



Letters from the LCC President

by Shauna Van Praagh

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As I prepared to write this mid-summer letter, I found a note to myself to share the following words with readers, excerpted from the writing of Hannah Senesh: "Build upon sand under the blue sky...everything anew. And know, costly is the road to the just and the true."

A Hungarian Jewish poet and World War II resistance fighter, executed at the age of 23, Hannah Senesh offers a combination of beautiful imagery of renewal with an unwavering reminder that the path to justice is ongoing, all-encompassing, and – perhaps above all – hard. The road to the just and the true requires investment. The risks are high. The burden is heavy.

My discovery of these inspiring lines a few weeks ago happened to coincide precisely with an important moment for the Law Commission. We kicked off our third year of existence by proudly sharing [our latest Annual Report](#) with the people of Canada! Officially tabled in Parliament on the 13th of June, the Report showcases the people and projects that have filled the 12-month period from April 1st 2024 to March 31st 2025. Here are some excerpts accompanied by an invitation to read the whole thing!

Readers will find a combination of substantive research-based pathways and public outreach initiatives and partnerships...All incorporate engagement with Canadians in the ongoing and dynamic evolution of law; all demonstrate coexisting and interacting commitments to living law, pursuing justice, renewing hope; and all connect inquiry and outreach today with impact and reform tomorrow...They underscore the Law Commission's efforts to connect scholars, policymakers, and community-based actors as we explore law and justice in constructive, creative and optimistic ways. Law in our everyday lives, law on the horizon, law in an open democratic society, law's complex dimensions, law's many responses to changing needs: all are incorporated into the work of the Commission.

In the time since my last letter, I was honoured to be invited to two special events. At the annual President's Dinner of the Canadian Bar Association, Lynne Vicars, outgoing president of the CBA talked about how crucial it is to collaborate on, and make a collective commitment to, projects designed to reinforce and demonstrate trust in rule of law. At the swearing-in ceremony for Associate Chief Justice Martine St-Louis and Associate Judge Kirkland Shannon of the Federal Court of Canada, speakers warned of the dangers of complacency and issued a strong call to



courage. Also in late spring, members of the Law Commission of Canada staff, alongside fellow members of Canada's public service, were invited to take note of the Prime Minister's mandate letter to Cabinet underscoring the importance of upholding the rule of law, protecting our democratic institutions and building a Canada worthy of our children and grandchildren.

This is what lawyers and judges, Parliamentarians and public servants talk about when they talk about law and justice. As underscored by our Annual Report, the summer of 2025 is a remarkable moment in which to be leading the Law Commission of Canada and thinking about how this agency is one of many contributors to what is a crucial ongoing conversation. We are all bearing the costs of construction and upkeep for the "road to the just and the true".

For the rest of this letter, let me return to Hannah Senesh's imagery of sand and sky, to suggest we can find surprising reminders of law and justice far from the usual, more formal, spaces. I celebrated Canada Day this year in beautiful Prince Edward Island. As the birthplace of Canadian Confederation, Charlottetown was the site of an extraordinary example of nation-building over 150 years ago – a project impressive in its dimensions, and dynamic in its invitation to reimagine and renovate over the decades and into the future. But I didn't visit Charlottetown on this trip. Instead, over two lovely weeks of sand and sky, I enjoyed finding less obvious connections to the LCC's three-part *raison d'être* of living law, pursuing justice, renewing hope.



Here are some of the souvenirs specifically related to "living law" collected over my summer holiday in PEI. The ubiquitous and striking red and white lighthouses served as nice metaphors for law's offer of orientation and security. Law's mosaic of shapes and functions and sources was reflected in the mix of tiny rust-red stones, multi-coloured rocks, and the shells of mussels, clams, and oysters hiding in strands of seaweed on the beach. The joy of sharing with newcomers was captured in the gift of colourful beach glass handed to me by a regular beachcomber with whom I crossed paths. A small stone painted with the Acadian flag, left on the sand at Cap Egmont, served as a concrete reminder of the interweaving of stories in this

space, starting with those of the Mi'qmaq and developing with generation after generation of people arriving and making the Island their home. A sign in front of the village church in Murray Harbour reminded passers-by of good neighbourly relations, a constant preoccupation of law in everyday life: "God bless Canada and God bless America, and let us pray for coming together in peace".



Customary norms of behaviour were evident everywhere: from the patient line-up of cars at every Tim Hortons drive-through, to the comings and goings of swallows to their nests in the red cliffs along the shore, to the "no whistling on the boat" rule in lobster fishing explained on a poster at the Summerside Lobster Festival. The fact that all provincial parks allow dogs, and that owners make sure the beaches stay clean and safe, conveyed the effectiveness of trust in lawmaking. A quote from Lucy Maud Montgomery's fictional and famous Anne, displayed at the Green Gables Museum, underscored the importance of imagination in creating and sustaining law and legal systems: "...because when you *are* imagining, you might as well imagine something worthwhile."

This particular collection of summer souvenirs is probably unique to me, but my guess is that souvenirs of this summer for many people across our country will include images and experiences marked by renewed commitment to participation in, and contribution to, justice in Canada. Even on holiday, enjoying the beauty of sand and sky, we find ourselves on a path that is both costly and promising: a path that welcomes complexity of history, constructive neighbourly exchange, travel across borders and oceans, and collections of memories and artefacts of law in our lives. Enjoy these long summer days and weeks: build anew and continue on the path.