Letters from the LCC President

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"Oh, the Places You'll Go!" Many readers will recognize the title of a children's book by Dr. Seuss – a book that paints an inspiring and whimsical picture of the adventures that life can offer. It turns out that lawyers have found fruitful and fascinating connections between the rhyming lines in Dr. Seuss books and foundational legal arguments. Or so one of my past law students told me recently in an email message from Australia where she had visited the Dr. Seuss Gallery in Melbourne, chatted with the gallery curator, and discovered a reference to an article entitled "Green Eggs and Law – Lessons from Dr. Seuss". I will not repeat here what I have previously written in a president's letter about the insights and power of children's literature. Instead, I will use my student's message as an invitation to reflect on the ways in which the Law Commission has been on the move over the past month.

"Oh, the Places You'll Go!" As this February draws to a close, the sense of excitement, adventure and movement captured in that title infuses recent events at the Law Commission. First, we waved goodbye with warm wishes and happy celebration to our Director General and Deputy Chief Executive Officer as he was named an Associate Judge of the Federal Court of Canada. For Kirk Shannon, the LCC was one of the "places you'll go" in life and law; as he moves to the FCC, he will explore and get to know not only a new place but a new way of serving the people of Canada. The Law Commission is grateful for his contributions and very proud to have been an important stop on his path.

Second, the Law Commission itself was on the move. We now have a new home on the 15th floor of 280 Slater Street in downtown Ottawa. Renovated to reflect and support our approach to the evolution of law, the office incorporates light-filled spaces for conversations and collaboration. As we left behind an office always meant to be a temporary home for the LCC, we took stock of how we managed to reorganize what had been available in that uninspired space to support hospitality and to foster a real sense of team spirit and motivation. It will take a little bit of time to adjust to our new permanent home; we plan to get settled while holding tight to the dynamism we have created and keep working hard to sustain. We look forward to welcoming visitors and to making the LCC one of the most interesting "places you'll go" for lots of people with all kinds of projects!

Third, we added Winnipeg, Manitoba to the "places you'll go" on our ongoing Listen and Learn travels across this land. We were happy to meet with our provincial counterparts at the Manitoba Law Reform Commission, created in the 1970's and still serving the province by offering non-partisan research and recommendations on law related to the daily lives of Manitobans. Recently installed at Robson Hall, home to the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Law, the Commission's

Executive Director looks forward to developing fruitful working relationships with researchers and teachers down the hall.

At the law school roundtable generously hosted by Dean Richard Jochelson, we were inspired by the high levels of energy invested across distinct yet related issues. Contributions to the conversation ranged from concerns over the patchwork of disparate health policy regulations across provinces and territories to constructive intersections of business law and support for the arts; from questions related to the pace of progress on access to justice initiatives to international and comparative lessons in the fields of tax and labour law. The LCC was reminded of Prairie-specific experience and wisdom with respect to the co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and legal orders. And we were invited to listen and learn from numerous examples of initiatives and clinics that count on a mix of lawyers and non-lawyers, scholars and practitioners, teachers and policy experts.

Nearby, also on the University of Manitoba campus, we were warmly welcomed and hosted by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. There, we learned about their ongoing and expanding processes of acquiring, preserving, and learning from, many millions of records from the operation of Residential Schools across Canada. New multifaceted and collaborative projects are in motion and Indigenous methods of memory, research and the sharing of stories continue to be developed and implemented. We were fascinated to hear about recent visits to the Centre from delegations from Taiwan, Norway, and Brazil, eager to learn about Canada's truth and reconciliation work.

Downtown at the University of Winnipeg, we met members of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Justice Studies who shared innovative ways in which they combine research and community engagement. Involved in a lecture series at the public library and in organizing conversations at retirement homes in the city, the Centre is dedicated to finding effective methods of mobilizing knowledge and contributing to the transformation of justice. That transformation is also central to the promise of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, from whose director of legal services we learned about the importance of embracing complexity and finding modes of reciprocity and exchange. With its extraordinary architectural and symbolic presence in

Winnipeg combined with its ambitious collections devoted to human rights-related experience situated across time and space, the Museum clearly belongs on the list of Canadian institutions doing inspiring law and justice work.

Our two days in Winnipeg were so intense that we hardly noticed the temperature move up from -30 to -10 while we were there! What I did notice, together with Isabelle Palad - the Law Commission's Research Officer who accompanied me on the visit - was a repeated dedication to exploring new ways of learning, knowing, reconciling, imagining and sharing. We also noticed substantial overlap with some of the Commission's own preoccupations – whether over designing appropriate space for people and projects, connecting in-depth data to analysis of legal and regulatory systems, figuring out how to measure and convey long-term value and impact, or enriching public trust in independent institutions of law and justice.

We flew back from slowly thawing Manitoba to the National Capital Region still blanketed by the extraordinary snowbanks left by back-to-back February storms. With March around the corner, it's not too early to start dreaming of springtime. We might even start looking ahead to summer when, we are told, a chip wagon known for some of the best poutine in downtown Ottawa will be parked across from our new office building on Slater Street. "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"