

COMMENTS & LETTERS

enb.ca • December 7, 2005

Two views on Kyoto protocol

REALITY CHECK

by Tanner Phillips

I have to say it for the sake of sanity, Kyoto is useless. Not only will the treaty hurt our economy, but who says that global warming is our fault? I know it's a fad to believe everything the liberal media says, but seriously, does anybody think for themselves anymore?

As Canadians, we love to look down on those primitive Yankees, but the fact of the matter is, they are so far ahead of us in emissions reduction and climate change research that it makes us look like fools. They have the right idea too: That we do not know enough about climate change to attempt something like Kyoto, and that all of the solid evidence available points to humanity's innocence.

The climate has been changing long before the Industrial Age, and humans have had absolutely nothing to do with it. In fact, a warming period helped to bring Europe out of the Dark Ages. Why is it that we try to blame natural cycles on our carbon dioxide emissions? Some people even try to blame earthquakes on humanity. Many left leaning environmentalists seem to think that our recent sprees of intense hurricanes are being caused by human induced global warming. If these individuals had the common sense to do some historical meteorological research, they would discover that hurricane intensity is the result of purely natural cycles. 30 years ago the Gulf of Mexico was home to some very, very scary storms, however that particular cycle ended and the coast line began to be heavily developed. Now people are trying to find excuses for their own stupidity, and blaming modern technology has become quite popular.

Still, I am not pretending to know the answers. If for some reason it turns out climate change really is our fault, there are no simple solutions, despite what everyone says. Firstly, Kyoto is worthless to the point of hilarity. Even if the Accord was successfully implemented (which it won't be) the impact on emissions will be minuscule. The economic consequences, however, will be enormous. Canadians seem to want action on global warming, but I'm willing to bet money that once the factories and plants start to shut down there will be a drastic change in heart. I also can't seem to grasp why India and China have been given such leeway? I don't care that they are developing countries. Here is a scenario for you: if we adopt Kyoto, our economy will go into a major recession. But wait, global emissions will continue to rise. Why do you ask? Because India and China will pick up the slack. Then the pinkie commie, development assistance happy lefties will demand that we provide aid to India and China so that they can bring their own emissions under control. Unfortunately, our economy collapsed because we decided to act on flimsy junk science.

The idiocy of our climate change policy makes me want to vomit - preferably all over the face of Leonardo DiCaprio or some other hippie activist celebrity. We have to learn to adapt to our changing world. We cannot halt or even put a dent in global warming; it is probably not even our fault. Instead, we are just going to have to live with it. In other words, grow up people.

Dear Editor,

The Kyoto Protocol is not as perfect and rosy as Greg LeBlanc's article last week seemed to be claiming it was, there are many flaws in it, and it needs to be revisited and re-enforced much more than it currently is.

After reading an excellent book called *The End of Oil* by Paul Roberts I realized that the Protocol had many holes in it which countries use to their advantage, such as selling credits of their emissions which is outlined as the following: "[the Kyoto Protocol] provides for countries with emission reduction commitments to buy and sell part of their assigned amount of CO2 emissions among themselves. For example, Country A reduces its emissions more than is required by its agreed target. Country B, which is finding it more difficult to achieve its emissions reduction target, purchases the excess emission credits of Country A, which helps Country B to achieve its target."

In other words, a country could do absolutely nothing to reduce their emissions of CO2 and buy another country's credits to make up for their lack of interest in the Protocol.

Countries which are exempt from the Protocol, such as China and Brazil, are starting to use more energy to bring themselves into the developed country list. As China expands its technological sectors, it burns the cheapest form of energy: coal. Coal is the most harmful burning substance to our environment used to create energy, next to natural gas and fossil fuels. China has made a commitment to bring itself into the 21st century by advancing its technology, and many Chinese citizens are using diesel engine vehicles to get around. This means even more CO2 emissions.

The largest contributor to harmful CO2 emissions is, of course, the United States which contributed to about 40 per cent of all industrial-country 'greenhouse gases' in 2003, and about seven times more per person than China.

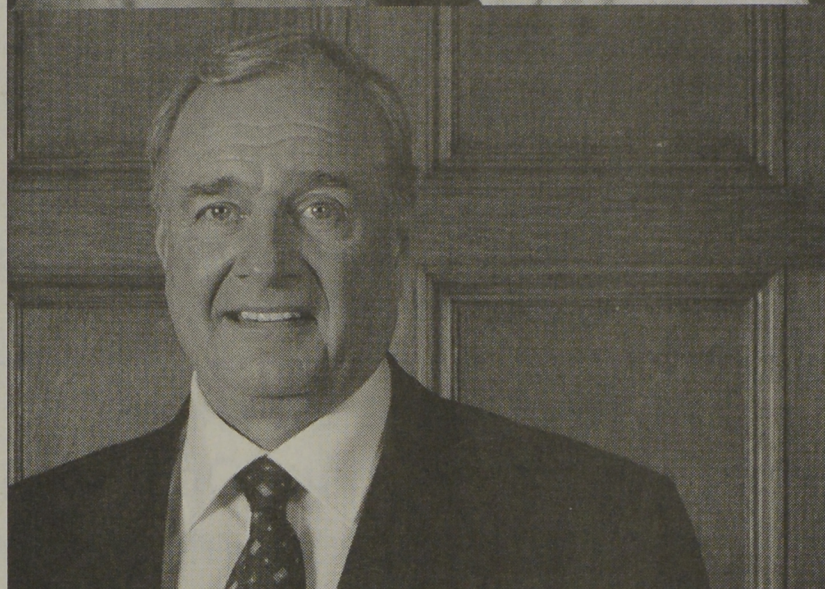
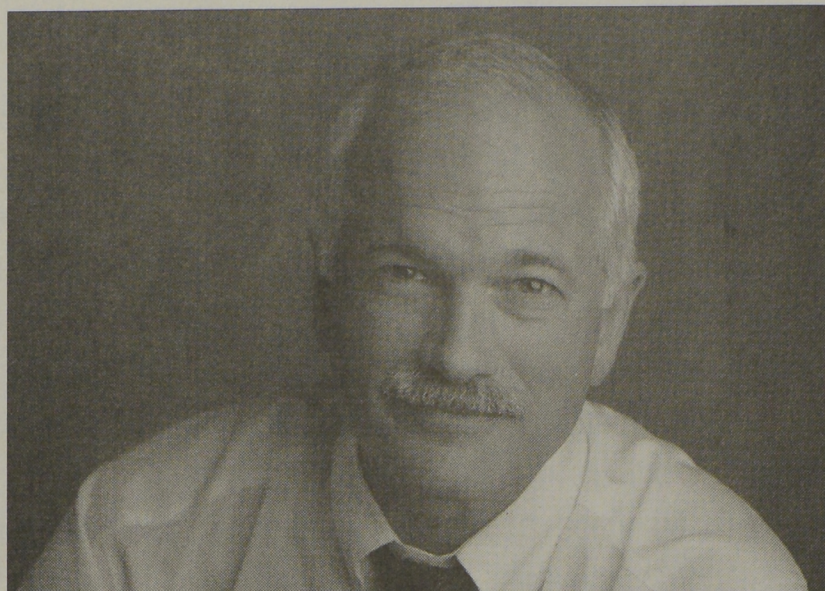
Since the United States and Australia are not participating in the Kyoto Protocol, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. There are more SUVs and heavy trucks used in the United States than any other country in the world, and many of those who drive these gas guzzling, pollution making machines, don't really need them for their intended use, and could switch to a lower CO2 emitting vehicle, but choose not to.

The Kyoto Protocol is not just for governments and big businesses; individuals must also commit to reducing CO2 emissions by recycling what we can, reducing the amount of driving we do, composting, turning down the heat and wearing a sweater, and so much more. If 2005 has taught us anything, it's that climate change isn't a myth. It is happening before our eyes, and is becoming harder to ignore. You may be enjoying these warm days of November, but you shouldn't be happy, you should be asking why is it so warm in November, why are we having the busiest hurricane season in history, and why are there so many more destructive storms?

Before believing scientists who claim climate change is not true, it's just Earth's natural cycles, look to see who's paying these scientists because if it's Shell, or Exxon-Mobile, you're being lied to.

Sarah Bernard

Election won't focus on relevant issues



Michèle Legendre / The Brunswickian

Canadian electoral system "a farce"

Dear Letters Editor:

Once again roughly three quarters of Canada's eligible voters will trudge to their polling booths on January 23, 2006, and mark an "X" opposite the name of the candidate who they feel will best represent their interests. Nearly all of these voters go through these motions in the belief that by so doing, they are participating in a "democratic" process of electing a government "of the people, by the people, for the people," where the majority rules.

But the reality is that, because we still cling to the 19th century "first past the post" electoral system, a minority of the popular vote can and does result in the control of Parliament. Most of the bills that are passed by the House of Commons originate from Ministers in the Cabinet. While the Ministers are in the minority within their party caucus, thanks to lobbying by powerful groups, they are generally able to garner the support of their back-bench colleagues even when proposed legislation runs counter to the best interests

or wishes of the voters back in the constituencies!

An important element of this lobbying process is a group that calls itself the Business Council on National Issues. It is comprised of about 150 chief executive officers of major banks and business corporations and functions as a kind of shadow cabinet in Ottawa. It maintains a constant vigil to ensure that their power is not infringed. Their sponsors play a significant role in funding right-wing political parties and right-wing think tanks that influence public policy.

It is my view that the term "democratic government" as it applies to Canada is a farce. The major decisions here are made in private corporate boardrooms, not by the government representative that we elect. The trek that we make to the polling booth every so often may very well be an exercise in deception.

Yours truly,
William Dascavich
Edmonton, Alberta

SU ROUNDUP

by Ellen Creighton

No known issue will decide this election.

This election is focused on animosity and anger, on charges of corruption and negative portrayals of parties, and not on the issues that mean most to Canadians.

I'm going to give you a real, concrete issue, though, that candidates can and should sink their teeth into: the funding crisis for universities and colleges in Canada, and support for Canadian students.

In recent elections, post-secondary education issues barely flickered across the lips of candidates. Budget after budget devotes only piecemeal allocations to post-secondary institutions and students. Institutions subject to this neglect are not able to keep pace with our needs and the needs of society.

I want to know why.

Is it because students don't vote? Well, talk to us instead of mourning over our lack of participation. Include us in your budgets - both the spending and the consultation. Show us that you have faith in our abilities, and that you want to help us make an amazing contribution to support our parents' generation. Only then will we know you're listening. Then we'll speak up. Then we'll be more engaged.

Remember that your inadequate funding affects many more than 18 to 24 year-olds. It affects young children, the students of tomorrow. It affects parents, who watch their children rack up tens of thousands of dollars of debt while they can't afford to support them because of rampant increases in tuition. It affects businesses who can't find the well-educated employees they need.

It affects society as a whole, both economically and culturally. Some students don't go to university or college, and so can't be part of the highly-skilled workforce our knowledge-based economy demands. Deeply-indebted young adults don't contribute to their own retirement funds to supplement the Canada Pension Plan; they don't buy houses or cars to sustain consumption, and they don't have children to sustain our population.

Before you fall prey to the mistaken stereotype that students have it easy, consider the following: tuition increases by over five per cent per year, on average. Tuition in New

Brunswick rose by the highest amount in Canada last year; student jobs pay minimum wage or just over, and we can't pay tuition with our earnings, let alone living expenses; student debt is over \$21,500 on average for a first degree. Most well-paying jobs require more than one degree; Almost half of students sustain a part to full-time job on top of their full-time studies in order to pay the bills; deferred maintenance totals \$3 billion across the country. Students are paying for buildings and roads, the government's responsibility in a public university system.

Candidates, you better start addressing our issues. You'd better start talking to students, parents, business owners, and the next generation of students, or you will face your demise. You'd better start talking to your provincial counterparts who realize the gravity of the issue. Alberta, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Ontario have all made significant and well-intentioned funding announcements in the past few months. But these are not enough. You need to act quickly, and act now, to avert an even worse crisis in post-secondary education.

Here's what we want: tuition rates that are under control, instead of progressively increasing to even more prohibitive levels; significant student debt relief; new, innovative ways to fund post-secondary education, including the dedicated Canadian Education Transfer; get the \$3 billion deferred maintenance problem taken care of. This is your responsibility, not the responsibility of students.

Candidates, we look forward to hearing from you. Education is the election issue of this election, so you'd better speak up.

The State and Capital in Canada

CLASS STRUGGLE

by Chris Bailey

Karl Marx asserts in the German Ideology that the state is, "the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests, and in which the whole civil society is epitomized." In the wake of the recent non-confidence motion in parliament, which toppled the Liberal government and has forced an election, this statement is particularly relevant.

As Canadians prepare to go to the polls to elect a new government, and as the various Canadian political parties prepare to woo the citizenry with campaign promises, it is important to examine the actual class character of the Canadian state and its historical role in society.

Liberal political theory holds that the state is an 'autonomous entity,' which is a 'neutral actor' and exists 'above society.' This characterization of the state is flawed as it places the modern state in a sort of 'social historical vacuum.' Liberal state theory fails to account for the history of social relations which gave birth to the modern state. The Marxists argue that the state arises in society only at that point in society where there is a need to manage the class struggle. In modern times, the state takes on a bourgeois form. Marx holds that within capitalist society the state exists solely for the purpose of preserving private property and capitalist social relations of production. Furthermore, capitalism cannot function independent of the state. The periodic crises which define this mode of production must be managed as well as class antagonisms; otherwise the society would tear itself apart at the seams.

Presently there is a crisis in capitalism. Capital cannot accumulate profit at the same rate it was able to even 10 years ago. This forces the bourgeoisie to devise ways of staving off this crisis, such as increasing outputs and expanding markets. The state plays a special role in this struggle. Not only does the state promote capital interests abroad through imperialist wars and conflicts (which have stimulated capital investment in Haiti and Afghanistan in the Canadian example), it also actively encourages capital growth and investment within its own borders.

In Canada, as well as other western capitalist countries, there has been an aggressive and systematic rollback of government spending and resources for social programs in the areas of welfare, healthcare, and education. This is known as retrenchment. These state monies are dedicated instead to capital in the form of financial relief, government bailouts, and massive tax breaks. However, taxation of Canadian citizens remains the same and in many cases even increases! The Canadian government has also initiated a program of 'social partnership' which works to 'off-load' the responsibility for maintaining and operating social programs from the state on the shoulders of the 'voluntary' and 'private' sectors. The effect of this shift is a rapid decline in the quality and availability of these programs. We are currently seeing increases in labour unrest in those sectors of labour throughout Canada - this is no coincidence.

These actions of the Canadian state must be exposed and actively criticized inside and outside parliament! The impending federal election provides all oppressed people within Canada with an opportunity to critically examine the party platforms and to expose the bourgeois character of parliamentary politics and the Canadian state! Once bourgeois parliamentary democracy is shown to be incapable of providing a better life for its citizenry, the only real alternative left available to the oppressed classes in Canada will be socialism!

**Happy Holidays
from everyone at
The Brunswickian.**

**Issues resume
January 4, 2006**

Young NDP ready for debate

Dear Editor,

The Fredericton Young New Democrats were ready and willing to debate with the Young Conservatives and Liberals on the original date the St. Thomas Political Science Society had set up.

We applaud the STU PSS for their non-partisan effort at elevating the profile of political debate on campus. However, we deride the senseless bickering the Young Conservatives and Liberals are engaged in over the timing of the debate. This practice only cheapens the quality of debate and serves to reinforce the tide of cynicism and

contempt that most Canadians, especially young people, express towards politicians.

The Fredericton Young New Democrats cannot understand Mike White and the Young Conservatives' position that they needed time for preparation after the Saint John Harbour by-election. Every young New Democrat in Fredericton was in Saint John on November 14 and we were eager to debate as we were fresh on party policy after the by-election. On November 15 we were more prepared for debate than we had ever been.

Before the now botched debate,

we were looking forward to offering our policies on the many issues that students are concerned about such as a tuition freeze, affordable housing, childcare, the environment and sustainable economic policy. We know that the Young Liberals are not keen to defend the Liberal record of bankrupting the healthcare and education systems through enormous cuts to the provincial health and education transfers, not to mention the numerous corruption scandals and cronyism. The Conservatives will have a hard time trying answer for the far-right leadership on the Federal Conservatives and the in-

competence of Bernard Lord's provincial Tories.

We hope the Young Conservatives and Liberals will cooperate with the efforts of the STU PSS and we will debate on a date they set. We call for this senseless bickering to end and for all of the parties to begin working together to engage students in politics.

Sincerely,

Charles Fournier

Secretary
New Brunswick Young New Democrats