



June 25, 2020

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The Honourable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislature Building  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford;

I hope this letter finds you well.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Canadian society hard, including not-for-profit organizations like The Royal Canadian Legion. Unfortunately, our Branches do not qualify for most current federal relief programs.

As a result, I am writing on behalf of the Legion's Ontario Provincial Command to request your support in the effort to obtain federal help for Branch operations. While the Legion has long prided itself on remaining self-sufficient through Branch initiatives, these initiatives have been eliminated or greatly curtailed due to the pandemic. We are living through unprecedented times in our nearly one-hundred-year history.

Here in Ontario, we are facing the closure of 29 Branches in our Command, due to their inability to raise critical funds needed for operations. Despite this looming disaster, our volunteer-run Branches remain as active as possible to support our Veterans and communities. While our Command can access temporary relief through the Legion's national reserve funds, these will run out. Some Branches have started *GoFundMe* requests, also temporary measures. The dollars raised through the Legion's National Poppy Campaign must be used to help support Veterans, families and communities and cannot be used for operational requirements.

Our Dominion President Thomas D. Irvine, CD, has made attempts to contact and work with the federal government on this issue, however no new programs that we can access have appeared. (*See attached communications*). Note that the Emergency Community Support Fund recently announced **cannot** be used for operational needs so is not an option for us, as has been suggested by some government representatives.

Ontario's 395 Legion Branches are hubs of support and comradeship, and we must help them survive so they may continue to provide the critical help needed by our Veterans and communities. We need your help to find a solution and ask that you raise our plight with your federal colleagues.

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By way of this letter, I am also requesting a meeting with your office as soon as feasible, to discuss our situation in more detail. I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garry Pond". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

Garry Pond  
Provincial President

cc. A. Horwath, Leader of the Opposition