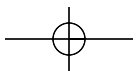
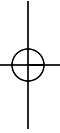
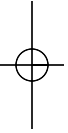


**PART III**  
**THE IMPLICATIONS**



## **EPILOGUE: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE JUDGES' POLICY CHOICES**

Jeremy Leonard, Christopher Ragan and France St-Hilaire

**I**n this epilogue to *A Canadian Priorities Agenda*, we exercise our prerogative as editors and do exactly what we forbade the judges to do. Whereas the judges had to make their choices independently, without consulting one another, we examine the six policy packages as a whole in an attempt to draw out notable themes and identify areas of overlap and disagreement. We conclude by offering our thoughts about what these choices might suggest for policy-makers in Canada.

When this project was on the drawing board, we expected that the judges would base their policy selections on the evidence presented by the analysts and critics, melded with their own experience in witnessing and analyzing past policy successes and failures. We also expected their choices to be influenced by their respective views — some would say biases — about which elements are most important for Canada's economic and social well-being, and for this reason we chose a panel of judges with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. This diversity, combined with the high quality of the various proposals put forth by the analysts, led us to expect little in common among the six judges' final policy packages. But expectations are often wrong.

### **A RANGE OF APPROACHES TO POLICY SELECTION**

**W**e gave the judges complete liberty to use whatever frame of reference they felt was most appropriate as they pondered their choice of specific proposals for their preferred policy packages, insisting only that they explain their reasoning. Not surprisingly, there are some important differences in the approaches taken, including how much emphasis is placed on the political feasibility of specific policies. These marked differences illustrate the degree to which making policy choices is at least as much an art as it is a science.

Wendy Dobson, Alain Dubuc and John Helliwell use what might be termed a top-down technique in the sense that they first describe their own view of what

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Canada's broad economic and social goals should be and then select the policies that come closest to achieving these goals. However, the specifics of the framework they use to govern their policy choices vary widely. Whereas Helliwell uses the lens of individual and societal well-being to guide his choices, Dobson focuses on the challenges and opportunities of globalization as an organizing theme and Dubuc makes his policy choices with an eye to Canada's "prosperity gap" — relative to its potential and to other countries. By using such frames of reference, these judges reveal, implicitly or explicitly, which of the eight policy challenges they believe are most pressing.

The other three judges — Richard Lipsey, Carolyn Tuohy and William Watson — take more of a bottom-up approach in the sense that they lay out their criteria for assessing specific proposals without explicitly establishing priorities among the eight challenges. Though this method may seem more objective than the top-down approach, the perspectives and biases of the judges nonetheless are revealed in their choices of criteria. For instance, in clearly stating his preference for small policy changes with relatively certain payoffs over large, visionary reforms with uncertain payoffs, Watson, echoing Donald Rumsfeld's concern over the extent of our policy ignorance, is careful to heed the "known unknowns" and the law of "unintended consequences." Important among Tuohy's criteria is the need for policies to fit into a "national narrative" that portrays a Canada that is richly endowed with natural resources and is a magnet for immigrants seeking a better life. Lipsey arguably adopts the most dispassionate approach, choosing those policies that appear to have the largest expected benefits relative to their costs, although both political feasibility and likelihood of implementation are very much part of his screening process. Overall, he keeps his cards close to his chest, revealing little of his world view apart from what can be inferred from his policy choices.

### THE FINAL SELECTIONS

**D**espite these quite different approaches to policy selection, it is surprising how much overlap exists among the judges' final choices. Table 1 summarizes their choices and organizes the proposals in a way that helps draw out some of the themes that we will discuss later. Table 2 ranks the specific policies according to the number of judges who include each policy in their preferred package. Note that in table 2 only 22 policies are listed; in constructing this table, we combined two sets of policies the judges deemed to be roughly equivalent — the early childhood development programs

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<b>TABLE 1. THE JUDGES' FINAL POLICY SELECTIONS</b>					
Wendy Dobson	Alain Dubuc	John Helliwell	Richard Lipsey	Carolyn Tuohy	William Watson
Carbon management standard (Jaccard-Rivers 1)	Carbon management standard (Jaccard-Rivers 1)	Carbon-air pollutants (CAP) tax to fund conservation initiatives (Olewiler 2)	Carbon management standard (Jaccard-Rivers 1)	Carbon-air pollutants (CAP) tax to fund conservation initiatives (Olewiler 2)	Reform EI to conform with insurance-based principles (Duclos 2)
Eliminate PST on machinery and equipment (Sharpe 2)	Eliminate PST on machinery and equipment (Sharpe 2)	National pharmacare program (Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 2)	Eliminate PST on machinery and equipment (Sharpe 2)	National pharmacare program (Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 2)	Eliminate PST on machinery and equipment (Sharpe 2)
Early childhood development program (Riddell 1, Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 1)	Early childhood development program (Riddell 1, Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 1)	Early childhood development program (Riddell 1, Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 1)	Canada's conservation plan (Olewiler 1)	Canada's conservation plan (Olewiler 1)	Canada's conservation plan (Olewiler 1)
Improve efficiency of Canada-US border administration (Hart 3)	Raise compulsory school-leaving age to 18 and improve programs to reduce dropout rates (Riddell 2)	Zero-emission vehicle standard (Jaccard-Rivers 2)	Improve efficiency of Canada-US border administration (Hart 3)	Tradable development rights to protect natural capital (Olewiler 3)	Improve efficiency of Canada-US border administration (Hart 3)
Improve immigrants' credentials recognition (Foot 1)	Improve technology diffusion (Sharpe 1)	Stricter building and appliance efficiency standards (Jaccard-Rivers 3)	Increase training of medical personnel and relocate health care services closer to elderly populations (Foot 3)	Improve immigrants' credentials recognition (Foot 1)	Merit-based university scholarships for low-income students (Riddell 3)

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Carbon management standard (Jaccard-Rivers 1); carbon-air pollutants (CAP) tax to fund conservation initiatives (Olewiler 2)	5
Eliminate PST on machinery and equipment (Sharpe 2)	4
Early childhood development program (Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 1, Riddell 1)	3
Improve efficiency of Canada-US border administration (Hart 3)	3
Canada's conservation plan (Olewiler 1)	3
National pharmacare program (Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 2)	2
Improve immigrants' credentials recognition (Foot 1)	2
Zero-emission vehicle standard (Jaccard-Rivers 2)	1
Stricter building and appliance efficiency standards (Jaccard-Rivers 3)	1
Tradable development rights to protect natural capital (Olewiler 3)	1
Raise compulsory school-leaving age to 18 and improve programs to reduce dropout rates (Riddell 2)	1
Merit-based university scholarships for low-income students (Riddell 3)	1
Reform EI to conform with insurance-based principles (Duclos 2)	1
Improve technology diffusion (Sharpe 1)	1
Increase training of medical personnel and relocate health care services closer to elderly populations (Foot 3)	1
Tax credits to encourage interprovincial worker migration (Sharpe 3)	0
Adjust pension plans and payroll taxes to encourage employment of older workers (Foot 2)	0
Universal basic income for working-age adults (Duclos 1)	0
Promote asset building among low-income and middle-income individuals (Duclos 3)	0
Reduce impediments to foreign participation in the Canadian economy (Hart 1)	0
Reduce resources devoted to trade diversification (Hart 2)	0
Standardized electronic medical record (Evans-Hertzman-Morgan 3)	0

proposed by Craig Riddell and Robert Evans, Clyde Hertzman and Steve Morgan; and Nancy Olewiler's carbon-air pollutants (CAP) tax and Mark Jaccard and Nic Rivers' carbon management standard.

Is the distribution of the judges' selections in table 2 unusual, or is it roughly what we should expect from this exercise? In other words, with six judges each choosing five policies from an overall menu of 22 proposals, how likely is there to be much overlap in their final selections? To answer that question, imagine that the judges were making their policy selections randomly from the menu, with any individual policy as

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likely to be selected as the next. In this hypothetical case, the expected outcome in table 2 would translate into 14 policies with a single vote and 8 policies with two votes; we would expect to see no policies with zero votes and no policies with more than two votes. Put another way, if the judges were making their policy selections randomly, we would expect little overlap in their choices.

Table 2 reveals a considerable nonrandom element in the judges' policy choices. One policy is chosen by all but one judge, a second is chosen by four judges and three policies are chosen by three of the judges. On the one hand, such nonrandomness should be expected (and hoped for!) in this exercise, since all the judges are exposed to the same arguments and evidence regarding the effects of various policies. On the other hand, the degree of overlap in the final choices is surprising, given the diversity of the judges' backgrounds and perspectives and their often-divergent approaches to policy selection. One immediate observation here is that significant differences in perspectives on public policy need not lead to large differences in the final policy choices.

### SOME OVERARCHING THEMES

**W**hat themes emerge from the judges' policy selections? We see three immediately: the need for greater environmental protection; the importance of human capital development; and the desire to pick low-hanging policy fruit.

#### The environment tops the Canadian Priorities Agenda

The first important theme reflected in the judges' choices (and in earlier parts of the CPA project) is the need for greater environmental protection. During the agenda-setters' meeting at the outset of the project, 10 of the 12 participants said they regarded the environment as a key challenge for Canada, and when the list of eight broad policy challenges was finalized, two of them focused on the environment. The judges' final selections display an even greater degree of consensus — all six judges choose at least one policy proposal that seeks to provide greater protection for Canada's natural environment (and Helliwell and Tuohy each choose three). Specifically, five judges (all except Watson) choose a policy aimed at reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, and three judges choose Canada's conservation plan (Nancy Olewiler), a policy designed to take a careful inventory of the country's stock of natural resources in order to identify which are in the greatest need of protection.

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For those judges who are persuaded of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the policy menu offered two alternatives: a carbon management standard (Jaccard and Rivers) and a CAP tax (Olewiler). While these are distinct proposals that differ in important ways, we group them together because both effectively put a price on polluting the atmosphere and create market-based incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Jaccard and Rivers state in their chapter that they actually favour a carbon tax as the optimal policy instrument for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Concerns about its political feasibility, however, led them to propose a creative carbon management standard with tradable certificates, which approximates the effects of a carbon tax but differs significantly from the more familiar cap-and-trade approach used in some European countries (and much debated here in Canada). One essential difference between the Jaccard-Rivers and Olewiler policies is that the carbon management standard does not raise revenue for governments, whereas a central part of Olewiler's proposal is to use revenue generated from the CAP tax to fund natural resource conservation efforts.

One of the philosophical questions that the judges were confronted with on climate change is the fact that it is an "earth-scale problem," as Watson puts it, and since we produce only 2 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, "Canadian policy is essentially irrelevant to its outcome" (539). Lipsey also highlights this dilemma, and argues that if we were mainly concerned with our own welfare, we would put much more policy emphasis on adapting to the domestic effects of climate change than on reducing our own emissions. Indeed, he adds that if such a proposal to deal with the domestic consequences of climate change had been on offer, it would have topped his list. Having made this point, he nevertheless includes an emissions reduction policy among his choices because of its demonstration effect on developing nations, and because he accepts the premise that every reduction helps. This last argument also motivated several of his fellow judges who saw this as a global commons issue requiring collective action, while others — like Tuohy and Dubuc — also stressed the competitiveness aspects and the desire to be at the forefront of new technologies in this area.

The second environmental policy that earns multiple votes is Olewiler's proposal for a conservation plan that would address a critical knowledge gap with respect to how much natural capital Canada has, how rapidly it is disappearing and what parts of it are most in need of protection. Thus, three of the judges (Lipsey, Tuohy and Watson) considered natural resource conservation to be an environmental priority quite separate from climate change and underscored the need for measures to ensure the sustainability of Canada's rich endowment of natural resources.

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Finally, of the eight proposals that garner single votes, three pertain broadly to environmental protection (see table 2). This reflects an even deeper concern for these issues on the part of two judges. Indeed, in addition to Olewiler's CAP tax, Helliwell includes in his package Jaccard and Rivers' second and third proposals: to increase the proportion of zero-emission vehicles produced, and to strengthen building and appliance standards. And, in addition to Olewiler's CAP tax and conservation plan, Tuohy selects Olewiler's third proposal: to create a system of tradable development rights. In Tuohy's view, the three policies constitute a coherent and comprehensive package of measures that could form the basis of an overall environmental strategy.

In a way, the prominence of the environment file at all stages of the Canadian Priorities Agenda project is not all that surprising. Recent polls indicate that the environment has finally replaced health care as the top-of-mind issue for Canadians. The factors that give rise to such changes in the issues at the top of the policy agenda are both complex and circumstantial. The last time the environment garnered this kind of attention among policy thinkers in Canada was almost 20 years ago, when the Mulroney government made significant progress on reducing acid rain, eliminated the production of CFCs and played a substantial role in setting the agenda for the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. However, the important economic adjustment costs and high rates of unemployment that followed first the implementation of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and then inflation-control measures in the late 1980s and early 1990s quickly pushed the environment into the shadows. By the mid-1990s, escalating public debt and deficits, particularly at the federal level, were the most pressing issue — although this problem turned out to be surprisingly short-lived as Ottawa quickly managed to turn persistent deficits into recurring surpluses. Ironically, it was in good measure because of this success that the spotlight again shifted to other issues. Indeed, federal cuts in transfers to the provinces (which were also cash-strapped) had an inevitable impact on social programs, and the health care system, showing the most visible cracks, became the top concern of Canadians.

Now, in the early years of the new millennium, the policy agenda is undergoing fundamental change yet again. Free trade is solidly entrenched and working well, unemployment is at a 30-year low, the deficit has been eliminated, and governments' books have rarely looked healthier. In recent years, the health care system has received large cash infusions, and although real progress on that front is slow and more difficult to achieve as population aging comes into play, health care as an issue has subsided somewhat for the time being. It is in this context, and against the backdrop of a global debate on climate change and its policy implications, that environmental protection has re-entered the Canadian policy spotlight.



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### Human capital development emerges as the all-purpose policy for economic and social well-being

A second challenge that figured prominently in the minds of the agenda-setters at the outset of this project was the need for more policy emphasis on human capital development, broadly defined. Indeed, there was unanimous agreement on the importance of human capital in contributing to overall economic and social well-being, and all 12 agenda-setters wanted to include it in the eight CPA policy challenges. The scope of human capital as a policy lever — and its multiple linkages to a wide range of economic and social objectives — is illustrated by the fact that 10 of the policy proposals put forward by the analysts have improving the use and/or development of human capital as one of their intended effects. The importance of human capital is echoed in the judges' final selections. All six judges include in their preferred policy packages at least one proposal directly related to human capital, and two of the judges include two such proposals.

The issue of early childhood development (ECD) was the focus of considerable attention and debate both at the CPA conference and in many of the contributions to this book. ECD is proposed as a key policy measure in the context of two different challenges. Evans, Hertzman and Morgan propose an ambitious universal ECD program as a way to improve long-term health outcomes, citing a wealth of international research suggesting that such programs lead to healthier, more productive lives. Riddell also cites evidence of the wide-ranging private and social benefits of ECD, in addition to the well-known economic gains to be derived from increased levels of human capital. His analysis, however, leads him to come out in favour of a targeted approach that would focus public resources on children at risk — that is, those likely to benefit the most.

Gauging the relative benefits of universality versus targeting is a central question in social policy. It also came up in the context of two other CPA challenges — health outcomes and economic security. The essence of the debate is well captured by Dobson's comments on the two ECD proposals: "The authors of both chapters agree that targeted social programs are probably more cost-effective, but such programs tend to lack broad support, which makes them politically vulnerable" (466).

Three of the six judges (Dobson, Dubuc and Helliwell) are convinced of the value of some kind of ECD program, and they include it in their policy packages, though they tend to favour Riddell's targeted approach. Whereas Dubuc is unequivocal on this issue, citing the unintended effects of Quebec's universal child care program as a case in point, Helliwell and Dobson call for an experimental, incremental approach, with

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initial targeting and careful monitoring to determine what is most effective. In addition, two other judges (Lipsey and Tuohy) mention that such a program, while not in their chosen sets of five, is nonetheless promising enough to be given serious consideration when more is known about the likely impact of different approaches. While it is clear that there are differences of opinion among the judges regarding the details of implementing an ECD program, it is equally clear that, as a panel, the judges show considerable support for the basic idea of investing in the human capital development of young children (though Watson is more ambivalent). Given the judges' differing perspectives and approaches to policy choice, this level of support is quite telling.

The proposal to improve the recognition of immigrants' employment credentials is another human capital policy whose importance is reflected by its inclusion in two of the judges' policy packages. David Foot advocates this policy in the context of mitigating the effects of an aging population, whereas Serge Coulombe highlights a similar option as an alternative to the three policies on human capital proposed by Riddell. It is more in the latter context that Tuohy and Dobson select it.

Two of the other policies that receive single votes also pertain to human capital (see table 2). Watson opts for merit-based university scholarships for low-income students and Dubuc includes Riddell's proposal to raise the compulsory school-leaving age to 18 and to improve high school programs for youths at risk of dropping out. In choosing this proposal, Dubuc draws attention to the dropout problem, which he describes as a "social tragedy," because of "the failed hopes it creates, the social inequities it perpetuates and the economic stakes involved" (485). Given that perspective, it is clear that he considers this policy to be a complement to a targeted ECD program, which he also selects, thereby supporting a two-pronged approach to human capital development.

### CPA judges pick the low-hanging fruit

A third theme we see in the judges' selections is the appeal of picking the low-hanging policy fruit — the more circumscribed proposals that can be implemented and administered relatively easily and whose effects on economic outcomes over time can be predicted with reasonable confidence. We identify two policies as belonging in this basket (though other proposals, such as improving immigrants' credentials recognition, could also qualify). Andrew Sharpe's proposal to remove the provincial sales tax (PST) on machinery and equipment in those provinces where it still exists is designed to increase business investment and thereby improve real wages and labour productivity. Michael Hart's proposal to drastically streamline the clearance process for goods as

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well as the procedures for business travellers crossing the Canada-US border is designed to reduce costs and thus increase the gains from trade between the two countries. Not surprisingly, given his stated preference for low-hanging fruit, these two policies score highest on Watson's policy scorecard.

Four of the six judges include Sharpe's PST proposal in their policy packages, arguing that such a change is long overdue and that it is almost a no-brainer, as policy choices go. While this action on its own will not solve Canada's productivity problem — as Lipsey points out, “the productivity gap is a prime case of death by a thousand cuts, so dealing with it means removing a thousand causes”(513) — it is a simple and effective instrument, and all evidence presented by Sharpe and his critics indicates that it passes the cost-benefit test with flying colours.

Three of the six judges (Dobson, Lipsey and Watson) include Hart's border proposal in their policy packages. Hart's argument is that much of what is done at the border could be done elsewhere, in preclearance facilities, or dispensed with altogether, creating great benefits in terms of efficiency. He includes this measure as part of a broader proposal to deepen economic ties between the United States and Canada (a proposal that also includes seeking greater regulatory cooperation and building institutional capacity for further integration), but only the first element of his plan for streamlining border processes makes it into any of the judges' policy packages.

Hart's broader proposal does not leave any of the judges indifferent, however. Consistent with her view that the Canada-US trade relationship is central to our economic well-being, Dobson selects the border proposal for her package and chooses building institutional capacity as one of her two runners-up. Lipsey questions the need for regulatory convergence, but he would like to see a greater fleshing out of the institutional issues. However, three of the judges (Dubuc, Helliwell and Tuohy) specifically mention Hart's proposals for closer Canada-US economic ties as ones they would *not* include in their policy packages. Helliwell and Dubuc appear to reject outright Hart's call for a strategy of preferential North American integration at the expense of a more multilaterally balanced approach and his premise that this is the main issue at stake for Canada in the context of globalization. Dobson and Lipsey also make it clear that they do not think Canada should give up on multilateral trade agreements or on pursuing new trade opportunities in the rest of the world. Tuohy concludes that Hart's proposals for deeper economic integration with the United States “step into highly complex and controversial territory, and nothing less than a new Macdonald Commission would be necessary to investigate this ground and build consensus on the appropriate policy responses” (531). Watson, too, flags this as a controversial issue in

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Canada. These reactions are probably an accurate reflection of the degree of polarization among Canadians over this question. This much was evident in the heated discussions at the CPA conference and in public debate during the 2007 North American Leaders' Summit at Montebello.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO HEALTH CARE?

As we mentioned in our introduction, health care featured prominently at the CPA agenda-setters' meeting, although in the end it was the challenge of improving health outcomes in the population rather than ensuring the sustainability of the health care system that made it onto the final list of policy issues to be examined. Broaching health care from an outcomes-based rather than a system-based perspective leads to quite different policy proposals. As we already pointed out, one of the proposals by Evans, Hertzman and Morgan centres on ECD and the positive relationship between education and health outcomes. It has been known for some time that a variety of social factors have a determining effect on the health status of individuals. However, a number of CPA participants consider that this reality does not receive sufficient attention from policy-makers, who are more preoccupied with addressing ongoing and visible pressures on the health care system in the short term, often to the detriment of preventive measures.

The other two proposals by Evans and his colleagues — to implement a national pharmacare program and to develop a standardized electronic medical record — do relate directly to the health care system's operation. Evans, Hertzman and Morgan argue that a national pharmacare program, along the lines of New Zealand's, would reduce the price of prescription drugs through the workings of a single-payer system. It would also control the cost-without-benefit aspects of the current approval process for new drugs and, in turn, would lead to better access to needed drugs and better health outcomes. Another point they make is that by reducing the overall costs of the health care system, more public funds would be available for other programs, like ECD, that are likely to have a significant impact on long-term health outcomes. Both Tuohy and Helliwell select the pharmacare proposal, citing equity and social well-being arguments. Lipsey also expresses support, but he selects the proposal only as a runner-up, as he considers it is unlikely to be implemented due to political resistance. He ultimately opts for ramping up the training of medical personnel and improving the geographic allocation of health care services, as proposed by David Foot, but he

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nonetheless suggests that standardized electronic medical records could be quite beneficial and should be examined more closely. These last two policies also catch Watson's interest, and appear among his runners-up.

Finally, it is important to point out that the national pharmacare proposal also has its detractors. Watson describes it as a "bad idea," in terms of both its workability within our federal context and its requirement of large-scale government intervention. On this last point Dubuc agrees, arguing that its implementation "would turn Canada back into a 1960s-style social democratic regime" (479). Like the idea of a universal ECD program, the national pharmacare proposal draws cautions from even some of the supporting judges. As Helliwell points out, "Both of these dishes are difficult to prepare and serve. Many chefs have tried, and many smoky kitchens attest to the problems related to their design and implementation" (493).

### THE POLICIES NOT CHOSEN

We have discussed the considerable overlap in some of the policies selected by the judges. The corollary, of course, is that several policy proposals put forward by the analysts failed to garner any support (see table 2). What does this imply in terms of the policy challenges and the specific measures involved? Interestingly, there is not a single broad policy challenge that strikes out with regard to the judges' choices, in the sense that each of the eight challenges is reflected in at least one of the policy proposals they selected. This could be taken as circumstantial evidence that the absence of a vote for any particular policy is more indicative of the judges' views on the relative effects, net benefits or political feasibility of that policy than it is of the relative importance of the broad challenge that it addresses. For instance, Sharpe's proposal to introduce tax credits to encourage interprovincial worker mobility finds no takers among the judges. But this does not indicate a lack of concern about productivity — Sharpe's recommendation to eliminate the PST on machinery and equipment receives considerable support, and Dubuc also includes Sharpe's proposal to improve the diffusion of technology in his final package. Moreover, Dubuc points directly to labour mobility as a serious problem linked to the broader issue of economic union. Both he and Dobson point out that they would like to have seen this challenge addressed as part of this project.

An important area of agreement that is not apparent in the results reported in tables 1 and 2 relates to Jean-Yves Duclos' proposed plan to replace the current patchwork of income security programs with a universal basic income and a reformed employ-

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ment insurance (EI) program based on social insurance principles. The need for income security reform appears to have wide support among the judges, but Duclos' proposals simply do not make it into the judges' preferred policy packages except for Watson's — in this case, he throws his low-hanging-fruit caution to the wind and picks EI reform. Both Lipsey and Dubuc regard efforts to improve the current system as an extremely valuable pursuit, but they believe that Duclos' basic income proposal needs more work and more fleshing out before it can be considered. Dobson and Tuohy also find Duclos' arguments compelling, but Dobson is uncomfortable with some of the implications for the tax system and Tuohy questions the need for Duclos' big-bang approach. The collective view seems to be that the version of the proposal on offer is not yet an idea whose time has come. The debate surrounding Duclos' ambitious policy proposals also highlights the age-old tension between the benefits and drawbacks of comprehensive reform versus taking an incremental approach based on existing policies.

#### AN AGENDA FOR POLICY-MAKERS?

**A**s we consider the seven policies that are chosen by two or more judges (see table 2), we are struck by the way this particular package of policies, taken as a whole, is balanced along a number of dimensions. First, it addresses a range of broad challenges — from greater environmental protection and better health outcomes to enhanced productivity and human capital development. Second, there is a mix of visionary policy changes (such as a national pharmacare program and a carbon management standard) and more circumscribed and pragmatic proposals (such as eliminating the provincial sales tax on machinery and equipment and improving the process for recognizing immigrants' credentials). Finally, the overall package of policies does not have any particular ideological slant. For instance, the idea of a universal ECD program has traditionally been associated with those on the political left, whereas the targeted approach favoured by the judges finds expression in many policies traditionally supported by those on the right. And while support for national pharmacare and strong environmental policies are also most often associated with those on the political left, the importance of adopting policies to enhance productivity and to reap greater gains from international trade is a position held strongly by those on the right.

It is important to circle back to the underlying theme of the CPA project, which is that the essence of good policy-making is the ability to make informed choices in the context of limited resources, striking a balance between the relative importance

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of various policy goals, the effectiveness of the specific policy instruments on offer and the political feasibility of implementing them. This project has done essentially that, and the exercise has produced a group of policies that, in addition to moving Canada forward with regard to economic and social well-being, could indeed have broad public appeal. While we certainly do not claim to have outlined the definitive priorities agenda for Canada, the policies at the top of the list of judges' selections have the legitimacy of surviving a thorough and arduous process and are thus worthy of consideration and debate. More important, it is our hope that the ideas, analyses and proposals contained in the pages of this volume will be valuable tools for policy-makers and politicians alike in years to come.