

## Women's equality losing ground, says report

By HELENA ZHU  
Epoch Times Staff

Despite a government report to the United Nations painting a "rosy picture" on women's equality, women's status in Canada has eroded in the past five years, labour and women's groups say.

"Women in Canada have lost ground in many areas," Barbara Byers, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress, said in a statement.

A coalition of groups including the Canadian Labour Congress and the Feminist Alliance for International Action on Monday released what they call a "reality check" report on Canada's achievements in women's equality. The report will be distributed at the UN World Conference on Women taking place in New York from March 1 to 12.

Five years ago, Canada was ranked among the top 10 countries worldwide for strides forward in women's rights. But by 2009, it had dropped to 73rd place in the UN Gender Disparity Index.

"Canada no longer compares favourably against other nations in assessments of gender equality and the gender gap," the report says.

The first large-scale UN-sponsored conference on women in 15 years, the NY meeting is expected to evaluate progress, identify challenges, and recommend policies to improve gender equality.

The report notes the government's 2006 decision to cut the phrase "gender equality" from the mandate of Status of Women Canada while closing 12 of 16 Status of Women offices.

Then-Heritage Minister Bev Oda said at the time that the closures would save on unnecessary rent and utility bills, freeing up about \$700,000 for women's programs.

"What these offices don't necessarily provide is the help directly to women. There was a lot of lobbying groups, there was a lot of advocacy," Oda told CBC News.

The report also points out that the government removed the right to pay equity for federal public sector workers in 2009.

"Changes to gender architecture, shifts in government policy and programming, and the government's inaction to the economic crisis have been felt by the most vulnerable women and girls in Canada," said Sam Hammond, President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, in a press release.

Although women have made significant advancements in education and currently comprise over half of all undergraduate students, the hiring and promotion of women in academic institutions has not increased correspondingly, said the report.

Men with PhDs are still twice as likely to be become full professors than their female counterparts, and female academics earn just 79 cents for every dollar that male academics earn.

"Although Canada has made commitments to implement equal pay for work of equal value, the federal government hasn't lived up to its commitments," Patty Ducharme, vice-president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said in a release.

## Vancouver revellers on good behaviour

By MATTHEW LITTLE  
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—Each night Granville Street morphs into an Olympic party zone overrun by an army of young people, many of them red-clad, maple-branded, certifiable Canucks.

"Go Canada Go," they shout, or just "Wooooohooooo."

If you're a reporter working the Olympic venues from dawn until midnight, you could be forgiven for thinking Vancouver is populated by tipsy, ecstatically patriotic twenty-somethings.

**'Our officers are sharing along in this great experience with everyone.'**

— Const. Lindsey Houghton

The family crowd can be found downtown at night, especially near the Vancouver Convention Centre and the flaming Olympic cauldron, but Granville is a jungle full of drunken monkeys.

That's not so unusual, given that it is the epicentre of Vancouver's night life, but during the Olympics the street has been closed to traffic and the young have taken over.

"On the vandalism front it has been surprisingly low. I think it is because everyone is in a jovial good mood and there are a lot of police downtown," said Gauthier.

The business association was even talking about shutting down Granville to continue the street parties after the Olympics finish, though the transit folks might not agree, he added. Granville is a public transit hub for bus routes

Overall, it's been a good go for downtown businesses fortunate enough to sell food, alcohol, and all things red and maple, says Charles Gauthier, executive director of the Downtown Vancouver Business Association.

They are seeing business double or triple compared to last month or this time last year, he said.

"In general, it has been very positive for those that we forecasted would do well," he said.

But for those not in the above categories, Gauthier said business has dropped a bit as regular customers avoid the crush of downtown pedestrians or spend their hard-earned money on Olympic hockey tickets.

Gauthier said downtown has become a bit of a black hole, sucking the cash out of other business districts like historic Gastown, but there as well, some establishments report a rise in business, just not the explosion seen on Granville.

The real surprise though is how well behaved the revelers are. While the odd whiff of urine emanates from shadowed alleys and the occasional brawl does break out, actual damages are at a minimum.

"The one concern he did raise was drinking in public, and police have handed out a few \$230 tickets for the offense and are trying to avoid handing out more."

"The last thing we want to do is hand out tickets, but we will."

Police on the street have echoed that sentiment, saying the partygoers are festive but relatively well-behaved.



Revellers wrap themselves in Canadian flags. MATTHEW LITTLE/THE EPOCH TIMES

and subways.

It seems all those rambunctious hockey fans running about are more content to frolic than fight, leaving the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) content to hang about watching the party blossom, said Const. Lindsey Houghton with the VPD.

"It's been really good, we are seeing tons of people, record numbers of people, come to enjoy the Olympics," he said.

"Our officers are sharing along in this great experience with everyone."

He said the Olympic spirit has caught on in metro Vancouver, and with that comes people wanting to drink, but he confirmed that so far fights and vandalism have been relatively rare.

"The one concern he did raise was drinking in public, and police have handed out a few \$230 tickets for the offense and are trying to avoid handing out more."

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Police on the street have echoed that sentiment, saying the partygoers are festive but relatively well-behaved.

With crowds reaching 200,000 a night, there certainly is potential for trouble, especially in Vancouver, a town known for its hockey passion. In June 1994, after the Vancouver Canucks lost to the New York Rangers in game seven of the Stanley Cup playoff, a riot broke out downtown and caused over \$1 million in damages.

Houghton said police are ready to deal with such an eventuality and have experience handling large crowds, like the 400,000 behemoth that comes out for Celebration of Light, an annual pyro-musical fireworks competition that lights the sky over English Bay, one of Vancouver's most popular beaches.

There will be more than enough officers out should problems arise, he said.

"It is all about our officers getting out there and positively interacting with the crowd ... reminding people that we are out there."

And like the crowds they police, Houghton says it will be fun for officers as well.

"It's great, everyone is having a great time."

"Come and party," he invited.

## Nation Briefs

### Rochette gives emotional performance, third going into final

Joannie Rochette was able to stay composed during her short program on Tuesday that brought the supportive Olympic audience to their feet.

"I am not someone who is prone to feeling a lot of emotions but my heart went out for her and she had me in tears," said CEO William Thompson of Skate Canada in a statement. "The level at which she skated was phenomenal."

Rochette was in third place going into Thursday's free skating final. Her story drew more attention this week after her mother died suddenly of a heart attack on Sunday.

In the statement, Rochette said that "words cannot describe" how she felt.

"It's hard to be precise but ten years from now I'd want to come back and try this again," she said.

"[The circumstances are] hard to handle but I appreciate the support. I'll remember this forever."

"Bond Girl" Kim Yuna of South Korea broke a world-record mark and leads rival Mao Asada of Japan. Rochette is the only athlete in the competition regarded as having a chance to break up an all-Asian top three.

Rochette is looking to become the first Canadian to receive a medal in the event since Elizabeth Manley took silver in the 1988 Games in Calgary.

### Williams unaffected by surgery debate: "My heart, my health, my choice"

Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams is unfazed by the debate going on in Canada after he decided to have heart surgery in the United States rather than at home.

"It's my heart, it's my health and it's my choice," he said in an interview this week with Transcontinental.

"It was an unselfish solution because I'm looking to try and get back on the job ASAP."

The premier said that he has "full confidence" in Newfoundland's health-care. "All my testing was done here, my diagnosis was done here, I've had other surgeries," said Williams. "If this surgery would have been able to be done in Burin I would have gone to Burin."

Williams knew he would need heart surgery late last spring, and said that the decision to look out-of-province was based on the advice of local cardiologists.

The traditional procedure available in Canada would have involved cutting the sternum and popping open the rib cage. Instead, Williams opted for a procedure in Florida involving a small incision under the armpit and use of special instruments.

"As a result, there's minimal physical damage to your body," he said.

Compiled by Matthew Simon  
Epoch Times Staff

## Canadians tops in Americans' eyes, says poll. But is it mutual?

POLL CONTINUED FROM P1

None of that matters, however. We were first.

Canadians queried weren't at all surprised that our neighbours to the south think so well of us.

"Why would they think otherwise?" asked Bethany Ceefeldt, a store manager in Orange, Connecticut, originally from Canada, now American by marriage.

"Hurricane Hazel" McCallion, the feisty, 89-year-old mayor of Mississauga, Canada's sixth largest and fastest growing city, talked about the special relationship between Canadians and Americans.

"No other relationship in the world is that of Canada and the U.S. We have our challenges like in hockey, but it's a healthy, friendly competition," said Mayor McCallion.

However, Canadians may give more thought to this relationship than our counterparts south of the 49th. Sure Americans like us—that is, to the extent that they think about us at all.

The anecdotal consensus from expats who straddled the border is that while Americans have a positive view of Canada, they don't spare us much thought—and that's how they like it.

Canadian born and raised filmmaker-producer, Chris Sheridan, went Stateside to work for NBC News, CBS News, BBC, and PBS



For the second year running, Canada ranked first in a Gallup poll, with 90 percent of Americans viewing us favourably. HELENA ZHU/THE EPOCH TIMES

among other networks. He says he used to think Americans put a lot more thought into their nearest, nicest neighbours (never mind that Mexico also shares a border with the U.S.) especially given how obsessed Canadians are with America, but that view changed when he migrated south.

"I fully realized this when I pitched a story in my first week at CBS News about a big Canadian election a few years ago and there was utter silence for about 10 seconds and the executive producer of

thing bad over a long term in order for their feelings to change," said the 11-year Canadian resident.

But what about the other side of the coin? Would Canadians rate their southern neighbours as highly in a similar poll?

"Probably not." Says Brett Rudd, a 34-year-old computer programmer from Vancouver.

That might come as a surprise to most Americans, Jim Carlson, a waste-water treatment operator in Beachwood, Ohio was sure Canadians would rate his country favourably.

"I think it will be similar. They are used to having us around."

Sheridan agrees with Carlson, calling it "one of the great ironies."

Americans "love us," he said. "But we have only a fair to good impression of them. In some ways I understand it, but I also see how Canada has taken on a little brother/little sister syndrome with respect to Americans," says Sheridan adding that Canadians tend to look up to America, but resent them at the same time.

"I think it's a bit tiring and silly sometimes."

With additional reporting by Stephanie Lam, Cheryl Casati, Helena Zhu, Kristina Skorbach and Lina Berezovska.

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