

My objective with this article is to give you another perspective on Canadian and Provincial political issues. Bearing in mind the differential of 5 days between my deadline and the publishing date of the paper, here are some issues that we, as Canadians, should be aware of.

Japanese Trade Mission

Team Canada skates again looking to drum up trade in Asia. This trip takes the Prime Minister (PM) and our Premiers, along with over 275 businessmen, to recession ravaged Japan. The Island's favourite tourists have had a rough go of it in the last few years since their banks began collapsing and there long honoured business tradition of bribery finally began effecting these businesses' bottom lines.

Our PM has decided to push, among other things, our high tech industries to the Japanese. I expect that to be about as successful as a Spaniard trying to give a Canadian hockey tips. While this seems embarrassing enough he certainly could do no worse than George Bush puking on their PM a few years ago

Fortunately our astute PM has been able to keep this topic off focus by taking our dirty laundry with Quebec abroad....

Prof Dion

The good professor was

brought into federal politics to put an intellectual face on our government and its Quebec policies. The wise man has been engaged in a cat and mouse game with the Pequistes ever since. Which is a good thing because the Pequistes pump out more mistruths than say Bill Clinton and his interpretations of sexual relations. The latest dribble is the Feds are getting tough and preparing a question of there own to propose to Quebec unless a clear question is put forward first. As most economists will tell there is a lag time involved in implementing many things. Unfortunately 19 years is a little longer than necessary. Bet hey folks, this is a step in the right direction.

One Small Step For Man

One giant leap for mankind is now needed from Ottawa. Our esteemed PM must be more than a little embarrassed about pledging 600 troops to try and pacify the boiling caldron in East Timor. Unfortunately the Department of Defence says we can only provide 250 troops (or one infantry company) because our resources are already stretched so thin they are even thinking about mothballing our Snowbirds (which incidentally is a horrible thing. Those who have ever taken in an air show can understand the pride we have in that air squad. It is also a rare national thread that we all like coast to coast in an in-

creasingly old, tattered national quilt). Personally, I am anything but conservative. Unfortunately the reality is that over the last 15 years our military has been cut regularly and substantially. I don't expect us to be going to war anytime soon but I am convinced that we will see more flare-ups on the world stage. And when they come, you know they will ask John-Jean Beaver to send our boys in to keep the peace. So lets give them the money they need out of our burgeoning kitty so that they can handle these roles the world asks of us. Besides, we're the ones that came up with the peacekeeping concept (Lester Pearson) so lets put our money where our mouth is.

Burgeoning Kitty

Potential good news for us, better news for our parents. Some expect the federal surplus (the difference between what the government spends and takes in in the form of taxes over one year) to be around \$10 Billion. Expect to see a 20% tax cut being phased in over the next four to five years. We'll here about it in February but this could mean some real money back in our pockets and might move tax freedom day (the day when we stop paying taxes and start earning money for ourselves) back into June.

The Zalmer is Back

The most crooked politician (until we can prove that Mulroney took over \$1million in an Airbus kickback) in Canada of the nineties is back. Bill Vander Zalm, who was disgraced and thrown out of the BC Premiers office, is back with visions of leading the BC Provincial Reform Party. Vander Zalm, who got thrown out over his sale of a theme park to another (who also happened to win more than a few government contracts), most outrageous proposal is to fly the recent Chinese boat people to Ottawa to force a more powerful immigration strategy. Personally, I can only hope that his presence will not only topple the BC Redneck Reformers but do it in the same manner that he decimated his own Social Credit Party that ran BC for the better part of the post WWII era. For those unaware, he handed one Rita Johnson a party that crashed and burned, a la Kim Campbell Conservatives, but unlike the Tories was never able to be resurrected again. What does this mean to us. Imagine Brian Mulroney trying a comeback. The horror, the horror...

Albertan Wealth

In Alberta the rise of the price of oil has translated into a \$2Billion budget surplus. Our shrewd western friends expect to use part of it for social programs and the rest to pay down their provincial debt