative Policy Solutions

Louis Fortier, Laval University

- the world including the climate is changing very rapidly; the climate is changing more quickly than expected
- the climate has been fairly warm and stable for the last 8,000 years, which has enabled us to develop and become what we are; however, this stability is diminishing
- the first place to warm will be the Arctic; the sea ice over the Arctic Ocean is shrinking
- ➤ in light of climate change, a number of actions including reduced greenhouse gas emissions and greater energy efficiency – should be taken
- although implementation may be difficult, the development of a plan to address climate change is a necessary first step; individuals as well as industry should be targeted for action
- climate change does not need to be catastrophic; however, a plan is needed if a catastrophe is to be avoided
- in respect of adaptation to climate change, it is relatively easier to predict global rather than regional effects
- > substantive geopolitical and economic tensions will be created by climate change
- technological "solutions" to climate change exist, and these solutions should be provided to the developing world as a global solution is pursued
- > since trucks are a major emitter of greenhouse gases, hybrid trucks should be considered
- a portfolio of actions or a series of solutions are needed in order to achieve targets
- changing the ways in which things are done will hurt some sectors but will help others
- all technologies should be considered, since they all have both benefits and drawbacks
- the cap-and-trade mechanism has problems; the ultimate goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and a cap-and-trade system may not be the best mechanism for achieving this goal

Honorable Ruth Ann Minner, Governor of Delaware

a cap-and-trade system is "the way to go"

- the focus on renewable and alternative fuels should be enhanced.
- individuals and businesses must act

Honourable Cecil Clarke, Speaker of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly

- counting on federal governments to provide a long-term solution to climate change is a huge and long debate; the provinces need to act, in part to meet public expectations
- there are economic opportunities as adaptation to climate change occurs; governments can facilitate these opportunities
- in order for targets to be met, collaboration must occur

Dennis Canavan, Johnson & Johnson

- a global cap is needed, since climate change is a global problem; however, national caps should also be set
- industry does not need a lot of incentives; proven technologies already exist, and they have a good payback
- industry should advocate good public policy in respect of incentives
- a cap-and-trade system could form part of a solution; this type of approach spreads the burden and does not impose the type of cost on low-income individuals that would occur with a carbon tax
- > 99% of our efforts should be directed toward efficiency

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Quebec-Northeast Relations

Honourable Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec

- while the Canadian federal government can sign treaties, it cannot act unilaterally in areas of provincial/territorial jurisdiction, such as foreign accreditation (which will be important in the future given demographic change and the need for immigrant labour)
- provinces/territories are taking on the responsibility to act in accordance with the expectations of constituents
- ➤ a better job must be done of developing an internal North American market, particularly in light of the emergence of China and India as major trading nations

- security has become a condition for trade within our economic zone; everyone recognizes the need for security that works, and that works well
- since climate change does not respect borders, cooperation and collaboration are needed
- since Quebec is the fourth largest producer of hydroelectricity in the world, there are many opportunities for partnerships in respect of energy

HEALTH CARE POLICY FORUM: Health Care Workforce: Looming Shortages, Best Practices

Paula Roy, Delaware Health Care Commission

- shortages of nurses, physicians, allied health workers, dentists and mental health workers exist
- the ageing of the baby boomers will result in an increased demand for health care services and, consequently, more jobs in the health care sector
- an adequate supply of health care workers is critical to ensuring access to health care services and to maintaining a healthy population
- there is a shrinking supply of faculty in health-related disciplines
- problems include supply and the distribution of that supply across disciplines and regions; as well, health care providers must be competent to provide services while respecting the diversity, culture and language of those requiring services
- in the United States, the salaries paid to physicians are falling, and there is an increased desire for a more balanced lifestyle
- > nurses feel overworked and under-respected; moreover, they believe that nursepatient ratios are unsafe and that there is too much paperwork
- potential solutions to the shortage of health care workers include:
 - loan repayment/forgiveness
 - the promotion of health professions to young students
 - identification of those seeking mid-career changes
 - the formation of partnerships among labour, educational institutions, licensing boards and public health agencies

Honorable Jim Douglas, Governor of Vermont

demographic challenges exist, with an ageing population and an exodus of young people

- Vermont has the lowest birth rate in the United States, as well as the highest proportion of high school graduates leaving their state to go to college
- the need for health care professionals will grow as the population continues to grow
- there is an increasing incidence of chronic illness
- prevention and early intervention efforts should be enhanced

Geoffrey Kelley, Member of the Quebec Legislative Assembly

- in Canada, the federal government plays a role in funding health care
- despite looming demographic changes, health professionals in some parts of Canada were offered early retirement incentives; now, there are health professional shortages
- there is a shortage of doctors teaching medicine in universities
- health care challenges in Quebec include:
 - Quebec is geographically large, and lacks the resources to pay lucrative salaries
 - health care practitioners are retiring, and regions are "emptying out" of young people and are being filled with elderly individuals
 - salaries, since 43% of provincial program spending is related to health

Geri Dickson, New Jersey Collaborative Center for Nursing

- > nurses "eat their young," in the sense that nurses are not nice to other nurses
- nursing is the core of health care
- there is a shortage of health care workers
- universal health care issues include:
 - access to care
 - the quality of care
 - cost
 - a lack of respect for health care providers
- > the "drivers" of the shortage in health care professionals include:
 - an increased demand for health care
 - increased patient expectations
 - an ageing population
 - a smaller available labour force as the baby boomers retire

- dissatisfaction among health care professionals, leading to retention issues
- issues related to health education, including finance and access
- inadequate capacity to educate the needed health care professionals
- qualified students are being denied admission to health-related fields of study for such reasons as a lack of resources to add the faculty positions needed to teach incoming students
- nurse staffing affects patient outcomes; in particular, evidence links in-patient mortality/adverse events to:
 - staffing levels of nurses
 - the education level of nurses
 - the work environment of nurses
- there are a number of unsustainable solutions, including:
 - importing nurses, which is costly and involves issues related to educational compatibility
 - supplemental or travelling nurses, which is costly and often involves no commitment between nurses and the institutions at which they provide health care services
 - more hours of work, which is costly and increases the risk of errors being made in respect of patient care
 - new graduates, since demand exceeds supply
- potentially sustainable solutions include:
 - provide data that support policy change
 - ensure nurse leadership
 - provide higher salaries for faculty
 - ensure adequate educational resources
 - provide financial aid for students
 - address nurse-patient ratios
 - eliminate mandatory overtime
 - streamline the licensing process for foreign health care providers

Roy Miller, Sheepscot Valley Health Center

- > there are low reimbursements for medicare and medicaid
- > reimbursements must change in order to provide incentives for primary care

CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY FORUM: Integrating Government and Community Efforts to Reduce Crime and Gang Involvement Among Juveniles

C. Ronald Huff, University of California (Irvine)

- gangs are the outcome of other situations that were not addressed
- most youth who join gangs remain with the gang for one year
- > youth tend to join gangs at age 11 or 12
- about one-third of gang members are female, and they tend to leave the gang relatively earlier
- youth may join a gang for social reasons or for perceived protection, rather than for profit; joining a gang for protection is odd, since that the odds of experiencing harm significantly increase when one becomes a gang member
- firearm usage is far higher among gang members than among those youth who do not belong to gangs
- the victims of crime are often uncertain about whether the offender was a gang member; consequently, it may be difficult to determine whether the crime was gang-related or -motivated
- law enforcement agencies may not categorize crimes as gang-related; rather, crimes may be categorized as a robbery, assault, etc.
- predictors of gang membership include:
 - a history of delinquency
 - low attachment and achievement in school
 - a poor parent-child relationship
- gangs and organized crime are very different; for example, gangs may get drugs from organized crime, but they do not control the drug trade
- in outreach and prevention programs, hope for the future must be created; if someone feels he/she has no hope, then he/she will take more risks

Hélène Simon, Quebec Department of Public Security

- the gang problem is increasing in Quebec, with implications for the prevalence of sexual exploitation, drug problems, weapons offences and intimidation
- there is a difference between "delinquency" and "crime for profit"
- > youth should form a positive attachment to their community
- an integration solution, involving all stakeholder agencies, is needed

support is needed by and for law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system, the prosecution process, youth, parents and communities

EDUCATION POLICY FORUM: Problems and Solutions in Financing Higher Education – Views from the United States and Canada

State Senator Robert Martin, New Jersey Senate

- the magnitude of college debt accumulated by students is growing astronomically; there are solutions to this problem, including:
 - increasing the amount that can be borrowed from federal programs
 - keeping the loan rate low
- there should be greater disclosure to students about what is available, the terms and conditions of contracts, etc.
- the higher education student loan system has been exploited to the benefit of certain lenders and higher education officials; there have been alleged conflicts of interest among university financial aid officers and questionable business practices by lenders

Pierre Moreau, Université du Québec

- > an important question is: what does "financing higher education" mean? does it mean "financing students" or does it mean "financing colleges and universities"?
- there is a need for knowledge workers with an awareness of culture in many countries
- solutions that need financing include:
 - mobility for students in order that they can increase their knowledge
 - insist that universities recognize studies completed at other universities
 - insist that students learn at least one additional language
 - insist on collective, trans-disciplinary research among North Americans
 - re-qualify those who are losing their jobs

Patrick Callan, National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education

- a highly educated population is needed in order to compete in the knowledgebased global economy
- there has been legislative policy passivity for a number of years
- the retirement of the baby boomer generation will have massive consequences

- ➤ the largest educational gains in the U.S. were made with the parents of the baby boomers largely as a result of the GI Bill and with the baby boomers
- the baby boomers are the best-educated Americans and they will leave the work force within a limited period of time and at a time when highly educated people will be at a premium
- the post-baby-boomer generation is smaller, is relatively less well-educated, and is often comprised of the types of individuals with whom the education system does not realize much success, such as members of visible minorities
- the situation in the United States can be contrasted with that in China and India, where their educational strength is their current generation rather than a generation that is retiring or is about to retire
- the United States has a great deal of college infrastructure in place, and most of the infrastructure is very good; however, colleges should operate more efficiently
- affordability of higher education continues to be a challenge
- solutions to the challenges in higher education include:
 - improve the flow of students through the education system for example, college readiness should be assessed in the junior year of high school in order that any problems may be resolved in the senior year
 - improve the educational process for example, offer blended learning, with the use of technology in-class and online
 - address mission creep in universities
- the level of tuition fees affects the choice and duration of studies, as well as the choice of career
- public opinion research reveals that people do not accept that there is a zerosum tradeoff among quality, access and cost
- while the United States has a disproportionate share of the world's best universities and colleges, the American population is not well-educated

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Border Jitters: Can Canada and the United States Still Live Together?

Stephen Handelman, Americas Quarterly

- the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is a key problem in the bilateral relationship, and some Canadians entering the United States feel like aliens
- the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 made us a profoundly divided continent, since neither Mexico nor Canada was willing to join with the United

States in the war on Iraq; nevertheless, the terrorist attacks showed us how much we depend on each other

- Americans are becoming less and less pro-Canada
- Canadians and Americans do not need to like or love each other in order to make money from each other
- Canada is the largest supplier of oil to the United States
- between Canada and the United States, there are issues that unite as well as issues that divide
- > many water resources are jointly managed, and military cooperation occurs
- North America is at a crossroads: there are pressing and obvious security problems and economic problems in the Northeast
- territorial re-composition of economic activity is occurring, with cross-border clusters arising even if the states and provinces are not contiguous; consider, for example, Ontario and North Carolina
- the Smart Border Action Plan concluded in December 2001 between Canada and the United States was a landmark piece of negotiations; it helped the countries avoid chaos and adopted a thematic approach
- there are five challenges for the three North American Free Trade Agreement partners:
 - how do we improve security without hampering trade and the movement of people?
 - how do we prevent outsourcing to China and India?
 - how do we build on, and balance, energy and environmental interdependence with trade?
 - how do we coordinate the development of joint security-related policy making by regions and cities throughout the three countries?
 - how do we deal with the issue of illegal aliens?

HEALTH TRAINING POLICY WORKSHOP: HPV and the Debate over Mandatory Immunization

Daniel Salmon, John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

- in the United States, there is a long history of compulsory vaccination
- > school immunization laws may be passed at the state level; there is wide variability in implementation in terms of antigens required, the process for adding antigens or making changes, applicable populations, who provides documentation, etc.

- in 1809, Massachusetts was the first state to pass an immunization law, and the law was passed with respect to small pox; the case of Jacobson versus Massachusetts upheld the right of states to compel vaccination, thereby providing the foundation for public health laws
- having the law is the first issue; enforcing the law is the second issue
- benefits of school immunization laws include:
 - prevent outbreaks
 - provide a safety net
 - demonstrate public commitment to immunization
 - assist in the introduction of new vaccines
- exemptions to school immunization laws can occur on religious, philosophical or medical bases, and the states rely on schools to implement exemptions; states are not required to offer non-medical exemptions
- there is wide variability among and within states regarding the way in which exemptions are implemented, and an easy process for attaining an exemption results in a high rate of exemptions; a majority of states never deny an exemption request
- parents may avoid vaccination of their children based on a variety of beliefs that they hold, including:
 - the vaccine might cause harm
 - vaccines might overload the child's immune system
 - the child is not at risk for the disease(s)
 - the disease(s) is(are) not dangerous
 - the vaccine might not work
 - there are moral or ethical issues
 - vaccines are contrary to religious beliefs

Melinda Wharton, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- childhood immunization program successes include:
 - record high coverage rates
 - vaccine-preventable diseases are at or near all-time lows
 - with the disease endemic to only four countries, polio eradication is drawing near
 - measles is no longer endemic in the United States and the Western Hemisphere
 - rubella has been eliminated in the United States

- immunization is one of a limited number of clinical preventive services that saves money as well as lives; for each birth cohort vaccinated in accordance with the immunization schedule:
 - society saves \$43.3 billion
 - health care costs are reduced by \$9.9 billion
 - 33,000 lives are saved
 - 14 million cases of disease are prevented
- > all school immunization laws have exemptions; while the exemptions moderate criticism, many public health officials are concerned about exemptions
- there are some controversies regarding immunization requirements, including:
 - expansion of immunization laws to new vaccines
 - philosophic exemptions
 - involvement of drug companies in the legislative process
- considerations in adding immunization requirements include:
 - availability of the vaccine
 - financing
 - parent and provider acceptance
 - safety data
 - feasibility
- potential unintended consequences include:
 - broadening of exemptions
 - loss of public support for vaccination
 - loss of public support for vaccination requirements
 - erosion of program gains
 - lack of enforcement
- keys to successful implementation of immunization requirements include:
 - parental acceptance
 - provider support and capacity to deliver
 - mechanism for enforcement

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jerahmiel Grafstein, Senator Co-Chair, Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group Rob Merrifield, M.P. Co-Chair, Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION Canada-United States

Inter-Parliamentary Group

ACTIVITY Council of State Governments –

Eastern Regional Conference: 47th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy

Forum

DESTINATION Quebec, Quebec

DATES August 12-15, 2007

DELEGATION

SENATE Hon. Pierre DeBané, Senator

HOUSE OF COMMONS Luc Harvey, M.P.

Nicole Demers, M.P.

STAFF Daniel Charbonneau

Executive Secretary

June Dewetering

Analyst

TRANSPORTATION \$1,099.25

ACCOMMODATION \$1,722.72

HOSPITALITY \$Ø

PER DIEMS \$939.60

OFFICIAL GIFTS \$Ø

MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION \$1,649.88

FEES

TOTAL \$4,471.85