

## Tories may have lost their nerve

If there is one thing which has consistently angered Liberals over the years - and sparked their just-below-the-surface disregard of Americans - it is when leading U.S. political figures make public comments about Canadian domestic policy.

Except, it seems, when it's an American loudmouth saying something they agree with.

Which brings us, of course, to former U.S. vice-president Al Gore - currently the world's most successful and self-interest global warming shill (who else can make millions by selling carbon credits to his own company and still be idolized?).

Gore, you may know, was hanging around last weekend with our own homegrown environmental fear-monger, David Suzuki, long enough to pronounce that Environment Minister



**National Affairs**

**Claire Hoy**

John Baird's new green plan is a "complete and total fraud ... designed to mislead the Canadian people."

Liberal Leader(less) Stephane Dion, who could be counted on to spew anti-American venom if, let's say, a Republican criticized our resolve in fighting terrorism, instead appeared to welcome Gore's contribution to the green debate.

"I hope the indignation from Canadians and the international community will be enough to get government to (fix) its plan," Dion told the National Post. "The reaction of Mr. Gore will be a reaction that will be very frequent, unfortunately."

There is so much hypocrisy and political doublespeak in all of this it is difficult to know where to begin.

We could begin, for example, by pointing out that Dion, for all his talk about the environment and Kyoto during his years as environment minister - and even more years of Liberals running the government - did nothing about it. Nada.

Or we could begin by pointing out that Gore - assuming he actually read Baird's proposals - is certainly someone who would recognize a "fraud" and an attempt to "mislead" the public when he sees it.

After all, Gore's much-heralded propaganda film is chalk-full of fraudulent prognostications and misleading pictures. Like the polar bears appearing to be stuck on a small bit of ice in the Arctic, for example.

The man who actually took that picture has since admitted that there was lots of ice not far from the little chunks - and polar bears are, let us recall, terrific swimmers.

They weren't in any danger at all, yet Gore's treatment would have you believe they are. (In fact, despite the propaganda, there are about five times as many polar bears in the world today than there were in the 1950s. And that, dear hearts, is a fact. You can look it up.)

There are countless other examples - particularly his fearmongering statistics, wildly exaggerated, predicting horrendous flooding and major storms - but let's just say that Gore is hardly in a position to lecture anybody on conning the public. (Although, unlike most people, he gets paid tens of thousands of dollars for showing up with his dog and pony show.) Lest you think your correspondent here is shilling for Baird and the Tory green plan, that too is absurd.

Regular readers will know that this writer ideologically leans sharply right-of-center - as does Baird, or at least he did when he was in the Mike Harris cabinet - but any minister who thinks it is good policy to make criminals out of Canadians who want to use the "wrong" light bulbs doesn't really understand conservative ideology. Clearly Baird and - sadly - Harper, don't appear to understand it either. But we digress.

I don't like Baird's green plan either.

But only because it's playing into the hands of the green activists who would have you believe that the same people who can't accurately predict tomorrow's weather can - by using the same computer models - tell us what the weather will be doing 25 and 50 years from now.

Think about that.

Three decades ago these same people were warning us about "global cooling." Then it was acid rain which was going to end life as we knew it. And don't forget that deadly hole in the ozone layer. And so on.

This is not to suggest there aren't some legitimate reasons to worry about the environment. But we should keep in mind that the air and the water is generally cleaner today than it was 20 or 30 years ago, one of the reasons - certainly not the only one - that people are living longer these days.

When the Tories were in opposition, they recognized the environmental fearmongering for what it was, but now that they're in government they've lost their nerve - and their intellectual honesty - and are trying to bring in a plan which will a)-do virtually nothing to change the amount of greenhouse gases and b)- cost us all a lot of money which could be better spent on a real problem.

In short: A pox on all their houses.

## Seeing what they want us to see

And while the public's sense of duty was evident, it's mind-boggling that all it took was a handful of celebrities and would-be artists to wrestle that amount of money from average viewers. Or maybe it's not surprising at all, given the media's hold on us.

It conjures up the image of the famed Pied Piper, followed mindlessly by an endless line of rats.

But we're doing the right thing is the response of the masses. Sure, for one night. How many viewers had a life-altering experience, and will now vow to help the needy wherever they go?

There's an old negative sentiment about walking around wearing rose-colored glasses - not seeing the world for what it really is.

I think this practise has been transformed into an art form these days. Either modern men and women have grown very astute at wearing blinders or they're no longer teaching our young to think for themselves in halls of higher learning.

Could it be that decades of technological prowess and material wealth have effected our retinas and per-

## Silica is a carcinogen

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fathered licences. This piggy-backing, which goes on with alarming regularity, absolves the aggregate producers from the more stringent "new" requirements that come with a brand new application: even the new rules do not go nearly far enough in controlling emissions from these operations.

The main by-product in air quality emissions from aggregate operations is silica. Silica is a known carcinogen. Under new licences here in Caledon, some of the pits have signage in place recommending face cover when entering the pit. It appears to be mandatory in at least one pit I have visited. Ironically, the pit next door operates under the "old" rules and no face protection seems necessary or required.

All of us living in this community are exposed to very high concentrations of silica daily. This is unacceptable. The Clean Air Act should be the umbrella under which aggregate operations fall and to which they should be made 100% accountable.

The Ministry of the Environment must enter into a dialogue with the aggregate community to ensure that air quality becomes a priority for them, as it has become a priority for this government and for ourselves.

Name Withheld  
On Request



**Mark Pavilons**

ception of reality? Maybe the widespread use of colored contact lenses has altered our outlook.

Here's a news flash - the world ain't pretty so deal with it, now!

We Canadians like to think of ourselves as compassionate humanitarians, willing to give to any cause or save any plant or creature. The fact of the matter is we're fickle, and we're spoon-fed by the media, huge multinational conglomerates and government into viewing the world in a particular way - the way they want us to see it.

And, more often than not, this has very little to do with reality, but a great deal to do with the bottom line.

We like to think of ourselves as intelligent, assertive, outspoken individuals. We're not, not by a long shot.

Just look around your home and the truth is as plain as the soda in your refrigera-

tor, the potato chips in your cupboard and the footwear by the front door. From our closets to our bathrooms, we're entrenched in a lifestyle not of our own making. It makes you wonder just how much control we do have over our own lives.

Sure, some of us rebel against The Man or Big Brother, and shun mass advertising and the Me, Me, Me lifestyle it promotes.

If the spin doctors can dictate what we eat, drink, wear, drive and use to clean our teeth, how far does their insidious reach stretch?

What about the dissemination of information and the impact of the Internet? Just how much of what we see, hear and read is accurate?

The face of the news media itself is changing in Canada, with mergers and acquisitions. Some TV news stations devote more time to the weather than headline news. The popularity of entertainment-based programs and reality shows far outpaces our need for stimulating brain food.

I often wonder why, given the clout of such media gurus, more emphasis isn't placed on doing good in the world.

That was partially answered by a recent fundraiser conducted by American Idol, which has raised more than \$70 million to help children in the U.S. and around the world. That was great, but again, where were these celebrities two or

three years ago? Why aren't there monthly telethons to raise needed support for every cause known to man?

The generosity of Americans was clearly demonstrated through the Idol promotion.

Why do their wallets remain closed the rest of the year?

Perhaps we need to enact some legislation that demands a portion of profits from such TV shows and franchises be directed to charity. Call it a generosity tax if you will, but I see nothing wrong with mandating goodwill for those who can afford it. In the case of the Idol franchise, that show has made many people, very, very wealthy. It's about time they "gave back."

And it still disappoints me that the giants in North America spend more on advertising - billions upon billions - than is given to Third World countries. It costs only pennies a day to feed, clothe and medicate the world's children and yet we let them die, needlessly, each and every day.

How can any of us take comfort in that? How can we feel good that we've donated a few bucks to the cause of the month, yet ignore starvation, genocide and global warming the other six days of the week?

What are you prepared to do about it?

I'm not sure how we let this happen.

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