



## *THE PUCK'S IN THE CORNER*

I've always loved hockey, even though I was never any good at it. I didn't score often, and when I did it usually came on my third whack at a loose puck with both skates in the crease. As a fan, I cheered for the players that seemed to work the hardest. Rod Brind'Amour, currently doing a great job as head coach for the Carolina Hurricanes, was that type of player. He was committed to strong defence in his own zone but presented with the opportunity he was ready to rush the puck. And in the corners he was relentless, seeming to win every battle.

In business, as in sport, we all need to win battles. Since mid-March the puck, metaphorically speaking, has been wedged deep in the corner. Success has required, and will continue to require, less finesse and more grit. In March and April, I spent a lot of time on the phone with our operating partners as they rolled-up their sleeves to play defence, putting out a thousand tiny fires. I am proud of the commitment they have shown to the health and safety of their employees. I am also impressed by the composure they demonstrated in the face of adversity and uncertainty. After stabilizing their respective businesses in the early stages of the pandemic, each of them engaged in proactive discussions with key stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers and lenders. They used the crisis as an opportunity to enhance key relationships rather than strain them.

More recently, our operating partners have sought to play offence by turning their mind to growth. They have revisited acquisition candidates and recruited talented new team members amidst the dislocation in the market. We have made key hires across the group and we now hope that several of our portfolio companies will complete an acquisition in the next six months. Similarly, our capital partners, members of some of Canada's leading business families, have been rock solid. Scott McCain and Rob Sobey have each encouraged me to continue thinking long term by demonstrating ongoing support for our companies and their employees. As a result, we doubled the number of SeaFort scholarships to be offered in 2020, from ten \$5,000 awards to the children of SeaFort company employees to twenty \$5,000 awards. We are proud to be able to support an impressive group of young adults as they advance in their studies.

Everyone's favourite hockey cliché is Gretzky's famous line: I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been. For the next few months, I believe we all know where the puck will be. The companies and individuals that succeed will be those that persevere and win daily battles. Longer term, things are much harder to predict. We could experience a period of profound recovery in a post-vaccine world, or we could be retrenching in an effort to survive a relapse of the virus. Whatever we encounter, I believe strongly that our operating partners are strong two-way players that have the resolve to survive and thrive. In any new investment, we'll be looking for partners with the same traits. The puck's in the corner. Let's go get it.

