**RETIRED TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATION OF**

**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

**MEMBER REPORT**

1. **Federal Concerns of RTANL:**
	1. Bill C 27
	2. CARP “Day of Action”- Securing Pensions for all Canadian Pensioners
	3. National Health Care Strategy/National Health Accord
	4. National Pharmacare Strategy
	5. National Seniors Strategy/Minister of Seniors
	6. CPPIB
2. **Major Federal Advocacy Initiatives:**

It is fair to say that the list of Federal Concerns has not changed much since our last meeting of ACER/CART in 2017. RTANL has been actively involved in pursuing the many areas of National concern to our members, through the Coalition of Seniors, Retirees and Pensioners NL. Federal MP’s, Nick Whalen, Ken McDonald and their PA’s, have met with us, as a Coalition, twice this year and were made aware of all the concerns, addressed by various members, during those meetings. They offered suggestions, answered questions and tried to explain Government’s stance on many of the issues raised but we were not appeased by any of the rhetoric or standard lines they pitched. They did promise to bring our concerns to their caucus meetings in Ottawa and would be getting back to us with any information as it became available.

1. With respect to Bill C-27, the two MP’s suggested that it was so far down the list of order papers that it was not likely to get any attention this year whatsoever. Mr. Whalen commented that there were so many other “good things” in this Bill that were positive, he felt it was a shame that the Bill was seen solely from one perspective…. the demise of Defined Benefit Pension Plans and that, even with the introduction of the Target Benefit Plan, people still had the “choice” as to which one they preferred. However, we were not to be convinced.
2. These same two members were also invited, by the local CARP Chapter, to attend the CARP “Day of Action” in St. John’s. This forum directly concerned securing the pensions of all Canadians by introducing amendments to the Federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Legislation needed to put Canadian Pensioners first (“super priority). This system already exists with so many other international governments, i.e. the US, the UK and the EU, to name a few. There were many union reps and interest groups in attendance and some became quite vocal on this matter. When the audience speakers were finished voicing their opinions and asking pertinent questions, the two MP’s addressed the audience, in their turn, and tried to dispel any false notions among the crowd. They agreed to take the messages they received back to the powers that be, in Ottawa, and thanked CARP for the invitation and opportunity to address the issues as presented.
3. We are still actively lobbying for a National Health Care Strategy/National Health Accord, every opportunity we get, both with our Federal MP’s and our Provincial MHA’s. RTANL sent the survey related to this to all its members and those of Affiliate Member Organizations within the Coalition, encouraging them to complete and return the survey for analysis. With the signing of individual Health agreements between the Federal Government and some of the Provinces within the Confederation, we are troubled that this may become a trend at the expense of the National Health Accord/Health Care Strategy.

With the advent of cataract surgeries being done in private clinics in NL and being paid for by the respective individual patients at a cost of $5000, needless to say, it raised a few red flags for many of us. How could this be allowed to happen? Was this legal? Who gave permission? How many Government members knew about this? What were they going to do about it? How is this not a two-tier system? The Minister of Health, Dr. John Haggie, is supposed to be looking into the matter and investigating the whole situation, reporting his findings to the House of Assembly for consideration. To date, no answers have been forthcoming and there hasn’t been any noise made about it since shortly after the news broke. Hence the need for a secure, strongly executed National Health Care Strategy/National Health Accord, where all citizens in every province are treated equally, regardless of personal wealth or lack thereof.

1. As president of RTANL, I was invited to attend the Canadian Labour Congress Town Hall Meeting on Pharmacare: The Unfinished Business of Medicare. I found it to be an opportunity to refresh some of the things related to this issue and revitalize my total commitment to it. The presenters were interesting and each had a different perspective from which they drew their message. It was particularly interesting to hear it from the perspective of a Health Care Provider–a Medical Practitioner. There was ample opportunity for questions and each of the presenters again gave their respective perspective to the responses. The one message they all had in common was that we need to get something concrete from the politicians before the next election because this issue is one they will all be hedging their bets on to be THE ISSUE of Election 2019. If we allow them to use it as an election promise, we’ve already missed the boat. It must become a burning issue leading up to the election and not as a campaign promise which will mean another four years before seeing anything happen toward bringing this to fruition. We also participated in the campaign to send a letter to our MP re the need for a National Pharmacare Program, distributing this to our fellow Coalition members as well.
2. As an Association, we participated in the vote for a Federal Minister of Seniors. It was sent out to all members of RTANL as well as all members of the Affiliate Organizations within the NL Coalition. In my addresses to the RTANL membership, I mentioned this item as one of grave concern for us, both Federally and Provincially. The bottom line for this is that there is no one looking out for the needs and issues of seniors, the largest demographic in the Country.
3. One of the most interesting events I had the pleasure of attending this year, as President of RTANL was the luncheon meeting of the St. John’s Board of Trade, where Mark Machin, President and CEO of the CPPIB, was the guest speaker.

In his speech and during the fireside chat, facilitated by Anthony Germaine of the CBC, Mark undertook to debunk some of the myths surrounding the CPP. He explained that the CPPIB exists to manage the CPP Fund and today invests over $300 billion in funds across 45 countries in public and private equity. Mark further explained that the CPP Fund is one of the 10 largest retirement funds in the world, yet Canadians’ knowledge of the Fund and its security processes is low, leading to unnecessary worry about the future of the Fund and their own future. In fact, 66% of Canadians do not have confidence that the CPP will be there for them when they retire. Due to signs of depletion of the Fund in 1993, the Federal and Provincial Governments agreed to create bold reforms to ensure the CPP would be there into the future. Contribution rates were increased and the CPPIB was created to invest funds not currently needed to pay benefits.

There is currently $337 billion in the CPP Fund and the Chief Actuary has also projected that the CPP Fund will reach approximately $370 billion by the end of 2020. With 20 million contributors and beneficiaries, the good news for the CPP Fund is that, with professional and diversified investment and sound oversight, the Fund has a projection of 75+ years of sustainability. Whoopee! No more worries about that!

**2. Major Provincial Concerns of RTANL**

a) Affordable Housing

b) Elder Abuse

c) Seniors’ Advocate

d) Seniors’ Assessment

e) Provincial Home Support Program

f) Long Term Care

g) Dental Care

h) Senior Care/Home Care

At the Provincial level, we have attended meetings with Government officials concerning all of the issues listed above. We have also attended meetings at the Municipal level on Elder Abuse and Affordable Housing. There have also been opportunities for attending seminars and webinars on some of these topics through Seniors NL, the Seniors Government Agency in NL. Things are being done but the wheel turns ever so slowly. However, they are turning and we are nudging them along.

The major item that we have pursued this past year is the Provincial Home Support Program. In early fall, we made contact with the Department and spoke to one of the ladies responsible for the implementation of the Report. Subsequent to that, we had a meeting with these Government officials and they walked us through all the measures that were to be put in place over the next two years. We then received a copy of the Plan. We brought it back to our members and the members of the Coalition.

At that Coalition meeting, it was decided that we needed to give all our members an opportunity to hear and see for themselves, the changes that would be happening in this major area of concern to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We therefore proceeded to arrange a Town Hall meeting for all members of the Coalition and their families and/or friends. This was held in one of the theatres at the Marine Institute and the two Government Officials, who are leading the charge on this project, came and did their presentation. Following that there was an opportunity for Q and A.

Those in attendance were keenly interested in what was happening in this particular area and had come prepared with questions they wanted answered. There were personal experiences shared about situations within the current system and reassurances given that, under the implementation of this new program, many of these things will, hopefully, never happen again.

There is a meeting planned between the Coalition and the two ladies who are continuing their work on this major project. The purpose of this meeting is to give an update on the progress, so far, in implementing all the improvements identified in the Report. It has been six months since our last meeting with them and we felt it was important to get an idea of the progress to date. Unfortunately, I will be away when this meeting takes place and this report will already have gone to print. So I will follow up with a short oral report on that at our AGM in June.

We are continuing to lobby the Provincial Government on all issues as they relate to seniors. Some of them cross over into areas noted in the implementation of the PHSP Review and are therefore, not singled out in this report.

1. **Resolutions to ACER/CART AGM 2018:**

There are none, at this time.

Doreen Noseworthy

President, RTANL