

Social assistance on the rise in area

By Sarah Sobanski

Canada's fall fiscal update means \$5.9 million coming to the riding in child care benefits alone, says Hastings-Lennox and Addington MP Mike Bossio.

According to a release by Bossio, "the Canadian economy has seen its fastest growth in 10 years, with fiscally-responsible investments being made under a low debt-to-GDP ratio. Over 450,000 jobs have been created since the last election, most of them full-time. The fiscal update also pointed to this strong growth—the highest in the G7—shrinking the deficit."

"This is great news for our riding, it's great news and it shows that our plan is working. We're making strategic investments, both in infrastructure and in Canadians through the Canada child benefit and working income tax benefit and increasing the guaranteed income supplement and also increasing the [Canadian Pension Plan] gradually over time," Bossio told *Bancroft This Week*.

He said strategic investments are "creating economic opportunities or economic drivers for our communities."

"I can specifically measure as an impact is the Canadian child care benefit in our riding \$5.9 million [per month]. That's prior to the increase that we've implemented in tying it now to cost of living increases," said Bossio, noting it will benefit close to 9,300 families and close to 17,000 children.

According to his release, the update means "a single parent of two children making \$35,000 will get \$560 more next year, tax free, to support her or his child."

Census results showed more than a third of children in Bancroft were living in low-income homes. Bossio said these funds will go to "everything, [including] putting better food on the table, being able to afford to have internet so that they can do their homework and progress to playing a sport or a piano lesson to buying winter boots and a jacket that are going to keep them warm."

The Working Income Tax Benefit has also seen an "enhancement," according to the release. The benefit is "a refundable tax credit that cuts taxes for eligible people already in the workforce and encourages others to get a job." It'll see \$500 million more per year starting in 2019 plus \$250 million annual increase to the CPP.

"Together, these two enhancements will boost the total amount the government spends on the WITB by about 65 per cent in 2019, increasing benefits and expanding the number of Canadians who qualify," states the release.

Bossio said these increases are "huge, because every cent of that gets spent locally."

"These are individuals and families that need it most. They're not putting it into the bank, they're not saving it, they're spending it," he said.