

Watt's Happening?

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VOTING: use it or lose it!



***This is us.** The Moon-bound Apollo 17 crew looked back at Earth on December 7, 1972, and snapped one of the single most iconic images in human history – our whole fragile Earth floating in the immensity*

of space. It is the only home we have. For our own security, it is now clear that we must protect it and everything on it. Canada can play its part.

It's frightening.

I watch as the Canada I love is dismantled, and the Canadian values I cherish thrown aside. I worry that the campaign of fear and greed will work, that voters will either not vote (out of disgust) or cast a vote motivated by fear.

I must apologize up front, oh valued and dedicated readers, for straying from my usual topics in this column. Only at election time do I indulge in a political rant, so here goes. (As always, the opinions expressed in this column are entirely my own, and do not represent those of any organization or persons I may be associated with.)

THE ECONOMY

Let's explore some serious misconceptions about "the economy," starting with the myth of the "free market." It's a thing of the distant past. There is very little freedom left in the markets, just like there is going to be very little freedom left in the world if we're not careful.

The economies of most countries are now controlled by trans-national corporations who have only one thing in mind: profit. Download costs to the taxpayers, upload profits to the corporations, that's the plan. So far it's working pretty well, as the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Governments have become merely the policy implementation departments of

corporations, with a good bit of public relations and crowd control thrown in.

PRIVATIZE EVERYTHING

Wow, now there's a big mistake. Some things belong in the public sector, not the private. Here are a few:

Privatize war and weapons, and guess what, more war and more "efficient" weapons.

Privatize health care, then sickness and disease become profitable. Result? Maximized sickness and disease for maximum profit.

Privatize police and prisons, and you get more crime. Hey, it makes money!

THE ENVIRONMENT

We have a great economic system if our goal is to destroy the habitability of our planet as quickly and efficiently as possible.

A federal government report on the effects of tanker traffic oil spills on the BC coast recently said they would be good for the economy! Clean-ups create jobs and "profit," apparently.

To the corporate profit-mind, the air, rivers, oceans, forests, wildlife, the land . . . you and me (the environment) are considered "externalities," not part of the equation. By definition, not important.

We know how to change this, by the way. That is, integrate natural and human values into the economic system. So don't buy the fear-and-hopelessness argument that change is impossible. We built the system. We can change it.

And change it we must, or it will all, indeed

ALL, be destroyed. I would say, by the way we are going, within the next fifty years, with nothing but an ugly, sad and cruel path to take us there. Is that the future we want?

Readers of *Watt's Happening* will know by now that it is NOT the environment OR the economy. It isn't either/or. Pitting one against the other is extremely dangerous, stunningly stupid, and irresponsible of any government.

We live in an immensely wealthy country. The role of government is to distribute this wealth, not help concentrate it in the hands of a few.

Our great national wealth should be invested in renewables and energy efficiency, creating millions of jobs overnight, cleaning up our environment, reducing health care costs, and re-establishing Canada's global reputation all at the same time.

And people, let's invest in people. Maybe a bit more for their needs and not so much for their wants.

Scientific research, especially on climate change and the environment, should not be cut and silenced, but increased. If we don't know about the problems then we don't know what to do about them. Duh!

VOTE NOW

Voting is the little bit of democracy we have left. It's use it or lose it. Believe me, we don't want to lose it.

I say, vote for change. Vote AGAINST the parties most likely to embrace the status quo, or vote FOR the parties most likely to embrace fundamental change. It's now or never. The future of Canada is in our hands for this brief moment in history. Let's make it count.

***Watt's Happening?* Quick Fact:**

SWEDEN PLEDGES TO BECOME A FOSSIL-FREE NATION: *Sweden will invest the equivalent of CAD\$727 million in climate-protection measures in the coming year as a first step to becoming one of the first fossil-free nations. The government will dramatically boost support for solar, wind, energy storage, smart grids and electric vehicles.*