

Our 2020 vision?

Editorial

AS WE APPROACH THE END of a most tumultuous year, the time has come for editorialists everywhere to go out on the proverbial limb and offer some supposedly educated guesses as to what we shall face in the new year.

Thus it is that we for once have a forward-looking 20-20 vision.

On the world scene, this will be another year when we'll see man-made climate change as a source of huge controversy, with younger activists leading the way in calling for action and right-wing populists denying its existence or merely paying lip service.

Nowhere will this be more evident than in the United States, where the big question to be addressed is whether the impeachment of Donald Trump will merely lead to his election for a second term and four more years of millions of Americans lacking the universal health care we've had for half a century.

In the United Kingdom, Brexit will be accomplished before the Jan. 31 deadline and the stage will be set for a referendum in Scotland that will almost inevitably lead to Scottish independence and a bid for re-admission to the European Union.

Our expectation is that the economic consequences of Brexit won't be quite as disastrous as most experts have been predicting but will still include a further decline in the value of the Pound and more unemployment stemming from the loss of exports to the EU. There will be attempts to reach trade deals with Canada and the United States, but the complexities involved will make it impossible to conclude the deals in 2020.

Elsewhere in the context of world trade, we shall likely see at least a truce in the trade war between the U.S. and China, if only because of a decline in China's economy and the impending U.S. presidential election, with Mr. Trump then being able to proclaim a victory.

As for the Middle East, it will be another year of near wars and an inability (or more likely unwillingness) of the parties to achieve real peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

It will also be a year in which technology will play an increasingly important role, with drones being used by terrorists and attempts being made to develop anti-drone defences, particularly for commercial aircraft.

And speaking of commercial aircraft, 2020 will be a year in which Boeing will face even more delays in getting its 787 Dreamliner planes back in service, perhaps even without the availability of the computerized anti-stall system that apparently caused the two lethal crashes.

Closer to home, it will be the first full year of a Liberal minority government in Ottawa, a year during which the government will face countervailing pressures from the opposition and business world, with the NDP, Green and Bloc Quebecois all pressing for more action to curb greenhouse gases and the business community calling for an end to deficit financing.

We'll have to wait and see whether Finance Minister Bill Morneau's prediction of growing deficits was aimed in part at dealing with provincial demands for greater transfers for healthcare and NDP demands for a universal pharmacare.

But with the opposition divided among four parties, the Trudeau Grits ought to be able to survive for most, if not all, of its new four-year term. but only if it can avoid scandals.

And it will be an equally challenging year for the Conservatives as they pick a successor to Andrew Scheer as leader. As we see it,

they would be wise to pick a moderate who doesn't hail from the Prairies and is prepared to support real action on the climate front.

As for Ontario, 2020 will be a year in which the Ford government tries hard to improve its image, perhaps by agreeing to have an arbitrator end the impasse between the government and the teachers' unions.

It will also be a year in which new efforts will be needed on the tourism front, thanks to the demise of Headwaters Tourism.

Is it too much for us to hope for a resurrection of the Credit Valley Explorer rather than closure of the former CP Rail line between Orangeville and Streetsville?