

THE FEDERAL ELECTION 2019 IS OVER; THE WORK OF POVERTY ELIMINATION MUST CONTINUE

Yes, here we are and another Federal Election has come and gone. Ballots cast and counted, speeches qualified, wins and losses evaluated and a minority Liberal Government now in place.

Over the past weeks and months there have been many promises made by every politician throughout their political campaign. It will take some time yet to identify if both the parties and elected representatives fulfill their commitment to their people. Secondly, the fact remains that the real winner in this election is still yet to be determined.

The Religious Social Action Committee is committed to advocating to community and government the identified need of poverty elimination in our society. Our vision is be a voice of reason, consciousness and moral persuasion in our great province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Throughout the election, many topics were in forefront for both our Country and Province; Climate change, affordability, jobs, Canada and the World, Ethics & many more.

Now that the election campaign hype has once again come to a close, we are once again faced with the realities of everyday life. One of those realities is that in Canada and in Newfoundland and Labrador, so many individuals suffer daily from poverty, hunger and homelessness. It is my belief that we need to stay on task both as a Government and as a people. Nelson Mandela once stated, "Lets recommit to work towards our common goal, a nation where all of us are winners, all of us have shelter, food and education". Although in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador poverty is not always seen, it does exist. Poverty needs to be a real concern for the people of this province. The RSAC membership is compiled of a diverse group of individuals and faith communities. However different we may be, it is our collective vision and desire to help through means of advocacy, the need to end poverty and seek a living wage suited to our province.

This living wage sets a higher bar than the minimum wage, reflecting what working families need to bring home based on actual cost of living in a specific community. In other words, economic need is a central component of the living wage concept and reflects the failure of minimum wage to address the issue of income adequacy.

I believe, as do many others, that we as a people need to care about all who are around us. There were many topics highlighted during the election that fell from the

lips of Canadian politicians. However, it is not only the elected that we have to keep accountable for the promises made. We the people of Newfoundlander and Labrador have to respond as well.

Bill Gates was quoted as saying, "I believe that if you show people the problems and you show them the solutions they will be moved to act." It is the hope of the RSAC that Newfoundlanders and Labradorian's will be moved to act. Poverty is all our responsibility.

After all, who should be the real winners of the election? Should it be the color of the party or its leadership? No, it should be the Nations' people working together to improve the quality of life for all.

"Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth...these are one in the same fight."

Ban Ki-Moon, Eighth Secretary-General of United Nations

Steven Barrett (Captain)

Executive Director

The Salvation Army Wiseman Centre (St. John's)

A Director, Religious Social Action Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador