

The Liversidge Letter

An Executive Briefing on Emerging Workplace Safety and Insurance Issues

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Interview with former WSIB President & CEO David Marshall

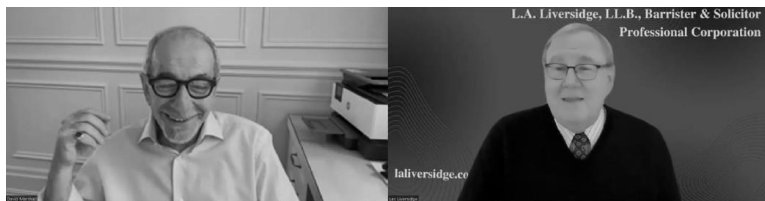
Reflections on an incredible time

I had the great personal and professional pleasure to have a fascinating extended chat with former WSIB President and CEO David Marshall. Three special editions of **The Liversidge Letter** are the result. When David assumed the role of WSIB President in 2010, as very clearly set out in the [2009 Auditor General Report](#), the Board's future was in doubt. It was David's leadership that saved it. Period. Full stop. I am of the unwavering view that David Marshall is one of the most remarkable public servants this country has produced and, in the context of the history of the Ontario WSIB, in my opinion, he is nothing less than a hero.

It was the remarkable serial leadership of the Hon. Steve Mahoney (WSIB Chair 2006 – 2011), David Marshall (WSIB CEO 2010 – 2016), Elizabeth Witmer (WSIB Chair 2012 – 2022) and Tom Teahen (WSIB CEO 2016 – 2021) that put the Board in the position we see it today – fully funded with a funding surplus. These four remarkable public servants, along with the remarkable and dedicated teams they put in place, navigated the Board through very stormy seas at a time when crashing on the rocks seemed imaginable, perhaps likely. Together they achieved what had eluded prior administrations for almost 40 years.

I interviewed David as I believe it important to revisit those times and create a record of those achievements before they fade too far into the past, to at least mitigate somewhat against that timeless Santayana quotation, "*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*" (we know it; we just don't apply it so well).

The interview, Part 1



LAL: So, how have you been doing?

DM: (Laughing) It has been such a long time.

LAL: It has. One of the great things about this project is that I have spent a lot of time going back over everything during your time. In my mind it all seems like yesterday but, my gosh, it is 13 years ago now.

DM: Right, it's nuts; so much has happened. You know you've raised a family; I've raised a family.

LAL: Yes, my girls now are 15 and 17.

DM: Oh, my goodness, yes, my son is 15 and my daughter is 13.

LAL: So almost the same.

DM: I know.

LAL: I want to get into so much with you. One of the reasons I wanted to do this, as I explained in the first email I sent some months back, I just wanted to record for posterity the remarkable turnaround story from 2010 to 2016. This may offer a bit of a beacon for leadership. I think it is an important part of the history that people may take for granted now that the workers' comp system is fine, that it is working ok.

DM: Right. Nice to see you on video, at least.

LAL: Yes, one of the benefits of this technology is you can do things like this fairly easily and efficiently. We can do this because we have known each other for a long time and we have a relationship. But, if you have not had the chance to build that interpersonal type of connection, the "ZOOM" approach has more drawbacks than positives. In the hundreds of meetings we shared, the meetings were always important, but often that 5-10 minutes before the meeting and the 5-10 minutes after a meeting were also so important in establishing a collegial rapport. It is not just all about the immediate issues on the list; it is about something broader and dynamic. So, I think this type of technology, while very convenient, you lose something. It's ok to maintain relationships, but not so great in developing relationships.

DM: True, I fully, completely agree, Les. We have known each other a very long time.

Introduction and Biographical Qs

LAL: First, let me say just how pleased I am that you are doing this. While doing my preparation for this, I actually had to shake my head twice or more to accept that it has

been seven (7) years since you left the presidency of the WSIB. I still recall our first meeting in January 2010, almost 14 years ago now. Vividly. As I recall, I left you with a couple of binders of homework, a few dozen issues of **The Liversidge Letter** as I remember, and much to my surprise (surprised then – would not be now), by the time we met again a few weeks later, not only had you read them all, you had a series of well-formed questions and, expected well-formed answers. It was an impressive first few encounters.

From that early moment, and heightened in every discussion and interaction in the years to follow, it was ever so clear to me that the enormous task of literally saving the WSIB could not rest in better hands. As that period fades into the distance, I want to create a small reminder of the enormity of the tasks that faced you in early 2010, of the brilliant and compassionate manner in which you not only grasped the problem and then developed and implemented hard solutions but built strong support for those efforts, all the while triggering a new collaborative partnership with business and labour leaders.

While we know from today's vista that a remarkable success was achieved, I want to remind everyone that victory wasn't a certainty, that things dipped a bit more into the red in the early days, and that pressures were mounting quickly. You faced an impatient legislature, sometimes a fickle public, even as successes began to accrue, but what did endure was a newly forged government/Board/stakeholder partnership. That had eluded past administrations. Your model of stakeholder engagement remained in place until very recent times.

Those involved at the time know that your engagement as WSIB president and CEO came about in the immediate wake of the **December 2009 [report of the Auditor General of Ontario](#)** (see Section 3.14, pages 314 – 335). This was a game-changer. It marked a modern demarcation point. There is the time before the AG report and there is the time after the AG report. They are different WSIB worlds.

To remind, the AG released a report in early December 2009 which essentially sounded a loud alarm bell. In a December 09, 2009 release, AG Jim McCarter declared, in strong and unambiguous language, "*there is the risk that the WSIB may not be able to meet its obligations, or it may have to raise premiums well beyond what employers can realistically afford.*" It was in that environment that you became engaged.

Before we start our chat about your early steps into the WSIB world, let's explore for a moment your background before the WSIB. Without trying to embarrass, your credentials, experiences and qualifications are not only impressive, they seem particularly well suited to your responsibilities as the WSIB CEO. Remarkably so.

You are a Fellow of the Certified Public Accountants Association of Canada, have been engaged in a senior capacity in both the public and private sectors, including a time as Assistant Auditor General for Canada, which must

have been a particularly helpful experience. You have held Assistant Deputy Minister roles within the federal government. For a decade, from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, you held senior roles in banking and telecommunications, including time on Wall Street and later as the Vice Chairman of CIBC. You then returned to the federal government as Deputy Minister of Public Works and Government Services from 2003 to 2007 and had a senior role in unravelling the narrative of the infamous sponsorship scandal.

I want to start with one question that I have never been able to understand. In the winter of 2009/10, you left the position of Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, to come back to Canada to manage the WSIB. **For goodness sakes – why?** The serious question is this – how did your experiences before 2010 assist you in the enormous challenge you were about to face?

DM: Yes, well it is a good question and you know, like so many things in life, it was an accident, almost. Well, I had been in Barbados, been through the sponsorship stuff in the federal government. I had also undertaken a fairly major revamp on how procurement was conducted in the federal government. I was very, very engaged intellectually and you know trying to make sure I followed strategies that resulted in good outcomes and so on. And then I had been sent off to Barbados. I was happy to take the assignment. It was an honour and a wonderful assignment. Our son was one month old at the time, so it was like a paradise. We had household staff, we had an official car, we had respect. Everything was wonderful. The weather was beautiful. But, toward the end of my term as ambassador I started feeling terribly isolated. You know, I had just come off a very, very intense assignment and I felt at loose ends. It just happened that the firm assigned to do the search for the new CEO of the WSIB was someone whom I had known very well over the years and he called me up and said listen, do you want to try to do this assignment. And, it sort of fell on fertile ground because I thought, why don't I look at this?

So, I called some of my friends, particularly Moya Green, who was then president of Canada Post, and who had worked for me at CIBC. And she said I would be crazy to take this post, it was a complete mess, she said you don't need this at this point in your career. Which only made me a bit more interested in trying to see what on earth was the problem. I was pretty confident in my understanding of financial matters. I had been in banking for a long time. As an auditor I thought, really there are only so many ways you can skin a cat, so I did take the interview.

By the way, I read some of your issues of **The Liversidge Letter**. I met the Minister, Peter Fonseca, and we talked about it. He thought that the management at the Board was not doing its job. I kind of agreed with him, however, I did not say very much. From what I could see from reading **The Liversidge Letters**, the place was in deep trouble.

So really, to answer your question, Les, it is really that, I had come back from a period, if you like, from rest and recuperation and I was ready to get back to action. But don't get me wrong, it was a wonderful assignment. I travelled all over. I was accredited to Barbados and six other eastern Caribbean Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda, one of the biggest islands. One of my jobs was to gather support for Canada's positions at the UN. So, for example, the ambassador to Germany had one vote to influence. I had seven votes to influence at the UN. So, I was a pretty important guy in that sense to Foreign Affairs, and so I was told, pack your bag and take the little regional airline and get over there and get the vote for us on sanctioning Iran, for example.

LAL: (laughs) Could have been a movie!

DM: Yes. So, I was out there, having lunch and dinner with a Prime Minister and you know, trying to convince him to support Canada, so it was a very interesting time. I would be referred to in a meeting as "His Excellency." I'd kind of look over my shoulder to see who they were talking about (laughing). But it was wonderful. But I did feel isolated, so I was ready for a complicated challenge, and this came up, so that is what happened.

LAL: A good friend of mine, who was my accountant for many, many years, relayed a similar story to me. He had a very good posting with a major accountancy firm in Bermuda for a long period of time. Similarly, he said it was great at first, it was like a vacation. Wonderful, and a great environment and everything you said, but he just got that sense of isolation after a period of time. A disconnect with his past life he had. After a few years he had to come back.

The state of affairs when you arrived at the WSIB

LAL: You were nominated pretty much at the very moment the AG report was dropped. The two were clearly connected. The AG questioned the very sustainability of the WSIB in that it may not be able to meet its obligations and demand may exceed employers' collective capacity to pay. **At the end of 2009, the Board had an unfunded liability of \$11.75 B, almost \$16.3 B in 2023 dollars, so you knew what you were getting into.** The UFL was a focus of WSIB administrations since the early 1980s, when the infamous 30-year funding plan was developed. It failed. I have written about the reasons for that failure before (see **The Liversidge Letter** of [April 19, 2010](#), "**The WSIB 2014 Funding Plan; Why it Failed**"). So, this was a long-term problem. How aware were you of the history of the WSIB funding efforts from 1983 onwards in late 2009 when you took up the challenge? I recall our very early meetings in late 2009 and early 2010. You didn't say much. You listened. Carefully, it was soon shown. Later, over the years, I spoke to many senior officials who worked closely with you in those days. That was a common observation. A classic situational leadership stance. You were diagnosing the problem.

LAL: Within just a few weeks, on February 24, 2010, you made your first appearance as WSIB President in front of a legislative committee, the **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**, the first of many appearances to come. I will get into that appearance and its early significance in a moment, but what came out loud and clear is that within four (4) weeks of your appointment, you had acquired quite the complex understanding of the WSIB, at least the diagnosing the problem part. (See **Hansard: [Standing Committee on Public Accounts February 24, 2010](#)**.)

LAL: I reviewed all the Hansards on that and, in a short time, you seemed to have a great sense of what had gone on in the past. How did you get to the core of the problem so quickly. How did you go from 0-60 at lightning speed?

DM: I think the answer to that is that I wasn't spooked and I was interested. When you have an open mind, you know, the numbers did not concern me. Having been Vice Chair at CIBC, I had the mortgage portfolio in my business unit and the credit card portfolio, so I was used to figures in the billions and that sort of thing. To me there were a set of numbers and I just needed to figure out what the numbers were saying.

Now, your issues of **The Liversidge Letter** were a very important piece of my puzzle. Also, the CEO of the BC Board, David Andersen, was very helpful to me. I had long phone conversations with him; he sent me his analysis of what was wrong with WSIB, which basically said "durations." And you were also pointing in that direction. And then, I was fortunate to have John Slinger, our Chief Operating Officer there as corporate memory. His knowledge and help was indispensable to me.

LAL: He was a remarkable public servant in my view.

DM: Yes, he was amazing, and the cadre of senior people around him, people he had been working with for a long time. And so, I had the benefit of being the CEO which is a great advantage, you know. You can come in and command input at your pace. So I would say, look we are going to start at 2:00pm, then we might go to 7pm, just gaming things. What's happening? Why is it happening? And so, I had the advantage of that kind of input and then also having spent several years as an auditor, I had a disciplined process of gathering data, gathering evidence I just went about it in a very systematic way. Did we have a revenue problem? Did we have an expense problem? How do we compare across Canada to the other Boards? I was given and absorbed a lot of information very quickly.

I have to make a confession. I have never told anyone until today. I never opened the briefing binder that my predecessor had left for me to read. I glanced at it and I thought this is a bunch of bureaucratic jargon and I am not going to bother with it. I did briefly scan through it when I was leaving and consigned it to some sort of archive, or you know, place where it should be read in the future.

So, I spent, I forget how many, but many, many hours. I had certain goals in mind in my inquiries. I needed to be able

to say whether this was a hopeless case, or whether something could be done.

Then, I had an obligation to keep the reputation of the place up. So, in other words, I wasn't going to go in there and do Chicken Little, the Sky is Falling, we are about to fold and so on, because that would have put the organization in a very bad position. I would have been continually obliged to defend that position and show that the place was a mess, which would not have served any purpose if indeed it could be rescued. We needed to be able to project that, look, we are not in good shape, but we are able to pay our bills, so we have time to figure out what to do for the future. That came also from my experience with the Sponsorship Scandal, whereby the Department of Public Works had been accused of funding illegitimate advertising efforts to keep the separatist vote in Quebec down. And a lot of the money had been mishandled.

If I had taken the view that the place was corrupt, which was the view at the time, then the consequences were immense and hugely negative in the long term. So, my inquiry there, as it was here, was: *Is this place recoverable?* And if it is I needed to be able to signal that it may be in a bad place, but we can make it sound for sure. So, I really had to figure that out. To do that, to be able to make that very hard decision, in my head, that this place could be saved or not, I needed to know what kind of problem we had.

I zeroed in very early on in my discussions with you and senior staff that really the extraordinary duration of claims at WSIB - how long injured workers were staying on claim - was the driving issue because I saw information that showed that. Lost time claims were coming down steadily over the years, but expenses were going up. Why? And so, my inquiry was, have injuries gotten more serious? You know therefore, people were unable to get back to work? The answer was no. In fact, workplaces were getting safer. The next question was: Were there fewer jobs and that is why people were not able to get back to work? The answer to that was no, Ontario was doing well economically. There were jobs available and so that was not the problem. So then, why were injured workers staying on claim so long? Then Slinger and his people were telling me, well in 1998 the Government changed the legislation and they removed our need to be in close touch with injured workers, and so workers just stayed off work, with little attention from WSIB.

I also looked at our investments to see how they were being managed. I had all of that in my head within about three weeks or so. The other thing too, Les, was that the Auditor General, Mr. Jim McCarter, was breathing down my neck, in parallel with the Deputy Minister, Cindy Morton. The Government was terrified because the Auditor General was about to qualify the next set of financial statements coming up in March/April (something like that) and he was insisting on a definite rescue plan or he was going to qualify the statements, essentially he was going to say that the

Government's financial statements were misleading because they were ignoring a huge liability. So, we went down all the key metrics. Premium rates - were they too low? Was our benefit scheme too rich? We compared ourselves across the provinces. We concluded that if we were able to achieve metrics to just match those of an average of the other provinces, we would be fine. That is what convinced us that a solution must be available and influenced our thinking and, of course, started the solutions coming in.

LAL: This wasn't the first time these issues were addressed. The UFL was an officially recognized problem since 1983 when the infamous 30-year plan to retire the UFL by 2014 was developed. Your opening words at that first committee meeting were:

I've come into this role as president and CEO of the WSIB with a clear mandate from the minister. It is to build a sound financial plan for our organization and address the unfunded liability; to ensure stability for workers, employers and stakeholders; and to ensure we have a WSIB that is, and is seen to be, value-added.

In early 2010 you had already made some solid observations - that while the funding ratio increased from 31% in 1985 to 73% in 2006, it didn't last. The 2007/08 financial crisis set the Board back. Even though the UFL was "a thing" since 1983, why was it more of a problem 25 years later?

DM: Yes, well you know, Les, it was Auditor General McCarter's report that was the key. I think you noted that as well. So, the spectre of, at the time, adding a \$12 billion UFL, (we will talk about this a little bit, because it turned out to be much more than \$12 billion), to the province's liabilities and potentially triggering a credit downgrade, really panicked the Government. So, the Government was under no illusion that they needed to have something done. That's why the Government went outside for a new CEO, it was not normal for them to get someone like me, or someone outside government. It was unusual that they went outside and picked somebody that had some experience in finance. Fairly early on I was citing your reports to Steve Mahoney and also asking him, so how did this happen? How did the Board allow benefits to go up and premiums to come down? Steve was very candid with me. He said you know David, it was never about the money, it was about, really, responding to government priorities, specifically the party in power.

I asked insiders about this and was told that from time to time the government wanted to have some wins so they asked the WSIB can you increase benefits for workers? And hold or reduce premiums for employers? And if WSIB obliged and said they could, even while they were in deficit, the government just went ahead and did it. The government never questioned the wisdom of doing this. It was not willful blindness, I don't know what to call it, perhaps *convenient blindness*.

LAL: We will get into Harry Arthurs in a minute, but that was his general thesis. The Board is there, but it really was

following the expectations of the government, that there was this inert understanding, whether said out loud or not, whether there was a memo sent or not, there was an understanding. What I can call the Harry Arthurs thesis, as simple as that is, perhaps explains a lot over a long period.

DM: And you know Les, I'm grasping about how to express this, but it is a very serious weakness in our system of government because ministers who are in it for a short term, make decisions. The bureaucracy has been weakened over the years. There is an absence of responsibility, really. The job of the bureaucrats is to keep the government out of "trouble," and the WSIB is just rolling along, and nobody really understood what was happening. Nobody understood what the UFL was. When I talked to the Secretary to the Cabinet at the time, she said nobody has ever explained the UFL like I have. Where were the people in the department of finance? Where were the people in the department of labour? None of them understood it. That is how the government works. And I think the chances that it could go back into a problem are quite high.

LAL: I agree entirely and I'll say it differently. I think it is inevitable, because the essence of what the AG was able to drive is gone. I am not trying to be too critical. That is pretty much the state of nature. Your period of time was the anomaly. It should have been the state of nature (**DM:** Yes).

One of the things you mentioned David, when you first came in, you recognized quickly that all the workplace injury indicators had been going down for well more than 25 years. Yet, durations were going up. Sticking with that standing committee appearance, you commented on this. You advised that increasing claim durations were a big problem and the culprit driving that was an unintended consequence of the 1998 legislative adjustments ([Bill 99](#)). Specifically, you observed that those changes caused the Board to be less involved in the early stages of a lost-time claim. I very much agree with that assessment. Of course, that was not intended. Bill 99 theoretically made the parties (worker and employer) more directly responsible in the early stages of the claim, and the expectation was that with the Board "out of the way," the worker and the employer and the union would "figure it out" more efficiently. They didn't.

I don't want to ask about the problems of the 1998 Act, as you fixed those specific defects in your later administrative designs (we will come back to that), but a more general question. The "law of unintended consequences" is a known construct. It should be front and centre in the mind of any reformer, no matter the reform. Almost every major policy adjustment will result in some unintended and, by definition, unknown consequences at the time of design. Why did these specific unintended consequences go undetected for so long, and secondly, when there are major WSIB design adjustments, statutory or otherwise, how can the organization identify these and fix them? It sounds easy in a way, just monitor the results over time etc., but it seems to always require fresh eyes. Why is

that and how can that be fixed? Do you think you put in place the structures to address that phenomenon while you were at the Board?

DM: Les, I think that there are two reasons that unintended effects were allowed to impact the WSIB and go undetected; perhaps three reasons. The first one was a complete misreading of the purpose of the Board. The Board was viewed as a compensation company by the government and by labour. In other words, the role was to pay compensation based on the legislation. The worker was injured, you had to pay for medical care, wage replacement and so on as specified by the legislation. The problem was that the Board was really not a compensation company, it was, in essence a return to work (RTW) company, with compensation being a bridge to getting a worker back to work. It is in fact right in the legislation. The purpose of the Board is to return workers to their place in their family and at work.

LAL: And yet that had been a theme that had sprung out in legislation that began in the 1980s and was really emphasized into the 1990s, but at the same time the administrative actions seemed to be going 180 degrees to that.

DM: Right, there was very little emphasis on RTW. The main thing was compensation costs and whether we were adequately compensating or undercompensating and so on. If you are not paying attention to the main purpose of the organization you are going to be going off in a complete tangent and you are not going to fulfil your goals.

You know, even when I was there, no Minister, I had four of them, I think, ever asked: So, your job is to get people back to work, how is that going? It was all about, you are upsetting labour, you are upsetting employers, all that kind of stuff. So, then you have that whole business about what gets measured, gets done, so to speak. If the whole idea is to not upset these people, then you do what you have to do to not upset them. (**LAL:** Right) So, nobody, literally nobody, except myself and yourself, was interested in if people were getting back to work or not. So that was the reason why the deterioration in WSIB's finances lasted so long and reached such a crisis stage.

The second reason was that the deterioration in a government agency takes a long time to surface as there is no marketplace discipline which could push back early when finances are getting out of order.

The third reason, Les, is that people in government don't pay attention to numbers. To me a financial statement is just a story told in numbers. It tells you things are getting better, worse, or more expensive. And so, when the WSIB saw a rising expense number nobody looked in and asked what is this telling us? Maybe the problem is financial literacy. But then the people governments put in charge of essentially financial organizations are often people who don't understand business or finance. So, you know that is why it took so long to pay attention to the situation and there was nothing inherent in the control framework that would have

stopped the deterioration. It could have kept going. I don't think investment returns could have helped improve the funding ratio. It probably would have gone on even longer and got even worse before something was done.

LAL: Getting back to the UFL, and that same meeting, you advised the committee, and this is just four weeks into the job as WSIB CEO, as follows:

Mr. David Marshall: If you ask me, I think I'd like to get to full funding or maybe even a little beyond, because you can't predict what can happen. As I think I pointed out, it's going to take some years to get the fund back on track. It took almost 25 years to get it to 70% funding from 31%. You can't predict what might hit you over the years to come, so I think you do need a cushion. That's my philosophy. I would like to see full funding, maybe even a little beyond, but I'm going to consult with stakeholders, see the art of the possible and get the best possible combination to bring forward.

Developing the plan and re-inventing the process

Later you said this:

Mr. David Marshall: My commitment is to develop a plan with my team and with consulting stakeholders that brings us to a fully funded position within a reasonable amount of time. I still have to figure out how soon we can do that.

That plan will have measurable benchmarks. It will say that we have to hit this rate of return, that we have to reduce duration by this amount by this date in order to meet the plan so that this committee, our stakeholders, the government and the minister can measure and see if we are getting there. However, it's going to have some tough, tough proposals in it. I mean, you can't recover this amount of money without some sort of pain some-where in the system. We're obviously going to try to be as fair and balanced as we can be. We're here because that, by definition, hasn't been done so far. We are committed to doing it.

It's clear that you had some very solid views, even at that early stage. But you stressed that you were going to consult. We know how that turned out. We know that that approach was very successful. However, from my experience over the years with many different WSIB administrations, that was not the normal WSIB way. The normal way was for an incoming administration to develop its own plans. It would then consult or advise before implementation, perhaps, but rarely consult about the plan itself. I should not overgeneralize, because there have been exceptions, such as the **1973 Aird Task Force**, the **1980 Weiler review**, and the extensive and extraordinary **Bill 99 consultation**, but those were government initiatives. You asked tough questions from the get-go and did throughout your tenure.

In your first several months, you and then Chair Steve Mahoney implemented one of his core recommendations from his year long consultation, and that was the establishment of the four **Chair Advisory Committees**. In the **2010 WSIB Annual Report**, Chair Mahoney commented on the then newly formed CACs. (**Note:** The WSIB used to archive all electronic copies of annual reports right back to 1997. Presently, [the annual reports commence at 2016](#) and earlier editions have been purged for some

reason (however, they are available at OLA.ORG). It is my view that the Board should make all historical financial records, particularly annual reports easily accessible on its own website.) This is what Chair Mahoney said:

In 2010, regular meetings of newly established stakeholder Advisory Committees commenced. With representatives from key industry, labour, and worker groups, these Advisory Committees provide a forum for discussing the impact of WSIB policy and program changes. I want to thank the members of these committees for their time and ongoing commitment to working with the WSIB to foster a frank and productive dialogue about the issues and challenges we are facing together.

These Advisory Committees are an important step toward building an environment of meaningful consultation, continuous stakeholder engagement and a two-way conversation about our future direction.

LAL: You worked with Steve on this. I remember suggesting this to him just before you arrived. He embarked on a year-long province wide consultation, concluding with his February 2010 "[Report on Stakeholder Consultations](#)."

One of the ideas that came out of that was to reach out better to the stakeholder community, management and labour, and establish and set up what was then called the Chair Advisory Committee. Why did you see the need to engage stakeholders from the get-go, and in effect, form a working partnership with them?

DM: Right. You know, I guess my history, background, my experience, for example, being the senior person in a major bank, I was responsible for business lines, but also for a start up effort called President's Choice Financial. If you go to Loblaw's you will see it. It is a partnership with Loblaw's offering financial services with their brand as a backbone.

Basically, in large institutions you have to gain the cooperation of many stakeholders. You can't do anything on your own. There are many people who will stop you from achieving what you want to achieve. You know, the risk management people are there, there are any number of important, powerful units in a large organization like a bank who have to be satisfied before anything can go forward. And that is a good thing. That is what keeps banks more or less on track, at least in Canada. But there again you have to gain a lot of cooperation. Then at the department of Public Works, it was a real shark tank. You know, you tried to standardize a number of models of chairs and you were going to get the furniture manufacturers down your throat. Same with shipbuilding and so on.

So, I was well schooled in knowing, no matter how good your idea is, you have to get the major stakeholders either supporting you or at least neutral.

In the next issue of **The Liversidge Letter** the conversation continues. David explains why he chose the **Funding Review** process and why he put his views on the record, right at the outset, in public, for all to see.